



# The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik  
Agencies and  
General Health

APRIL '18 • ISSUE NO. 158



## GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

**HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK DO YOU EAT STARCH-BASED FOODS (LIKE BREAD)?**

**A: DAILY ; B: 3-4X; C: SHABBOS ONLY**

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



## HEALTH STAT

**MENTAL HEALTH: DON'T DRINK TO THAT!**

Of men who get diagnosed with dementia and alcohol-related brain damage, rough percentage of that diagnosis by smallest/largest age group:

**13%**

AGE 85

**40%**

AGE 55

Source: study, *The Lancet*, Feb. 13, 2018



## HEALTH QUOTE

**IF YOU DON'T TRY IT, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW.**

—Dr. Shixiu Wu of China's Hangzhou Cancer Hospital on providing the world's first cancer treatment using a patient's own edited immune-cell genes, National Public Radio, Feb. 21



## HEALTH TIP

How to lose 100 pounds? Make appointments with yourself. Specifically, set calendar dates and times for: grocery shopping, prepping produce, and any physical activity.

## INSIDE

### HEALTH

**02** New UV lamp kills flu, other bugs

**04** Broken Heart Syndrome real thing, says researcher

### PUBLIC HEALTH & POLICY

**03** Federal panel says no to iQOS 'smokeless cigarettes'

**09** Wal-Mart joins opioid battle by offering disposal packets

### HAMASPIK

**07** Hamaspik increasing Comm Hab services for people on Long Island

**09** Peers helping peers at Hamaspik's new HARP mental-health program

### HOSPITALS

**11** New York-based company makes robe-like new hospital gown

### AUTISM

**08** Writer with autism calls for more mainstream inclusivity, acceptance

**08** First blood test for autism boasts accuracy rate of up to 90 percent

## HAMASPIK NEWS

# ANOTHER CHAPTER OF PARTNERSHIP

NEW YORK STATE SENATOR AND DISABILITY CHAMPION DAVID CARLUCCI (D-38TH DIST.) VISITS HAMASPIK'S FOSSE SHVESTERHEIM AND REVIEWS "MY LIFE ON WHEELS," PENNED BY BELOVED RESIDENT MS. BREINDY HERSHKOWITZ, AS NYSHA EXECUTIVE DIR. MEYER WERTHEIMER LOOKS ON.



IN THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE SINCE THE JAN. 2011 START OF HIS FIRST TERM, SEN. CARLUCCI HAS FOCUSED CONSIDERABLY ON LAWS RELATED TO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGAN DONATION, SENIOR DRUG PRICES, AND DISABILITY SERVICES.

STORY ON PAGE E5 >>

## HAMASPIK NEWS



**HALL OF CHANGE:**  
The residence's central hallway at the newly renovated and updated 61st St. Briderheim

SEE PAGE E6 >>

## HEALTH NEWS

# DOWN TO EARTH: RESEARCHERS FIND MOUSE-EFFECTIVE NEW ANTIBIOTIC IN U.S. SOIL

SEE PAGE E4 >>

## DISABILITY NEWS

# BOY WITH DOWN SYNDROME BECOMES NEW 'GERBER BABY'



SEE PAGE E8 >>

Non Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Ptex Group

**NYSHA Inc.**  
Published and Copyrighted March, '18  
1 Hamaspik Way  
Monroe, NY 10950

# 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-meds · 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-meds · 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

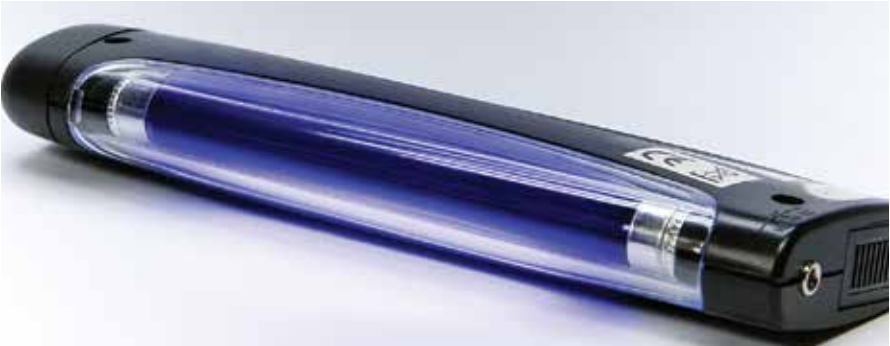
**OMH**

**HEALTH AND RECOVERY PLAN (HARP)**

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

● ► HEALTH NEWS

# New UV Lamp Kills Flu, Other Bugs



SEEING THE LIGHT: A FAR-UVC LAMP WITH TECHNOLOGY SIMILAR TO COLUMBIA’S

New York, NY — Researchers with the Center for Radiological Research at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center have developed an ultraviolet (UV) lamp that kills the influenza virus but isn’t harmful to human skin or eyes, according to a new study in *Scientific Reports*.

Current germicidal lamps, commonly used to sterilize ORs and other hospital rooms, are only safe when no one is in those rooms; prolonged exposure can cause skin cancer and cataracts.

To get around that problem, researchers used light on the far end of the UV-C spectrum (far-UVC light). Far-UVC light has very short wavelengths and thus can’t

travel through the protective outer layers of human skin or eyes.

Preliminary studies on animals and humans have shown that far-UVC light does indeed appear to be safe, and can even kill MRSA bacteria, a common cause of infections after surgery. What’s more, in new tests, a far-UVC lamp killed airborne flu viruses.

The Columbia team is currently working with a company to develop a commercially available version of the lamp. They hope the technology can be commercialized and marketed to prevent the spread of season flu in public places like schools, hospitals, and airports. ★

**YOUR ULTIMATE  
SOURCE FOR GROUP  
INSURANCE SOLUTIONS!**

**Reliable Brokerage, Inc.**  
*We get you protected.*

GROUP MEDICAL INSURANCE  
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL  
INDIVIDUAL LIFE  
LONG/SHORT TERM DISABILITY  
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT/ LONG TERM CARE  
FSA/HSA/ HRA/ CAFETERIA PLANS  
STATE MANDATED DBL/TDB  
GROUP DENTAL/ VISION/LIFE

**888.783.6286**  
CALL FOR YOUR NO-OBLIGATION INSURANCE QUOTE

**HENRY KELLNER & ASSOCIATES**  
E-mail us at: info@reliablebrokerage.com  
Visit us on the web at: www.ReliableBrokerage.com



## ●► NYSHA NEWS

# Tri-County Care Participates in Statewide 'CCO Summit' in Albany



Joining their peers for a day-plus summit in Albany this past February 1st and 2nd, Tri-County Care Executive Director David Mizrahi and colleagues made a compelling case for their position.

Tri-County Care is the Care Coordination Organization (CCO) recently launched by NYSHA (the New York State Hamaspik Association). On January 12, it was approved by New York State officials for operations come July 1, 2018.

Having passed operational muster, though, Mr. Mizrahi and staff are hardly resting on their laurels; nor can they.

With state authorities on full-court press for approved CCOs to meet this summer's launch deadline, Tri-County Care—one of only six CCOs state-

approved—is plowing full steam ahead in readying its inner workings.

In attendance at the New York State summit were Executive Director Mizrahi, Chief Operating Officer Connie Twerski, Director of Finance Mendy Ornstein, Director of Strategic Initiative Bob Manley, R.N., and Leadership Advisor Steven Eidelman.

"It was a very long day," reports Mr. Mizrahi.

Still, the five Tri-County leaders deftly navigated a Thursday chock-full of meetings, sessions and presentations to officials with the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and Dept. of Health (DOH).

While sessions officially began at 11:00 a.m., Tri-County team members were in meetings well before 9:00 a.m., according to Mr. Mizrahi. Those meetings lasted until 11:00 p.m., he adds.

The two-day 'CCO Summit' was essentially a listening event—with top officers of all six approved CCOs visiting Albany to apprise their OPWDD and DOH

counterparts of what inner workings need tweaking "to make it feasible," Mr. Mizrahi says.

With the CCOs having made their case on Thursday, it was the OPWDD and DOH's turn the next day to review and discuss the recommendations and plans going forward.

With NYSHA Executive Director and Hamaspik founder Meyer Wertheimer joining them for the day, the Tri-County contingent wrapped up on a note of confidence and authority. "We have a very strong team," Executive Director Mizrahi asserts.

Comprised as it is of highly skilled professionals with deep backgrounds in relevant fields like training, communications, person-centered quality and regulatory compliance, Tri-County Care's team "is very encouraged and ready to make this transition a success in which it will personally benefit individuals, families and MSCs alike," Mr. Wertheimer says.

Tri-County's capable crew is now working on agency enrollment, Mr.

Mizrahi says.

The CCOs are the result of planned improvements to New York State's disability services. They consist primarily of Medicaid Services Coordinators (MSCs) transferred from all existing non-profit employers to "conflict free" independent status as employees of the CCOs (Care Coordination Organization/Health Homes or CCO/HHs). They will focus as providing individuals with expanded and holistic medical services, and greater focus on personal goals and outcomes.

Under the new entities like Tri-County Care, the newly-independent MSCs will be re-dubbed *Care Coordinators*.

The Tri-County Care CCO/HH is currently gearing up to absorb MSC teams from other agencies as they begin to receive notice-to-transition letters from the state in coming weeks and months.

While the process can be a challenge, if NYSHA's track record is any indication, this transition is sure to be smooth, seamless and professional. ★

## ●► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

## IQOS 'Smokeless Cigarettes' Get Lukewarm Preliminary FDA Review, then High-stakes 'No' Vote

**Washington, D.C.** — Tobacco giant Philip Morris International (PMI) is still betting big on an FDA approval of its new IQOS 'smokeless cigarette.'

But on Jan. 22, the FDA released a mixed review of the closely watched cigarette alternative. It said that certain harmful chemicals were 55 to 99 percent lower than cigarette smoke in the vapor produced by IQOS—but that other studies suggested the chemicals could still contribute to precancerous growths.

And on Jan. 25, an independent FDA panel entitled the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee (TPSAC) rejected PMI's claims that the heat-not-burn IQOS product is safer than smoking cigarettes.

The penlike device is already sold in 30 countries, including Canada. It works by heating, not burning, tobacco. Philip Morris says that the so-called "reduced-risk" cigarette produces less cancerous chemicals and exposes users to less tar.

The committee disagreed, voting unanimously (with one abstention)

against the claim that IQOS cuts tobacco-related diseases risk.

In another vote, 5-4, the panel also rejected a claim that IQOS is less risky than continuing to smoke cigarettes.

One claim the committee voted in favor of was that IQOS reduces the body's exposure to harmful or potentially harmful chemicals. But it did vote against the idea that reductions in exposure are reasonably likely to translate to a measurable and substantial reduction in morbidity and or mortality.

Philip Morris told the committee it expects to switch six million adult smokers to IQOS if the FDA allowed it to market the system as less risky than cigarettes. Members were skeptical, with the majority saying that the likelihood of IQOS users

switching completely to the device is low to medium.

One member pointed to price as a barrier. If approved, the heating device would cost \$79 and the price of

accompanying tobacco sticks would be comparable to a pack of cigarettes.

The recommendations are non-binding, meaning the FDA does not have to follow them. ★



GOING UP IN SMOKE? THE IQOS 'SMOKELESS CIGARETTE' SYSTEM, SHOWN HERE

### Hamaspik Gazette

Published and Copyrighted March '18 by:  
NYSHA, Inc. 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1, Monsey, NY 10952  
Distributed free. USPS Presorted Non-profit  
Mail Postmaster: Return service requested  
© All Rights Reserved



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Meyer Wertheimer  
**WRITER:** Mendy Hecht  
**TEL:** 845-503-0213  
**FAX:** 845-503-1213  
**MAIL:** Hamaspik Gazette, 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1,  
Monsey, NY 10952



# Happening in Health Today

## JAPANESE DRUG KILLS FLU WITHIN 24 HOURS

**Tokyo, Japan** — An experimental new compound by Japanese pharmaceutical firm Shionogi was shown in tests to kill the flu virus within 24 hours of administration.

The prototype drug is being fast-tracked by Japan's drug regulator for use as early as this March. Shionogi also said they will apply for U.S. approval this summer.

"The data that we've seen looks very promising," said Martin Howell Friede, who leads the World Health Organization (WHO)'s advisory on vaccines, including for influenza. "This could be a breakthrough in the way that we treat influenza."

## "BROKEN HEART SYNDROME" REAL: RESEARCHER

**Seattle, WA** — University of

Washington (UW) and UW Medicine cardiologist Dr. Zachary Goldberger says there really is such a thing as a broken heart—certainly no news to poets or to the wise ancients, but news to modern medicine.

According to Dr. Goldberger, the intense emotional pain known forever as "a broken heart" causes symptoms similar to heart attacks, including chest pain and loss of breath. The difference is that "broken heart syndrome" is caused by emotional or physical stress, not heart disease.

Dr. Goldberger says the typical "Broken Heart Syndrome" patients are women ages 60-70 undergoing loss of a loved one or economic hardship.

## DEEP BRAIN STIMULATION TO BE TESTED FOR ADDICTION

**Kansas City, KS** — Deep brain stimulation (DBS) technology has been around for a while. The treatment involves

implanting electrodes deep in the brain to regulate activity of targeted neurons. It's used nowadays primarily to treat tremors related to Parkinson's disease.

But in an addiction-treatment first, DBS will be tested in an upcoming clinical trial at Rushmore Diagnostics to see if it helps people with opioid addictions overcome their problem. Results will be released in September 2018.

## CANCER "SWITCH" TARGETING SHOWS EARLY POTENTIAL

**San Diego, CA** — New cancer research by California-based Wellspring Biosciences has found a way to stop a key cancer "on/off switch" from turning on in mice.

The research, published recently in the journal *Cell*, revolves around the RAS family of genes.

In cancers driven by RAS mutations, a certain protein "switch" that normally tells cells to grow or not stays "turned

on"—empowering cancer cells to keep growing. Scientists have been trying for years to figure out how to "turn off" mutated RAS proteins. The federal National Cancer Institute (NCI)'s RAS Initiative has been working on this problem since 2013.

Researchers showed that, in live mice carrying human cancer cells with the mutated RAS proteins, their new compound blocked the proteins from getting stuck in the "on" position.

Of the over 1.7 million Americans expected to be diagnosed with cancer in 2018, nearly one-third will have tumors with at least one RAS mutation. Ninety-five percent of pancreatic cancers and 45 percent of colon cancers involve a RAS mutation—making this new research significant.

## MOUSE-EFFECTIVE NEW ANTIBIOTICS FOUND IN SOIL

**New York, NY** — To solve modern health's biggest problems, you sometimes have to just get back to roots. Or at least back down to dirt.

That's exactly what New York City's very own Rockefeller University recently did—isolating a new class of antibiotics called *malacidins* out of over 1,000 U.S. national soil samples.

In lab tests, the malacidins proved capable of killing disease-causing bacteria in mice, including the dangerous methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) skin infections. ★

## TEST MODIFIED FOR FAST, ACCURATE PARKINSON'S DETECTION

**Bethesda, MD** — Researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH, whose Clinical Center is shown here, right), took a brain test under development and modified it to quickly and accurately detect Parkinson's disease, too.

The test, called the *Real-Time Quaking-Induced Conversion* (RT-QuIC), was originally designed to detect rare *prion* diseases like Creutzfeldt-Jakob, which slowly destroy the brain.

With a modification, though, RT-QuIC was shown in tests to accurately diagnose Parkinson's.

Standard Parkinson's tests currently take up to 13 days for results; the new test takes less than two. ★





● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# On “Jewish Arbor Day,” State Sen. David Carlucci Pays Grassroots Visit to Hamaspik

*Meets and Greets Residents of Fosse Shvesterheim, Agency Executive Leadership*

Wednesday, Jan. 31 marked Tu B'Shvat, the “Jewish Arbor Day” otherwise known as the New Year for Trees.

And on the same day, Hamaspik turned its attention to a different kind of growth, as New York State Senator David Carlucci (3-38th Dist.) paid a friendly grassroots visit to the non-profit agency.

Senator Carlucci first appeared in person at Hamaspik of Rockland County's Fosse Shvesterheim. Staff and residents at that Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) for women, led by capable longtime Manager Mrs. Landau, were only too happy to show him around the group home, giving him a first-hand, up-close-and-personal view of the residential facility.

The public servant, known across Rockland for taking a down-to-earth approach to his constituency, took a demonstrable interest in the home-like workings of the residence.

During his walking tour, Senator Carlucci took in the well-kept bedrooms, kitchen, dining and living rooms, backyard and even the secure medicine cabinet, coming away impressed by each.

Residents were not hesitant to personally greet their special guest. With Mrs. Landau showing the way and making introductions, residents gladly said hello and engaged in friendly chat with the elected official.

Also accompanying Senator Carlucci on his first visit to Fosse was NYSHA (New York State Hamaspik Association) Executive Director and Hamaspik founder Meyer Wertheimer.

Senator Carlucci's hosts also included Hamaspik of Rockland County Executive Director Joel Freund, Rockland County Legislator and Hamaspik Director of Public Affairs Aron Wieder, and Hamaspik of Rockland County Director of Residential Services Moshe Sabel.

After taking in the Fosse IRA in person and coming away with a first-hand impression of what a Hamaspik group home looks like, Senator Carlucci and his entourage headed over to 58 Rt. 59 in central Monsey—home to the perfectly-located headquarters of Hamaspik of Rockland County.

Once there, Senator Carlucci was given a tour of the sprawling facility's numerous departments. The Senator briefly visited the nerve center of Hamaspik of Rockland County and its staff.

He also popped in on the still-growing HamaspikCare home care agency, saying hello to administrator Asher Katz and his



CONFERRING WITH (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT): JOEL FREUND, MEYER WERTHEIMER, ARON WIEDER, ASHER KATZ, EZRA FRIEDLANDER, DAVID MIZRAHI, AND HERSHEL WERTHEIMER



WITH AGENCY TOP BRASS, TALKING SHOP ON THE FRONT LINES OF FOSSE



WITH (L-R) ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATOR AND HAMASPIK DIR. OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS ARON WIEDER; TRI-COUNTY CARE EXEC. DIR. DAVID MIZRAHI; HAMASPIKCARE EXEC. DIR. ASHER KATZ; NYSHA EXEC. DIR. MEYER WERTHEIMER; HAMASPIK CHOICE EXEC. DIR. YOEL BERNATH; HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY EXEC. DIR. JOEL FREUND; EZRA FRIEDLANDER; HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY EXEC. DIR. MOSES WERTHEIMER



OUT AND ABOUT AFTER VISITING FOSSE; GETTING AN “AERIAL TOUR” OF A SCALE MODEL OF MAJOR HAMASPIK FACILITIES



outstanding team.

Likewise did the Hamaspik Choice managed long-term care (MLTC) plan under the leadership of Yoel Bernath enjoy a quick visit from the State Senator.

After meeting and greeting with those departments and their staff, Senator Carlucci retreated to the onsite executive boardroom, where executive leadership

from across Hamaspik met with him.

During that healthy discussion, Hamaspik's top brass presented the community's most pressing concerns vis-à-vis intellectual disability and other special needs.

Senator Carlucci knowledgeably responded with an overview of state and federal resources currently available,

as well as with a discussion of plans and possibilities currently on the table.

All parties came away with an upbeat feeling of partnership—with that positive sense of mutual responsiveness and understanding that encapsulates grassroots outreach at its best.

And being Tu B'Shvat as it was, that feeling was all the more appropriate. ★





## New Season, Fresh Look



WINDS OF CHANGE: A NEWLY-UPDATED BEDROOM AT THE 61ST ST. RESIDENCE

## Holiday Spirit in the Air



A BUOYANT EXPERIENCE: A RESIDENT'S LOOK OF APPROVING SATISFACTION SAYS IT ALL AT THE CONCORD BRIDERHEIM'S TU B'SHVAT HOUSE PARTY, BALLOONS AND ALL

## Arcadian Briderheim Residents Gear Up for Purim

It may be after Purim as you're reading this.

But it is on Thursday, February 8 that your humble *Gazette* editor is writing this.

In other words, it's well before Purim.

Fairly early to be writing an article about Purim, you may think.

But for Manager Shlomo Lebowitz and crew at Hamaspik of Rockland County's Arcadian Briderheim residence (and pretty much every other Hamaspik residence), a month out is just the right time to be gearing up for the madcap holiday of Purim.

That's why Messrs. Fried, Goldberger, Gottesman and Lebowitz (sounds like a law office, doesn't it?) have been helping residents get into gear for Purim.

They've been doing so by taking the time to sit down with individual residents one-on-one, slowly turning pages of costume and goodie-package catalogs.

The former revolves around the Purim

custom of going in costume, while the latter is based on the ancient tradition of presenting family and friends with edible gifts come Purim.

Keeping residents involved and on the front lines of community interaction is an ironclad tradition at Arcadian (and every other Hamaspik residence, of course). Besides being person-centered, it's also mainstream-centered and belonging-centered.

And at Purim across Hamaspik, mainstream-centered and belonging-centered means two things: dressing down in giddy get-ups, like everyone else, and feting family and friends with food, also like everyone else.

And in the Purim spirit, it's worthwhile to now needlessly and nonsensically note that dressing as food falls squarely within the letter of the Purim spirit. ★

## New Season, New Décor at 61st St. Residence

Wind and snow weren't the only things the cold season blew in come January.

For Hamaspik of Kings County's 61st St. Briderheim Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA), the change in outdoor climate brought with it a welcome and warm change to its indoor climate—with a full, floor-to-ceiling makeover of the residence's entire décor.

Everything from ceiling light fixtures to floor rugs was updated, along with the furniture between. Residents now enjoy new beds (and linens), couches and even

new blinds and drapes, and all chosen per their personal preferences via catalogs and in-person local shopping outings.

Every good homemaker will tell you that a proper home needs a freshening-up if not a full redo every good few years, thanks to the passage of time and the natural wear and tear it brings.

And with 61st being a proper Hamaspik home subject to the same wear and tear, reports affable Director of Residential Services Cheskel Fisher, it was time for an update. ★

## Marking Tu B'Shvat "Jewish Arbor Day" Holiday, Hamaspik Gets Back to Roots

January 31st marked not just the ushering out of one of coldest months on recent record, but the ushering in of the Jewish New Year for Trees.

The 15th day of the Jewish-calendar month of Shvat ("Tu B'Shvat") is traditionally celebrated by enjoying the "Seven Species" associated with the Holy Land.

Those would be wheat, barley, olives, figs, grapes, pomegranates and dates. And in homes, synagogues and supermarkets throughout the communities serviced primarily by Hamaspik, and at programs operated by Hamaspik, samples (at least ready-to-eat specimens) were in

abundance.

Like other Hamaspik of Rockland County IRAs, Concord Briderheim hosted a fruity feast for residents. Ditto for Kings County's 38th St. Shvesterheim.

At Hamaspik's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) programs, the men and women supported by those also got into the day's theme come Tu B'Shvat—assembling take-home fruit kebabs and creating organically inclined artwork.

One understanding of Tu B'Shvat is spiritually connecting with the vegetable kingdom and all of its lush beauty. And at Hamaspik, Tu B'Shvat's underlying message of growth wasn't lost. ★



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

## Putting their Hearts Where Their Hands Are

*38th St. Shvesterheim Visits Brooklyn Crafts Store*

Like so many of their typical peers, residents of Hamaspiik of Kings County's 38th St. Shvesterheim enjoy an outing every Sunday, reports Assistant Home Manager Mrs. Yona Kasnett.

And this past Sunday, Jan. 28, the girls selected an outing they could quite literally get their hands into—or, perhaps better worded, get into their hands.

Pottery and Glass Land, an artsy central Brooklyn venue for artisans of all levels, has been opening its doors for the past five years to anyone interested in decorating their home with their handiwork. The laid-back space lets you walk in, pull up a stool, and walk out hours later bearing

your own painting or handcrafted pottery masterpiece. Staff will even help you.

The popular store on Coney Island Ave. regularly welcomes individuals and groups with disabilities, which recently included Hamaspiik.

People with special needs take what they make more to heart, offers Pottery and Glass Land manager Zahava Ourfli. Besides having more patience to lean over a painstaking painting longer than typical, “they work hard on it,” she says. “They understand what they’re painting.”

But coming from a residence where they receive a lot of hands-on heart, that isn't surprising. ★

## Standing By, a Part of a Tender New Life

Talk about being a part of every part of community life!

The gentlemen of Hamaspiik of Rockland County's Day Hab program are very much a part of the ecosystem of their home community, regularly attending synagogue and shopping local business.

On top of that, their Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) see them more as friends and family than disconnected clients that they leave and forget about at each day's end.

Over the years, “Day Habbers” have

thus attended no shortage of weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, baby namings and other staff family milestones.

Most recently, the gentlemen were graciously invited to visit the home of one of their very own DSPs who became a proud father.

The baby boy surely shared his father's joy as the young men stood around his bassinet to recite the traditional “Shma Yisroel” credo—and the young men felt, as they indeed should, that they were a part of the little lad's new life. ★

## With Hamaspiik's Help, OPWDD's Comm Hab Programs Growing in Queens and Long Island Communities

It's been over two years since Hamaspiik of Kings County responded to a growing number of individuals residing in Queens and Long Island by opening a satellite branch in Far Rockaway.

Led by hardworking Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) Julie Bergmann, that office eliminated locals' need to travel to Brooklyn for Hamaspiik services—bringing Hamaspiik to them instead.

Today, says Mrs. Bergmann, the Queens office fields several staffers, including the recently-hired Mrs. Yehudis Schuster handling a much-needed human resources desk (along with standard MSC duties, too).

That desk was opened to handle a

growing influx of Queens/Long Island residents seeking to become Hamaspiik employees—primarily as Community Habilitation (Comm Hab) providers.

Comm Hab, a program long provided by Hamaspiik, gives individuals with disabilities a one-on-one coach of sorts to help them master daily life activities and goals of their own choosing.

And with growing Hamaspiik action on Long Island, a growing number of local parents are opting for Hamaspiik-provided Comm Hab—along with a growing number of residents wanting to work for the agency.

For an agency that never stops growing, it was perhaps inevitable. ★

### Creativity On the Table



CRAFTING EXPRESSION: TABLES AND MUGS AWAIT VISITORS' PERSONAL TOUCHES

### Honoring Life



INTEGRATION FROM THE BEGINNING: “DAY HABBERS” WITH A YOUNG FRIEND

### “Bear”-ing the Purim Spirit



A ROARING GOOD TIME: HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S DAY HAB BEFORE PURIM



# The Autism Update

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

## WRITER WITH AUTISM CALLS FOR MORE ACCEPTANCE

**Toronto, Canada** — In an online op-ed, writer and autism advocate Sarah Kurchak makes a powerful personal call for increased interpersonal acceptance and tolerance of people on the autism spectrum like herself.

Ms. Kurchak, who recently turned 36, points out the numerous risks associated with living with autism, including health and energy issues, life-threatening accidents, unemployment, and even uncaring caregivers.

“Because I can speak, work, and maintain a semblance of a social life—and because I am able to hide my most severe symptoms from other people—they assume that I am too ‘high-functioning’ to be considered autistic,” she points out.

However, for those with autism, a high-functioning life still brings a parade of challenges, Ms. Kurchak writes.

These include being “tired all the time” due to “the effort it takes to fit in,” and the resulting “erratic” sleeping patterns; chronic anxiety; and “whether my contributions to my family, friends, and the world are at least equal to all that I feel like I’m taking from it.”

Amusingly addressing one common autism stereotype, “I repeatedly have to tell people I’m not a math savant,” she writes.

“So what do I want you to do about it? Listen to us,” she concludes. “Think about how hard we’re working to exist in your world and consider meeting us halfway. Tell us we don’t bore you. Tell us we don’t drain you. Look at us somewhere other than the eyes—we’re really not comfortable with eye contact and are tired of being forced to make it for your benefit—and tell us that we deserve to be alive. And then act like it.”

## ‘COGNITIVE ENHANCEMENT THERAPY’ BOOSTS EMPLOYABILITY: STUDY

**Pittsburgh, PA** — According to a new study by the University of Pittsburgh, cognitive improvements, and resulting employability, may be increased by a therapy designed to bolster social learning.

The therapeutic approach, called “cognitive enhancement therapy,” combines computer-based tasks with structured group sessions.

The computer games are believed to improve problem-solving and memory, while the closely monitored group sessions ostensibly provide participants with valuable practice in reading



## BOY WITH DOWN SYNDROME NEWEST “GERBER BABY”

**Dalton, GA** — One-year-old Lucas Warren has Down syndrome, an irresistible personality (and matching smile)—and the title of 2018 Gerber Baby title, too.

Young Mr. Warren was chosen by the iconic American baby-food company in early February to have his face adorn Gerber’s bottles for the next ten-plus months.

In beating out over 140,000 competitors, little Lucas becomes the first “Gerber Baby” with disability since the annual contest’s start back in 2010. ★



nonverbal cues, taking someone else’s perspective, as well as with other social skills.

Cognitive enhancement therapy already has a record of success helping adults with schizophrenia to secure and maintain employment. The new study focused on applying the method towards benefiting young adults who have autism.

Results of the study, the largest and most comprehensive evaluation of cognitive enhancement therapy for people with autism, was published recently in *Autism Research*.

## FEDS FAST-TRACK AUTISM DRUG DESPITE QUESTIONS

**Washington, D.C.** — In mid-February, Swiss drug maker Roche won a rare “breakthrough therapy” designation from the FDA for balovaptan, an experimental new autism drug.

The designation allows balovaptan to move faster to final FDA approval.

The drug works by suppressing the social hormone vasopressin in the brain. It was shown in a Roche trial to

improve scores on the popular Vineland behavior survey in 223 men with autism who were taking various dosages of the drug daily for 12 weeks.

There are currently no drugs approved to treat the central features of autism, although risperidone and aripiprazole are approved for treating the irritability associated with autism.

## UP TO 90-PERCENT ACCURACY FOR FIRST-EVER AUTISM BLOOD TEST

**Warwick, England** — Last month, it was U.S.-based LabCorp announcing approval of the first patented autism diagnosis test.

This month, it’s a British university announcing development of an autism test of its own. The still-experimental test is far from available to the public.

While the LabCorp test uses patient samples of tissue or other biological material for its patented genetic test, the University of Warwick research consists of a blood test.

To develop their test, the researchers had custom software compare blood

samples from 38 Italian children with autism to 31 without.

The computerized scans looked for damage to specific proteins in the blood’s plasma; those damaged proteins are associated with autism.

The most successful of the four new algorithms correctly identified blood profiles as belonging to a child with autism 90 percent of the time, and also correctly identified those who do not have autism 87 percent of the time.

The new test is ultimately expected to improve the accuracy of current ASD tests from 60-70 percent to approximately 90 percent, according to researchers.

They also hope it will be available readily at all major hospitals, as it does not require expertise in neurological disorders.

Autism is currently diagnosed at the average age of two utilizing a battery of surveys and questionnaires. The new test, if and when approved for mainstream usage, would allow for an authoritative single test at a far younger age than currently possible. ★



► HAMASPIK NEWS

# In Mental-Illness Recovery, People Helping People—with a Little Help from Hamaspik

It was back in 2014 that the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) first started working on Health and Recovery Plans (HARPs).

By January of 2015, the more efficient method of delivering mental health care to Medicaid members took effect in New York City. The rest of the state followed suit that July. As a Home and Community Based Service (HCBS), the HARP program helps replace costly cycles of chronic mental-health relapse with positive and permanent solutions. It does so by offering eligible adults specific HCBS services targeted just for them.

Innovations provided by HARP include direct supports for patients' social and emotional needs—critical not just for attaining long-term mental

health but for maintaining it, too.

Most importantly, the HCBS “sub-program” gives beneficiaries a sorely-lacking morale boost on two fronts: support training for family members, and support from recovered peers.

Hamaspik currently offers the HARP program to qualifying members of the public in Rockland and Kings Counties who are affected by mental illness. Hamaspik of Kings County psychologist Mordechai “Muttu” Solomon, LMHC, shares one such example.

A woman recently signed up with the Hamaspik behavioral health program, seeking primarily to benefit from its peer-support feature. Hamaspik duly rolled up its sleeves and got to work, seeking the right candidate to become the woman's certified Peer Support

Specialist.

It took a bit of a search, reports Mr. Solomon. Said specialist must not only possess a high school diploma and have undergone Peer Support Specialist training, but, understandably, also have experienced that critical personal victory over chronic mental illness.

Ultimately, the right résumé—and the perfect employee behind it—was found.

The candidate was shortly hired and trained, performing impressively throughout—and shortly assigned to the individual in question, providing her with personal support on shared mental-health issues, as well as Transitional Employment support.

The development perfectly encapsulates Mr. Solomon's personal mission of embracing and assisting those with mental illness—a drive for which Hamaspik took him on and a drive which he discharges professionally. “If I could, I would dedicate my life to erasing the stigma,” he asserted to the *Gazette* in October of 2017.

Four months later, that drive to legitimize those with mental illness continues unabated—a drive that he also wants to pass to those recovering from chronic mental illness.

Commenting case-in-point on the recent hiring of a Peer Support Specialist, Mr. Solomon shares a sentiment not uncommonly shared by those who've taken that journey.

“I wish I could become a therapist,” some of them say,” he says. “Well, now they could.” ★

*If you or a loved one have received a HARP participation letter for Rockland County, please call Kathleen Clay of Hudson River Healthcare at 914-734-8513 or Noel Sander of Hudson Valley Care Coalition at 914-502-1435.*

*For any questions on Hamaspik support services for HARP beneficiaries, please contact Mrs. Pearl Spira, LMSW in Rockland County at 845-503-0247, or Mrs. Yehudis Heimfeld in Brooklyn at 718-408-5405.*

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

## Walmart Joins Opioid Battle with Disposal Powder Packets



**EPIDEMIC, TAKE A POWDER! THE DISPOSERX PACKETS RENDER OPIOID PILLS USELESS**

**Bentonville, AR** — The war against the ongoing U.S. opioid epidemic is now getting an unlikely ally: Walmart. The retail giant is helping customers get rid of leftover opioids by giving them packets that turn the painkillers—or any pill-based medication, for that matter—into a useless gel.

On Jan. 17, the company announced that it will provide the packets free with opioid prescriptions filled at its 4,700

U.S. pharmacies coast to coast.

The small packets, made by DisposeRX, contain a powder that is poured into prescription bottles. When mixed with warm water, the powder turns the pills into a biodegradable gel that can be thrown in the trash.

According to DisposeRX, the packets work on most other prescription drugs and for pills, tablets, capsules, liquids or patches, too. ★

CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

## HAMASPIK EI PROGRAM

CAN HELP!

*At no cost to the parents*

### Our Services:

**Birth- 3 Yrs**

- **Evaluations**
- Ongoing Service Coordination
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech / Feeding Therapy
- Special Instruction

**EI Class**

- Individual Goals
- Music therapy
- Yiddish, English, Hebrew
- Warm & loving atmosphere
- Lunch and transportation provided
- Constant collaboration with family and therapist

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
**845.503.0209**  
 mschik@hamaspikrockland.org

The Early Intervention program is contracted and publicly funded by the NYSDOH and RCDOH 845-364-2032. The EI services are provided at no out of pocket costs to parents.



# Public Health and Policy News

chemicals that can be poisonous if ingested, and a number of young people around the country have suffered severe reactions in recent years upon accidentally or even purposely eating the colorful packets.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers has reported 154 calls to poison control centers relating to teenagers ingesting the pods this year, up from 53 cases last year.

## BIG FLU SEASON BOOSTS HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

**New York, NY** — While the flu has been sending Americans to doctors and even hospitals in droves this season, it's also been giving a shot in the arm to the entire healthcare industry, too.

Rates for flu hospitalization have reached record levels, according to the CDC. (New York State alone reported a 35-percent increase in confirmed flu cases the first week of February, prompting Gov. Andrew Cuomo's ordering of financial aid to hardest-hit counties.)

This is leading to higher revenue from increasing hospital visits and drug sales for care providers and other companies all along the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Pharmaceutical giants like GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi have likewise seen a surge in vaccine sales.

Drug distributors like McKesson, which move medications from factories to pharmacies, and retailers like CVS, are

financially benefiting for higher demand for flu medications.

Laboratory companies like Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp are also receiving a boost as more sick patients are being sent by doctors for tests and blood work.

## HOUSE FINE-TUNES CALORIE INFORMATION LABEL RULE

**Washington, D.C.** — The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act on Feb. 6. The bill changes the requirements of a new federal nutritional rule that is slated to go into effect on May 7, 2018.

Under that rule, food establishments with 20 or more locations have to include the calories of each item on their menus. The newly-passed bill modifies that requirement, giving restaurants and retailers more flexibility on what calorie

is exploring whether dangerous asthma attacks in kids is preventable with regular vitamin D, a vitamin long associated by many studies with many health benefits—including, apparently, significantly milder asthma.

The principle at play here is not without precedent. A recent pediatric cancer treatment placebo study was successful enough to be stopped mid-study to provide the actual treatment to placebo patients.

## PURDUE CALLS OFF OXYCONTIN MARKETING TO DOCS

**Stamford, CT** — Responding to the ongoing opioid painkiller overdose crisis, Purdue Pharma announced on Feb. 10 that it has halved its salesforce—which will also no longer visit doctors' offices to promote its Oxycontin product to physicians.

## ALBANY LEADS AGAINST 'TIDE PODS'

**Albany, NY** — State Senator Brad Hoylman (D-27th Dist.) and Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas (D-36th Dist.) introduced legislation this past Feb. 6 that would mandate child-resistant packaging for Tide Pods detergent packets in New York State.

Laundry detergent contains several



**TURNING AGAINST THE TIDE:** A BILL BY NEW YORK STATE LAWMAKERS BRAD HOYLMAN AND ARAVELLA SIMOTA WOULD MAKE TIDE DETERGENT PODS SAFER



**STERILE SAMPLE:** MIAMI HOPES TO ELIMINATE BITING MOSQUITOES LIKE THIS ONE

information must be displayed, and where.

The bill now heads to the U.S. Senate, where it is expected to pass and then head to the White House for signing.

## PRINCIPLED PROFESSOR PROTESTS PEDIATRIC PLACEBO

**Seattle, WA** — If you know that a certain treatment is good for people, it is unethical to conduct a placebo study in which you provide that treatment to only half the participating people.

That is the essential complaint made to the federal National Institutes of Health (NIH) this February by University of Washington asthma researcher Dr. Bruce Davidson.

Dr. Davidson objects to an asthma study in which only 200 of 400 children with severe asthma and low vitamin D are being given vitamin D—compared to the other 200 getting a placebo.

The five-city government-funded study

## MIAMI BATTLING BITERS WITH BUG-CARRYING MOSQUITOES

**South Miami, FL** — By releasing millions of non-biting mosquitoes carrying the Wolbachia bacteria into a targeted neighborhood over the next six months, this Florida city is hoping to drastically reduce the number of biting mosquitoes.

The plan is simple: Use infected mosquitoes to spread Wolbachia to non-infected mosquitoes; Wolbachia renders mosquitoes unable to have children. The plan hopes to drastically reduce South Miami's number of mosquitos—and thus, numbers of biting mosquitoes carrying the dangerous Zika, dengue fever and chikungunya viruses.

In 2016, Miami-Dade County was the epicenter of the first U.S. outbreak of the Zika virus—prompting a successful mosquito eradication campaign and one of America's most successful mass disease containment efforts.





HEALTH NEWS

# New Vaccine for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) Passes Phase I Trial

First Human Placebo Study Proves Safe for Currently Untreatable Viral Disease

**Bethesda, MD** — When the first cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) appeared in Saudi Arabia in 2012, the new virus had no vaccine. Treatment for its flu-like symptoms was limited. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the MERS has since spread to 27 countries and sickened more

than 2,000 people, of whom about 35 percent have died. It currently has no cure. But in a small clinical trial conducted at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center, an experimental vaccine has now shown promise as an effective preventative. Close to 40 volunteers were given either the experimental SAB-301

vaccine or a placebo. No side effects occurred in any volunteers other than mild common cold and headache symptoms. The vaccine was created using genetically modified cattle and then tested in mice. It was made by SAB Biotherapeutics of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The development is significant for two reasons. The first is because a MERS vaccine is now on the way. The second is because the vaccine was created by modifying the genes of live cows. The cows' immune systems then produced human antibodies, not cow antibodies. Researchers now believe they may be able to use these so-called *transchromosomal* cows to rapidly produce other human antibodies in as few as three months—meaning that new vaccines against future incurable viruses could possibly be mass-produced in livestock in the event of future epidemics. ★

HEALTHY EATING

## Eggplant!



**EASY**

PREP TIME: **0:15**

**YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS**

READY IN: **1:15**



### Babaganush Eggplant Dip

THE PERFECT DIP FOR SHABBOS!

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 medium eggplant
- 3 cloves garlic
- 5 tablespoons mayonnaise
- Salt to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Pre-heat oven to 375°
- Wrap eggplant in silver foil
- Bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until tender
- Remove from oven and let cool completely
- Remove peels
- Blend all ingredients in immersion blender

**For smoked version:** wrap eggplant well in silver foil and place directly on flame; then follow same directions.

**MEDIUM**

PREP TIME: **0:10**

**YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS**

READY IN: **:50**



### Simple Eggplant Parmesan

A BIT DIFFERENT THAN YOUR TYPICAL EGGPLANT PARMESAN

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- ½ cup corn flake crumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- 1 small eggplant
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- 1 cup shredded cheese

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Preheat oven to 400°
- Pour melted butter into an 11x7 baking dish; set aside
- Place egg in a shallow dish; set aside
- In a separate shallow dish, combine corn flake crumbs, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper; set aside
- Slice eggplant. Dip each slice in egg and coat with crumb mixture. Place in prepared baking dish
- Bake for 20 minutes
- Turn slices and bake for another 15 minutes
- Pour marinara sauce over eggplant and top with mozzarella cheese
- Bake for 3 more minutes or until cheese is just melted

**EASY**

PREP TIME: **0:15**

**YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS**

READY IN: **:35**



### Roasted Veggies

ENJOY THIS HEALTHY, TASTY SIDE DISH!

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 eggplant
- 1 butternut squash
- 1 onion
- 1 tomato
- 1 red pepper
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt to taste
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp black pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Cube all vegetables
- Line baking sheet with non-stick parchment paper
- Spread cubed vegetables in single layer across sheet, ensuring each is separate
- Drizzle with olive oil
- Season with salt and garlic powder
- Roast for 20 min
- Mix all together
- Season with black pepper (and more salt if needed)

**BENEFITS:**  
Eggplant contains an impressive across-the-board array of minerals and vitamins, including copper, fiber, folate, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus and potassium, as well as vitamins C, K, and B6, thiamin, niacin, and pantothenic acid.

CHEF'S TIP:

To remove the eggplant's bitter flavor, slice and sprinkle salt on both open faces. Let salt sit for 20 minutes, then rinse well.



# In the Know

## ALL ABOUT... CARPAL TUNNEL

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



No, carpal tunnel is not part of driving directions around the metro New York area—the “tunnel” in carpal tunnel has nothing to do with getting in and out of Manhattan (and “carpal” has nothing to do with cars, either).

But, like sitting in traffic in (or before entering) the Holland Tunnel, carpal tunnel can be painful.

Here’s what you need to know about this often-debilitating condition—and how to treat or even prevent it from striking in the first place.

### DEFINITION

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a medical condition that causes numbness, tingling and other symptoms in the hand and arm.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is most common among people whose white-collar jobs primarily involve repetitive and excessive usage of the fingers and wrists—writers, secretaries and others who type a lot every day.

The syndrome is also common among blue-collar workers who excessively use their hands for gripping and pushing. For example, carpal tunnel syndrome was once known as “meatpackers’ wrist” because New York City meatpackers would frequently get it due to their jobs. As such, carpal tunnel syndrome is also common among cabbies, bus drivers and truckers who grip steering wheels all day.

### SYMPTOMS

Carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms usually start gradually. The first symptoms often include numbness or tingling in your thumb, index and middle fingers that comes and goes. The condition may also cause discomfort in the wrist and the palm of the hand. Common carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms include:

“

**CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME IS MOST COMMON AMONG PEOPLE WHOSE JOBS PRIMARILY INVOLVE REPETITIVE AND EXCESSIVE USAGE OF THE FINGERS AND WRISTS... WHO TYPE A LOT EVERY DAY.**

”

### Tingling or numbness

You may experience tingling and numbness in your fingers or hand. Usually the thumb and index, middle or ring fingers are affected, but not your little finger. Sometimes there is a sensation like an electric shock in these fingers.

The sensation may travel from your wrist up your arm. These symptoms often occur while holding a steering wheel, phone or newspaper. The sensation may wake you from sleep.

### Weakness

You may experience weakness in your hand and a tendency to drop objects. This may be due to the numbness in your hand or weakness of the thumb’s pinching muscles, which are also controlled by the median nerve.

### CAUSES

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by pressure on the *median nerve*. This nerve runs from the neck and shoulder down through the arm—and into the hand through a tiny “tunnel” formed by a space between the bones of the wrist that is called the *carpal tunnel*.

The median nerve provides sensation to the palm side of your thumb and fingers, except the little finger. It also provides

nerve signals to move the muscles around the base of your thumb.

The wrist also contains a ligament called the *transverse carpal ligament*. When this ligament gets overused by constant typing, gripping, pushing or holding, it becomes swollen and inflamed. (This is also known as *repetitive strain injury* (RSI).) The swollen and inflamed ligament then presses on the median nerve, resulting in carpal tunnel syndrome.

The anatomy of your wrist, health problems and possibly repetitive hand motions can contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome.

Anything that squeezes or irritates the median nerve in the carpal tunnel space may lead to carpal tunnel syndrome. A wrist fracture can narrow the carpal tunnel and irritate the nerve, as can the swelling and inflammation resulting from rheumatoid arthritis.

Bottom line: in many cases of carpal tunnel syndrome, there is no single cause. Rather, a combination of risk factors contributes to its development.

### Risk factors

A number of factors have been associated with carpal tunnel syndrome. Although they may not directly cause carpal tunnel syndrome, they may increase chances of developing or aggravating median nerve damage. These include:



Computers and other workplace factors. Several studies have evaluated whether there is an association between computer use and carpal tunnel syndrome—as well as working with vibrating tools, on an assembly line, or any other work requiring prolonged or repetitive flexing of the wrist. According to the Mayo Clinic, there has not been enough quality and consistent evidence to support extensive computer use as a risk factor for carpal tunnel syndrome, although it may cause a different form of hand pain. Many other experts disagree.

**Anatomic factors.** A wrist fracture or dislocation, or arthritis that deforms the small bones in the wrist, can alter the space within the carpal tunnel and put pressure on the median nerve.

**People with smaller carpal tunnels** may be more likely to have carpal tunnel syndrome. This may be why carpal tunnel syndrome is generally more common in women: because a woman's carpal tunnel is relatively smaller than a man's.

**Nerve-damaging conditions.** Chronic illnesses like diabetes increase risk of nerve damage, including damage to the median nerve.

**Inflammatory conditions.** Illnesses defined by inflammation, like rheumatoid arthritis, can affect the lining around the tendons in the wrist and put pressure on your median nerve.

**Alterations in body fluid balance.** Fluid retention may increase pressure inside the carpal tunnel, irritating the median nerve. This is common during expectancy; carpal tunnel syndrome associated with expectancy generally resolves on its own.

## DIAGNOSIS

If you have persistent signs and symptoms that suggest carpal tunnel syndrome, see your doctor—especially they begin interfering with normal work/life activities and sleep patterns. Permanent nerve and muscle damage can occur without treatment.

To diagnose carpal tunnel syndrome, your doctor may ask questions and/or conduct any of the following tests:

**History of symptoms.** Your doctor will review the pattern of your symptoms. For example, because the median nerve doesn't provide sensation to your little finger, symptoms in that finger may indicate a problem other than carpal tunnel syndrome. Carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms usually occur while holding a phone or a newspaper, gripping a steering wheel, or waking up during the night.

**Physical examination.** Your doctor will conduct a physical examination. He or she will test the feeling in your fingers and the strength of the muscles in your hand. Bending the wrist, tapping on the nerve or simply pressing on the nerve can trigger symptoms in many people.

Other tests and procedures doctors may use to better isolate and diagnose carpal tunnel syndrome include x-rays, electromyograms and nerve conduction studies.

## TREATMENT

Proper treatment usually relieves the tingling and numbness and restores wrist and hand function.

Treat carpal tunnel syndrome as early as possible after symptoms start.

Take more frequent breaks to rest your hands. Avoiding activities that worsen symptoms and applying cold packs to reduce swelling also may help.

Non-surgical treatments include wrist splinting and medications. These are most likely to help if you've had only mild to moderate symptoms for under ten

months. cortisone to relieve pain. The doctor may sometimes use an ultrasound to guide these injections.

Corticosteroids decrease inflammation and swelling, which relieves pressure on the median nerve. Oral corticosteroids aren't considered as effective as corticosteroid injections for treating carpal tunnel syndrome.

## Surgery

Surgery may be appropriate if symptoms are severe or don't respond to other treatments. The goal of carpal tunnel surgery is to relieve pressure by cutting the ligament pressing on the median nerve. The surgery may be performed with two different techniques:

**Endoscopic surgery.** The surgeon uses an *endoscope*, a telescope-like device with a tiny camera attached to it, to see inside the carpal tunnel. The surgeon will then

the upper body and joints may help reduce pain and improve grip strength.

**Hand therapy.** Early research suggests that certain physical and occupational hand therapy techniques may reduce symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.

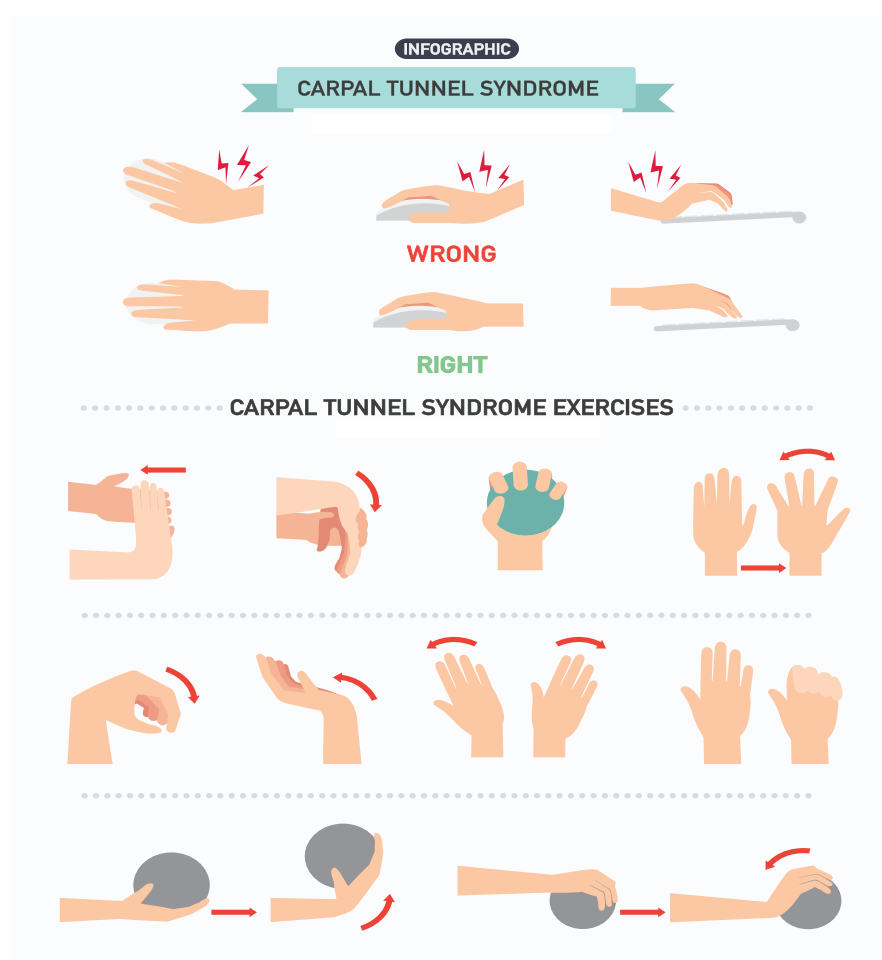
**Ultrasound therapy.** High-intensity ultrasound can be used to raise the temperature of a targeted area of body tissue to reduce pain and promote healing. Research shows inconsistent results with this therapy, but a course of ultrasound therapy over several weeks may help reduce symptoms.

## PREVENTION AND PROGNOSIS

There are no proven strategies to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, but you can minimize stress on your hands and wrists with these methods:

- Take short breaks from repetitive activities involving the use of your hands
- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese
- Rotate your wrists and stretch your palms and fingers
- Take a pain reliever, such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) or naproxen sodium (Aleve)
- Wear a snug, not tight, wrist splint at night. You can find these over-the-counter at most drugstores or pharmacies
- Avoid sleeping on your hands
- Reduce your force and relax your grip. Hit cash register or keyboard keys softly. Use a big pen with an oversized, soft grip adapter and free-flowing ink.
- Take frequent breaks. Gently stretch and bend hands and wrists periodically. Alternate tasks when possible.
- Avoid bending your wrist all the way up or down; a relaxed middle position is best.
- Keep your keyboard at elbow height or slightly lower.
- Improve your posture. Incorrect posture rolls shoulders forward, shortening your neck and shoulder muscles and compressing nerves in your neck. This can affect your wrists, fingers and hands.
- Make sure that your computer mouse is comfortable and doesn't strain your wrist.
- Keep your hands warm. You're likelier to develop hand pain and stiffness if you work in a cold environment. Put on fingerless gloves that keep your hands and wrists warm if needed.

At the end of the day (at least in the personal experience of your *Gazette* editor and carpal tunnel patient) life with carpal tunnel syndrome is manageable—so long as you type lightly, regularly stretch and relax those hands, wrists and forearms, take regular work breaks as needed, and keep prolonged gripping activities to a healthy minimum. ★



months.

## Wrist splinting

This involves a splint that holds your wrist still while you work and especially while you sleep, helping relieve symptoms of tingling and numbness.

## Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others), may help relieve pain from carpal tunnel syndrome in the short term. There isn't evidence, however, that these drugs improve carpal tunnel syndrome.

## Corticosteroids

Your doctor may inject your carpal tunnel with a *corticosteroid* such as

cut the ligament through one or two small incisions in the hand or wrist. Endoscopic surgery may result in less pain than does open surgery in the first few days or weeks after surgery.

**Open surgery.** The surgeon makes an incision in the palm of the hand over the carpal tunnel and cuts through the ligament to free the nerve.

## Alternative medicine

Integrate alternative therapies into your treatment plan to help you cope with carpal tunnel syndrome. You may have to experiment to find a treatment that works for you. Always check with your doctor before trying any complementary or alternative treatment.

**Yoga.** Yoga postures designed for strengthening, stretching and balancing



## Status Report

# Happening In Hospitals Today



**IT'S A WRAP: CARE+WEAR'S NEW HOSPITAL GOWN WORKS FOR PATIENTS**

## COMPANY MAKES ROBE-LIKE NEW HOSPITAL GOWN

**New York, NY** — Healthwear company Care+Wear is testing a prototype new hospital gown that provides the personal privacy and decency absent from the common “johnny” gown.

Unlike the industry-standard johnny, Care+Wear's new gown ties at the front like a robe. It even comes with a pocket for a cellphone.

The gown was created by Care+Wear in conjunction with fashion students at New York City's elite Parsons School of Design. It is currently being tested at MedStar Montgomery in Olney, Maryland.

Standard hospital gowns are designed primarily to be convenient to doctors and nurses, not patients. Care+Wear and Parsons students worked with caregivers, patients and clinicians to create a new gown that works for all.

## TODAY'S STUDENT DOCS BEFUDDLED BY HOSPITAL FAX MACHINES

**Englewood Cliffs, NJ** — According

to an amusing recent report by business news outlet CNBC, “Thousands of medical students across the country have never seen a fax machine, until the day they enter a hospital for the first time.”

The report explains that while fax machines and pagers have virtually disappeared everywhere else, hospitals are slower to digitize than most other industries.

As a result, today's crop of student doctors learn to use outdated technologies like pagers and fax machines for the first time while in medical training. About a dozen medical students told CNBC that they had never seen a fax machine before, let alone operated one.

Part of the reason fax machines continue to thrive in healthcare is tradition, as many older doctors simply feel comfortable with the technology and refuse to let it go, CNBC reports. The devices are also considered safe and secure under today's HIPAA privacy laws—which specifically state that fax machines are acceptable methods for transmitting medical records.



**THE BASIC FAX: TODAY'S MED STUDENT CAN HANDLE ANYTHING HANDHELD, BUT APPARENTLY NOT THIS**

## MORE HOSPITALS HIRING CHIEF WELLNESS OFFICERS (CWOS)

**Cleveland, OH** — A decade ago, The Cleveland Clinic was very progressive in hiring a new full-time “C-suite” employee: a chief wellness officer (CWO).

As the title implies, the CWO is to overall employee health what the CEO is to overall employee performance. But in recent months and years, a growing numbers of hospitals have been taking them on.

Hospitals with high-paid executives overseeing worker wellness can expect not only happier employees but also improved patient experiences and outcomes.

The CWOs are being brought in at a time

when physician burnout is at an all-time high. A recent *Medscape* survey reported nearly two-thirds of doctors burned out, depressed or both—with, 33 percent of respondents saying those feelings impacted their patient interactions.

Drivers of that burnout include long hours, increasing regulatory and recordkeeping requirements and administrative and computer tasks. A Sept. 2017 *Annals of Family Medicine* report found that primary care physicians spend over half their workday on electronic health records (EHRs).

Chief wellness officers at a number of hospitals have arranged for on-site employee gyms, healthy food and snacks (and elimination of unhealthy items), stress management programs, and otherwise changing their hospitals' workplace cultures and environments by rewarding employees for getting and staying well.

Besides staving off doctor burnout, CWO-driven programs also save hospitals considerable costs—and provide patients with healthier caregivers.

## CONGRESSIONAL PANELISTS: PATIENTS NOT HELPED BY HOSPITAL MEGAMERGERS

**Washington, D.C.** — According to industry experts testifying mid-February before a House panel, healthcare consolidation does not necessarily improve patient care or lower costs.

Several economic and health policy experts testified Feb. 14 at a hearing before the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. They said that most research suggests that healthcare mergers have limited benefits for patients.

In 2017, hospital mergers increased by 13 percent over 2016.

The value of healthcare deals announced in 2017 also skyrocketed, increasing by 145.8 percent compared to 2016. Much of that was bolstered by the mega-merger between CVS and Aetna. ★



**HEALTHCARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS: DRIVEN BY NEW CHIEF WELLNESS OFFICERS (CWOS), GYMS LIKE THIS ONE ARE AN INCREASINGLY COMMON ON-SITE EMPLOYEE BENEFIT AT HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CENTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**





# The Senior Care Gazette

News from  
the World of  
HamaspikCare  
and Senior  
Health

## Research On Cholesterol-Busters to Lower Alzheimer's

**Denver, CO** — Planned research at the Kerwin Research Center will look into the use of cholesterol-lowering therapies called *cyclodextrins* as possible treatments for Alzheimer's.

Cyclodextrins are non-toxic compounds made up of sugar molecules that can bind with and extract cholesterol. Preclinical-trial studies have shown that they can protect nerve cells, suggesting they can become a potential therapy for the disorder.

Scientists have long known that high cholesterol is a risk factor for Alzheimer's. They also know that cholesterol-lowering drugs can reduce its progression of the disease—possibly because cholesterol and membrane lipid proteins can control production of the harmful beta amyloid proteins associated with Alzheimer's. ★

## Human-Rights Org.: U.S. Nursing Homes Improperly Drugging Dementia Patients

**New York, NY** — Between October 2016 and March 2017, researchers with the international Human Rights Watch group visited 109 facilities across six U.S. states—interviewing 323 people including residents, family members, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and long-term care experts.

The resulting 157-page report, released Feb. 5, estimates that over 179,000 people living in U.S. nursing facilities are given antipsychotic medications each week, despite staff not having secured psychiatric diagnoses like schizophrenia to warrant usage of such drugs.

The report alleges that the medications are used as a cost-effective “chemical restraint” to suppress adverse behaviors in senior residents with dementia, and to ease the workload on overwhelmed staff. ★

## New York State Makes ‘Top Ten’ for Retirees

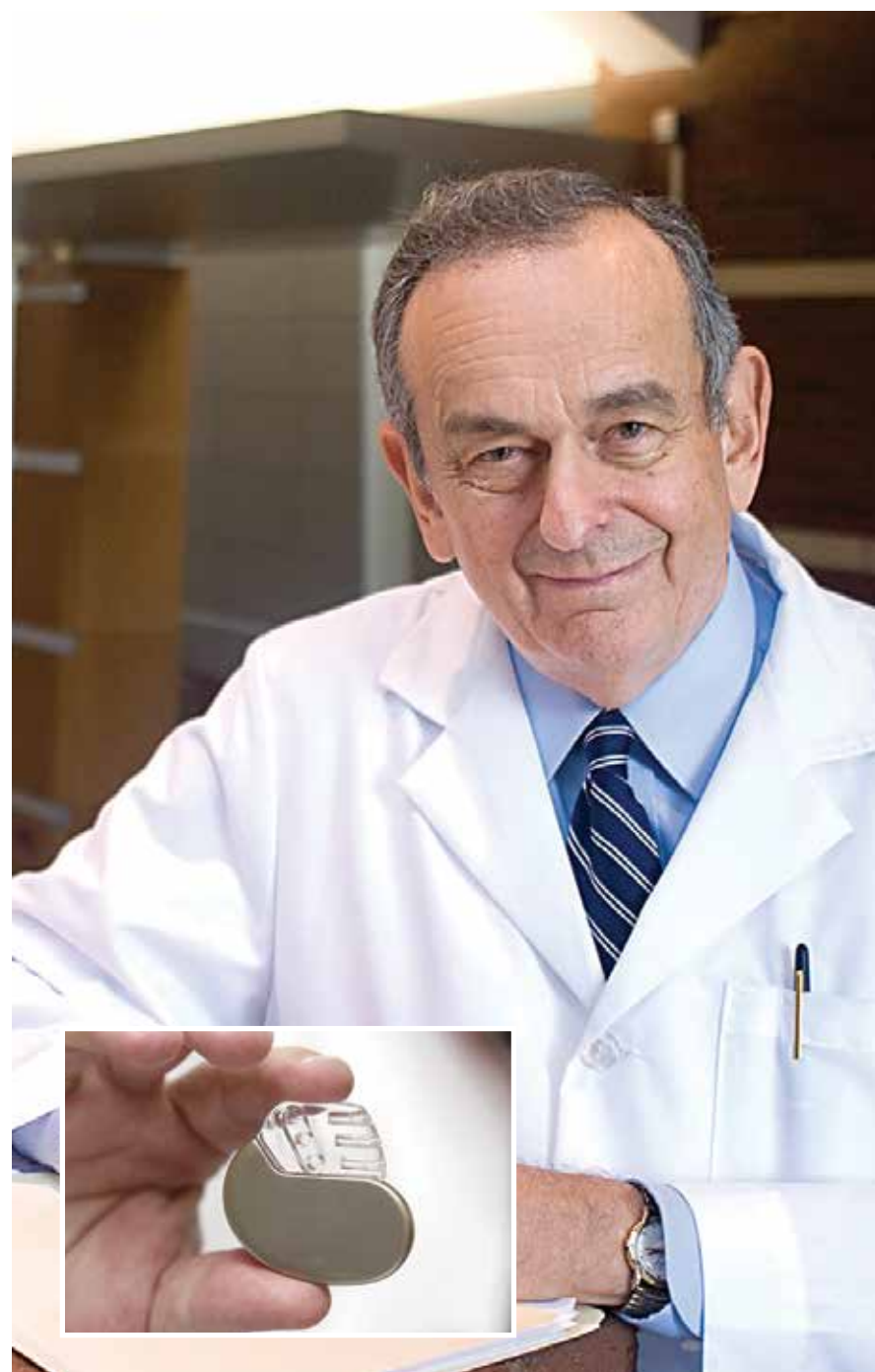
**New York, NY** — The influential AARP seniors lobby and the World Health Organization (WHO) dubbed New York the first U.S. “Age-Friendly” state this past December.

And this February, more good news for Empire State seniors came in a state-by-state report by personal finance website WalletHub, which ranked all 50 states for retirement, worst to best, in three broad categories: affordability, quality of life, and health care.

In the Quality of Life category, New York came in at an impressive #6, largely on account of its wealth of world-class medical, wellness, museums, theaters and other renowned venues filling Manhattan.

Not surprisingly, what with its highest per-capita percentage of seniors, Florida is the best U.S. state overall for retirees.

As for bottom of the list, Kentucky takes that dubious honor. ★



**A PIONEER WITH A HEART:** DR. MOSS INDIRECTLY SAVED THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS THANKS TO HIS ONCE-CONTROVERSIAL PUSH FOR PACEMAKER IMPLANTS (PICTURED)

## Research Reverses Alzheimer's In Mice

**Cleveland, OH** — Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic found that the deletion of just a single enzyme in lab mice saw the near-total reversal of the deposition of amyloid plaques found in brains of those with Alzheimer's, improving cognitive functions in the mouse subjects.

The study was published Feb. 14 in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*.

These promising research findings center around deleting a gene that produces an enzyme called BACE1, which helps make the beta amyloid proteins that accumulate abnormally in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

Studies have shown that stopping or reducing that enzyme's activity dramatically reduces production of beta amyloid proteins, which are toxic to the brain and lead to the symptoms of Alzheimer's.

However, researchers urge caution with the results as many Alzheimer's discoveries seem to hold true in mice, then fail in people. Still, five BACE1 inhibitors are being tested in human subjects currently. ★

## Arthur Moss, Eminent Cardiologist, 1932-2018

**Rochester, NY** — Cardiology pioneer Arthur Moss, M.D. of the University of Rochester Medical Center passed away Feb. 16 after 60-plus years of major contributions to medicine. He was 86.

Dr. Moss specialized in *cardiac electrophysiology*, or the relationship between the heart and natural electrical signals.

He had a leading hand in developing the now-common pacemaker implants, which the medical establishment opposed over 40 years ago but which ultimately came around to his view. ★





Make Your Child's Development  
**Easy as A-B-~~C~~ A!**

If your child is on the autism spectrum, **now's your time to learn how ABA boosts your child's developmental skills** appropriate behaviors, executive function, speech/language and more.

We'll walk you through from A to Z—making ABA for your child as easy as ABC

In New York State, every insured child on the spectrum is eligible for ABA.

**You believe your child deserves a bright future.**  
**We agree.**

By building your child's social and emotional skills and redirecting your child's behavior, our ABA program gets your child there.

**Call us now!**

We'll walk you through from A to Z making ABA for your child as easy as ABC.



HAMASPIK  
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES  
המספיק  
מרכז עזרה לצרכי העיבור

Your Hamaspik ABA Contact:

**Reiny Steif**

845.503.0239

rsteif@hamaspikrockland.org