



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

JUNE '18 • ISSUE NO. 159



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

**FOR SECOND-STORY VISITS, DO YOU TAKE THE STAIRS OR THE ELEVATOR?
A: STAIRS; B: ELEVATOR**

Respond to: survey@hamaspik.org



HEALTH STAT

OBESITY PREVALENCE IN U.S. YOUTH AGES 2-19

16.8%
2007-2008

18.5%
2015-2016

Source: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES),
2007-2008 and 2015-2016



HEALTH TIP

See the light: More natural sunlight, less artificial light—great for the natural circadian (or, sleep-wake) rhythm and the eyes too!

INSIDE

HEALTH

02 Experimental substance could treat cavities without fillings

04 IBM lab designs molecule to kill drug-resistant superbugs

PUBLIC HEALTH & POLICY

10 With bugs and hygiene, public restroom air dryers blow it

10 House defeats 'Right to Try' experimental drug legislation

HAMASPIK

07 Parental appreciation served up at annual Respite Shabbaton

07 For kids with multiple diagnoses, Hamaspik still driving ahead

HOSPITALS

11 Urgent care claims skyrocket; ER claims pale in contrast

AUTISM

08 Advocates push again for FDA ban on corrective shock device

08 Kids with autism may inherit DNA mutations from dads

HAMASPIK NEWS

ON THE FRONT LINES OF INTEGRATION

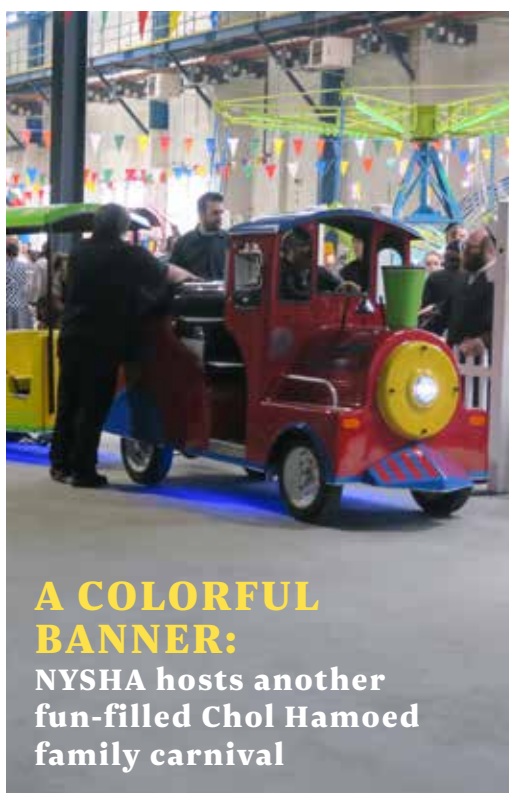
NEW YORK STATE CITY COUNCILMEMBER KALMAN YEGER, ACCOMPANIED BY NYSHA PRESIDENT AND HAMASPIK FOUNDER MEYER WERTHEIMER AND STAFF, MAKES HIS FIRST VISIT TO HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL REPRESENTING HAMASPIK'S BOROUGH PARK DISTRICT.



SINCE WINNING ELECTION FOR THE CITY COUNCIL'S 44TH DISTRICT, WHICH ENCOMPASSES SEVERAL PARTS OF BROOKLYN EXTENSIVELY SERVICED BY HAMASPIK, COUNCILMEMBER YEGER HAS MADE SPECIAL-NEEDS SERVICES A PRIORITY.

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HAMASPIK NEWS



A COLORFUL BANNER:
NYSHA hosts another fun-filled Cholim Hamood family carnival

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HEALTH NEWS

High-tech Helmet Tracks Brain Activity While Body Moves

SEE PAGE E11 >>

DISABILITY NEWS

Built by Boy with Autism, World's Biggest Lego Titanic Sailing to Pigeon Forge, Tenn.



SEE PAGE E8 >>

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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 Hamaspiik 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 Hamaspiik news

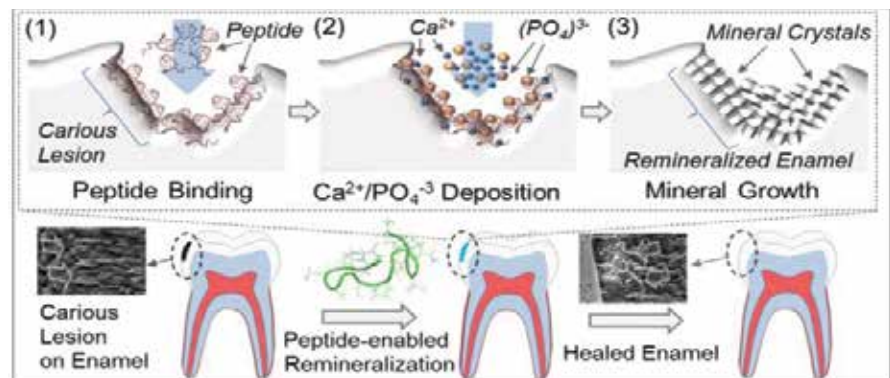
OMH

HEALTH AND RECOVERY PLAN (HARP)

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

HEALTH NEWS

Experimental New Substance Could Treat Cavities Without Fillings



TAKING A BITE OUT OF DENTISTRY? AN EXPERIMENTAL SUBSTANCE MAY FILL CAVITIES

Seattle, WA — A dental research team at the University of Washington has developed a new substance to treat dental cavities without making a costly and unpleasant trip to the dentist.

They started with a protein called *amelogenin*, which is vital for forming the hard enamel on teeth. Using that, they created a kind of substance called a peptide. They then tested the new peptide-based substance on artificial dental cavities created in the laboratory.

The researchers found that each application generated between ten to

50 micrometres of new enamel, the hard natural substance of which healthy teeth are made (and in which the holes called cavities develop upon repeated consumption of certain foods combined with lack of tooth-brushing).

That process of renewed enamel is called *remineralization*. The researchers hope that the formulation could one day be sold in over-the-counter toothpaste or other such dental products to prevent and treat tooth decay, or put into clinical products used by dentists. ★

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●► NYSHA NEWS

With Statewide Public Forums in April, OPWDD Introduces Community to Impending Switch-over to Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs)

NYSHA's Tri-County Care CCO Positioned to Seamlessly Transition Hamaspik's MSCs



"The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is making an important improvement to the way services are coordinated," began a March 14 public memo from the OPWDD.

"The Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) program which is currently used to coordinate services will be replaced by a new and improved program called Health Home Care Management beginning July 1, 2018," it went on.

"Health Home Care Management will continue to provide the service coordination that people currently receive, and will also provide coordination of other services, such as

health care and mental health supports. Health Home Care Management Services will be provided by Care Coordination Organizations," or CCOs.

And to provide the disability public with information and answers about the impending transition, the OPWDD hosted public forums in nine regions across the Empire State.

From Batavia in Western New York to Binghamton in the Southern Tier, and from Tupper Lake in the North Country to Hauppauge on Long Island, and everywhere between, the forums provided, well, a forum for individuals, parents, and professional Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs) themselves to step forward, air their concerns and be heard.

The first of the nine events was held April 2nd at Tupper Lake High School in Tupper Lake. The last, one of three servicing the New York City area, was held April 24th at the Bronx Developmental

Disabilities Services Office (which, coincidentally, is in the Bronx).

With its being home to numerous individuals with disabilities, and the families and non-profits like Hamaspik that support them, the greater Hudson Valley was provided with a public forum of its own.

That one, which was attended by members of the greater Hamaspik community, was held April 12 at the Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Regional Office (DDRO) in Thiells.

"These forums are intended to educate the people we support about the transition," the OPWDD memo explained.

In plain English, that transition means that the Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) that each person with a disability gets from the agency servicing him or her will now no longer be working directly for that original agency.

The OPWDD is shifting every MSC to

what's being called "Conflict-Free Care Management" (CFCM) organizations. As employees of these newly-created organizations, the MSCs will be empowered to provide independent and conflict-free advocacy and support for each individual served—giving them the supports and services that best suit them, regardless of which non-profit provides those supports and services.

They will also be empowered to provide more services to individuals than are currently available; under the "new and improved program," individuals will also get certain healthcare supports from their coordinators. Finally, the MSCs are to be renamed Care Managers.

Come this July, every MSC will have been moved to one of seven new CCOs, of which Tri-County Care is one. Tri-County Care operates under the auspices of the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA), Hamaspik's umbrella support group. ★

●► HEALTH NEWS

Amazon Won't Sell Drugs Directly to Hospitals: Reports

Seattle, WA — For the past few months, it looked like the industry-changer was gearing up to bring massive and disruptive change to yet another industry.

But business behemoth Amazon.com, which defined itself (and, arguably, the Internet) by constantly redefining itself, will apparently not be distributing pharmaceuticals to hospitals now.

Reports emerged on April 16 that Amazon—which launched online over 20 years ago selling books—had dropped its plans to break into the entrenched pharmaceuticals-distribution business.

The news boosted stocks of existing major drug distributors, including CVS Health, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Cardinal Health and McKesson Corporation.

According to business analysts, Amazon's decision may have been due to the difficulty of transporting temperature-sensitive drug products; the company's infrastructure does not yet have a temperature-controlled supply chain

in place.

Other factors are the mutually satisfactory business relationships in place for decades between large hospitals and existing drug distributors—which typically deliver several shipments per week—as well as high levels of federal and state regulation.

However, reports said that the company's Amazon Business wing is apparently still selling less-sensitive medical supplies to hospitals. ★

NOT OUR BUSINESS: AMAZON FULFILLMENT CENTERS, LIKE THIS ONE PICTURED HERE, WON'T BE SELLING DRUGS FOR THE TIME BEING



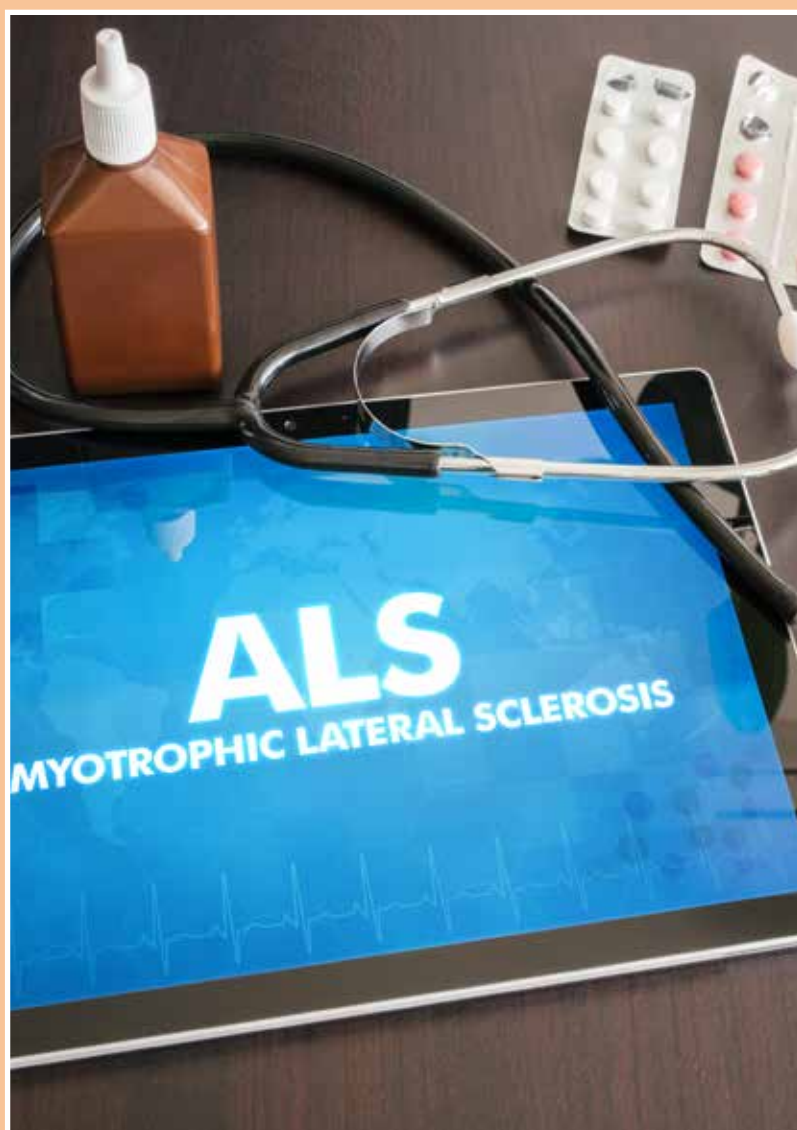
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Happening in Health Today



AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS), ALSO KNOWN AS LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE, CAUSES THE PROGRESSIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE BODY'S MOTOR NEURONS. THESE ARE THE NERVE CELLS FOR THE MUSCLES THAT CONTROL VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT.

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF ALS USUALLY INCLUDE MUSCLE WEAKNESS OR STIFFNESS. AS THE DISEASE PROGRESSES WITH MORE MOTOR NEURONS DETERIORATING AND DYING, ALL MUSCLES UNDER VOLUNTARY CONTROL ARE AFFECTED. PATIENTS PROGRESSIVELY LOSE THEIR STRENGTH AND THE ABILITY TO SPEAK, EAT, MOVE, AND EVEN BREATHE.

RESEARCH INTO CAUSE AND TREATMENT OF ALS REMAINS A HIGH RESEARCH PRIORITY FOR GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIA AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE WHIMSICAL "ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE," IN WHICH PEOPLE TOOK VIDEOS OF THEMSELVES POURING BUCKETS OF ICE OVER THEIR HEAD (AND THEN RECORDING A VIDEO CHALLENGE TO ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL TO DO THE SAME), WAS A WILDLY POPULAR AWARENESS AND RESEARCH-FUNDRAISING PROGRAM OVER THE SUMMER OF 2014.

THE DISEASE REMAINS VERY RARE, STRIKING LESS THAN 20,000 PEOPLE A YEAR IN THE U.S. WHILE MEDICATION AND THERAPY CAN SLOW ALS AND REDUCE DISCOMFORT, THERE UNFORTUNATELY IS NO CURE. ★

NEW GENETIC MUTATION LINK TO ALS FOUND

Worcester, MA — An international team of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) researchers has now proven that mutations in the neuronal transport gene KIF5A are associated with ALS. This gene was previously linked to two other rare neurodegenerative disorders.

The discovery, published recently in *Neuron*, identify how mutations in KIF5A disrupt transport of key proteins up and down the long, threadlike axons that connect nerve cells between the brain and the spine, eventually leading to the neuromuscular symptoms of ALS.

In related news, Illinois-based biotech startup AveXis announced in early April that it's slated to be bought by pharmaceutical giant Novartis for \$8.7 billion. AveXis presides over five clinical trials for its promising AVXS-101 gene therapy for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). It's also developing a potentially similar therapy for a genetic form of ALS.

NEW BODY PART DISCOVERED BY NEW YORK RESEARCHERS

New York/Hempstead, NY — In a study published late March in *Scientific Reports*, NYU Langone Health pathology professor Dr. Neil Theise and Hofstra University assistant professor Dr. Petros Benias describe their discovery of what they consider a new organ: the *interstitium*.

According to their research, the interstitium is a layer of tissue found just below the top layer of the skin, and also in also in tissue layers lining the gut, lungs, and urinary systems, and in those surrounding blood vessels and the fascia between muscles.

Examined closely under newly-developed microscope technology, the interstitium turns out to be made of a body-wide network of interconnected, fluid-filled compartments supported by a meshwork of strong, flexible proteins.

The interstitium was unknown until the discovery because its fluid-filled compartments dehydrate quickly when tissue samples are removed from the body, making it unnoticeable.

The researchers say that the newfound interstitium may shed new light on how

certain diseases spread throughout the body.

GOV'T RESEARCHERS CRACK MYSTERY BEHIND RARE BONE DISORDER

Bethesda, MD — Researchers with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) worked with 15 unrelated patients from around the world to uncover a genetic basis for the very rare disorder known as *melorheostosis*. Researchers found that that eight of the 15 participants had mutations in the MAP2K1 gene.

Also known as "dripping candle wax" bone disease, melorheostosis causes excess bone formation that resembles dripping candle wax on x-rays. There are only about 400 known cases of the disorder worldwide.

The results, appearing in *Nature Communications*, offer potential treatment targets for the rare disease, provide important clues about bone development, and may lead to insights about fracture healing and osteoporosis.

IBM LAB DESIGNS MOLECULE TO KILL DRUG-RESISTANT SUPERBUGS

San Jose, CA — Scientist James Hedrick of IBM's Almaden Research Laboratory has designed a new molecule called a polymer that targets five deadly types of drug-resistant microbes. The lab's work, in conjunction with Singapore's Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, was reported recently in *Nature Communications*.

If commercialized, the new polymer could possibly boost the fight against "superbugs" that are virtually resistant to every known antibiotic. An estimated 700,000 people worldwide die every year from these untreatable infections.

The research is part of IBM's ongoing effort to develop synthetic polymers for medical uses, based on a technology discovered in 2012 when exploring new ways to etch silicon wafers used in semiconductor chips. In 2016, that team showed they could be used to combat deadly viral diseases. ★

● ► **HAMASPIK NEWS**

Kalman Yeger Pays First Visit to Hamaspik as Newly-minted NYC Councilmember

Tours New Borough Park Office Complex; Meets Leadership, Staff, Individuals

On Tuesday, March 3, recently-elected New York City Councilmember Kalman Yeger (D-44th District) paid his first official visit to Hamaspik.

The energetic public servant's "get-to-know-you" tour gave him first-hand familiarity with yet another one of the numerous non-profits dotting his Brooklyn district—in this case, the leadership, staff and supported people with special needs of Hamaspik of Kings County.

Mr. Yeger, who swept into office on a platform of robust community advocacy, is a career public servant and former top aide to his predecessor, former City Councilmember David Greenfield.

Both staunchly support a host of proactive community institutions, including Hamaspik.

The early-March occasion actually marked his second visit to Hamaspik; his first, as a victorious Councilmember-elect, took place at the dedication of the new building on November 27, 2017.

The Council Member first enjoyed a sit-down brunch with Hamaspik's top brass. He joined Hamaspik of Kings County Executive Director Hershel Wertheimer and team in the spacious 4th-floor conference room of Hamaspik's newly-expanded Borough Park headquarters complex.

Agency executives present were Hamaspik founder and NYSHA (New York State Hamaspik Association) Executive Director Meyer Wertheimer, Hamaspik Choice Executive Director Yoel Bernath, Hamaspik of Rockland County Executive Director Joel Freund, Hamaspik of Orange County Executive Director Moses Wertheimer, Tri-County Care Executive Director David Mizrahi, HamaspikCare Executive Director Asher Katz, HamaspikCare Downstate Regional Director Mordechai Wolhendler and Hamaspik of Kings County Director of Business Development Naftali Tessler.

Hamaspik of Kings County program heads at the table were Residential Services Director Chezkel (Joel) Fisher, Day Services Director Yehuda Spangelet, Entitlements and Benefits Coordinator Moshe Schechter, Community Services Director Shaya Ross, Bookkeeper Israel Greenzweig, MSC Naftali Weiser, and Maintenance Manager Yaakov Kellner.

Mr. Yeger used the informal setting to express support for Hamaspik's ongoing mission, pledging a much-applauded commitment to fight for continued funding and to ensure that Hamaspik's



WITH HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HERSHEL WERTHEIMER AND TOP BRASS IN THE MAIN OFFICES



GREETING HAMASPIK CHOICE HEAD YOEL BERNATH (R)...



...AND A HAPPILY SUPPORTED INDIVIDUAL AT DAY HAB

vital community services are reinforced and expanded.

The freshman City Councilmember was then led on a tour of the facilities by Hamaspik Director of Public Affairs Aron Wieder. Also accompanied by Executive Director Wertheimer, Mr. Yeger personally met and greeted the Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs) who form the heart and soul of the agency, along with the Directors and Managers of each of the complex's several departments and offices.

Literally getting in on the ground floor, Mr. Yeger was cordially introduced to the men and women of Hamaspik's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program. There, the individuals were only too happy to say hello to their elected representative at City Hall, share a few words and proudly familiarize him with the activities in which they were healthily occupied at the moment.

Throughout the walking tour of the



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: AT THE END OF THE DAY, WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

building at the corner of Borough Park's central 41st St. and 14th Ave., Council Member Yeger found himself amicably chatting with Hamaspik staff members, engaging in back-and-forth questions and coming away with enhanced familiarity with Hamaspik's dedicated employees

and the front-line work that they do.

All came away with a renewed sense of partnership—a feeling of friendship and mutual respect, and reinvigorated commitment to help people with intellectual disabilities and others in need.



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



PARTY LINE



ATTENTION! AN INDIVIDUAL POINTS TO MSC LEVY'S NAME AS THE STAFFER SPEAKS

PUTTING IT ON THE TABLE



READY FOR ANOTHER DAY: THE WILLIAMSBURG ASR PROGRAM FACILITY

An Environment of Sustainability

Hydroelectric. Solar. Wind.

Those are just some of the alternative sources of cheap, clean and green energy that is fueling the ongoing rise of environmentally-friendly common hardware items, like commercial lighting fixtures.

Against that background, with the fall of traditional light bulbs has come the rise of compact fluorescent and high-tech LEDs for light sources both indoor and out.

And in keeping with the times, Hamaspik of Orange County contributed

its part to reducing New York State reliance on fossil fuels—by recently switching the exterior lighting on all its residential and administrative facilities in upstate Kiryas Joel to LEDs.

The cutting-edge items use far less electricity, generate significantly more light, and give off far less pollution than their old-school counterparts.

When it comes to integration, Hamaspik's always provided a healthy environment. Now, it's doing its part toward providing a healthy environment for the environment, too. ★

With Party, Day Hab Celebrates Beloved Staff Member's Personal Miracle

One fine morning this past March, the young men who benefit daily from Hamaspik of Rockland County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) Program hailed another milestone.

Festive events are commonplace occurrences at Day Hab. For starters, devoted Manager Pinchos Knopfler regularly sees to it that each gentleman's birthday is embraced and treated with the respect that it deserves.

A weekly pre-Shabbos party is likewise held each Friday, getting the gentlemen in tune with the wider community to which they belong and putting them in sync with their faith tradition.

But on this past Friday, March 9, it wasn't another birthday party or other lifecycle event—a close relative's wedding or Bar

Mitzvah, for example—that Mr. Knopfler and crew had “his boys” celebrating.

Rather, it was a personal and far-from-minor miracle experienced by one of the Day Hab's long-time Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), Mr. Yechezkel (Chezky) Levy.

Mr. Levy, en route to a wedding one night not too long before that (he's a professional singer), lost control of his car while exiting the highway. While it took a tree to bring his automobile to a halt, the vehicle's damage was minimal enough to allow him to shortly proceed, shaken but grateful to be alive.

And, of course, in due time, Mr. Levy found himself sharing that gratitude with a group of young men who were only too happy to reciprocate. ★

Hamaspik of Kings County After-School Respite (ASR) Program Flourishing

It's only been a few months since it's opened its doors. But in the interim, like so many of its fellow Hamaspik programs supporting the community, it's become a veritable pillar of the community.

The parents who benefit from it certainly think so.

Hamaspik of Kings County's After-School Respite (ASR) Program, like the successful identical programs run for years now by Hamaspik in upstate Monsey and Kiryas Joel, sees schoolchildren with intellectual disabilities visit each school-day afternoon for several hours of therapeutic stimulation and education—all cleverly disguised as fun and games.

It's all designed to maximize much-needed break time for their fathers and mothers, whom will be the first to tell

you of the joyful rigors of special-needs parenting (and the need for breathing space it often generates).

Thanks to the OPWDD's ASR program, though, parents of special-needs school children are afforded that daily break—through participating non-profits like Hamaspik.

Under the outstanding leadership of Director Ms. Weiss, a professional special-needs educator, the children visit each day for rounds of reading, writing, and exercise physical and mental—all dressed up as exciting and colorful camp-like activities.

Beginning with a handful of children at the get-go, the program's colorful classrooms are now filled with excited kids each day. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Parental Appreciation Served Up at Hamaspik's Respite Weekend

"My daughter... just spent Shabbos at the hotel with the rest of the children and the wonderful staff, and she had such a wonderful time!"

So reported an elated mother in a March 20 voice mail left with NYSHA Executive Director and Hamaspik founder Meyer Wertheimer.

It referred to the 6th annual Shabbaton children's weekend getaway event for young folk with disabilities who regularly benefit from Hamaspik's Respite programs. The most recent event was hosted by Hamaspik at the Crowne Plaza Hotel this past March 16-18.

"She came home all smiles," Mom continued. "She danced and she ate, she played, she participated beautifully! It was the first time that she really *fully* participated. And the staff? Everybody

gave her such a wonderful time."

The grateful parent singled out Hamaspik Special Events Coordinator Mrs. Brenda Katina for special praise, underscoring the "excellent" program that she ran across the weekend. She also blessed Mr. Wertheimer with strength to "keep up your *avodas hakodesh*" (holy work).

It's one thing to extend Respite's weekday program into a weekend of skills-building training—during which participants practiced table manners, making beds and such.

It's another when that same event grants parents a much-needed break from special parenting (especially before Passover as it did)—and all the more so when their children come home "new and improved," too. ★

For Kids with Multiple Diagnoses, Hamaspik Still Driving Ahead

Transportation, Coordination Services Heaven-sent for Parents

If its individual success stories are any indication, Hamaspik of Rockland County is quite the successful non-profit—at least if you ask the parents of children with multiple medical conditions who've directly benefited.

For children with at least two qualifying chronic medical conditions (or one mental-health condition), life is hardly a walk in the park.

That's why Medicaid provides Health Home Servicing Children (HHSC) services through non-profit Care Management Agencies (CMAs) like Hamaspik of Rockland County.

Led by at-Home Services Director Moshe Laufer, Hamaspik's HHSC services quite literally drive home the caring—and the cared-for home. It does so by invoking

Medicaid's transportation benefit, coordinating third-party transportation services to whisk young patients to and from all caregiver appointments—thus eliminating one critical logistical hurdle for parents.

But the specialized *Care Managers* cover far more.

For example, Care Manager Hamaspik Jody Brauner has real-time access to each patient's data—giving her the electronic health records (EHRs) she needs in the course of a day's work to coordinate total care for each individual. That includes networking with parents and providers, filling out often-extensive paperwork, and otherwise securing the best medical care.

For a CMA provider, that's the job description. At Hamaspik, it's the drive. ★

Membership Has Its (Card-carrying) Benefits Seasonal Employee Satisfaction a Perennial Passion at Hamaspik

From standard employee benefits including healthcare and vacation to holiday bonuses and appreciation event, Hamaspik has always striven to thank its hardworking employees.

Most recently, Hamaspik of Orange County yet again went the extra mile for its entire team, teaming up with local retailers to provide employees with a year-round

discount card.

The initiative, which will amount to substantial savings across 12 months of staples shopping, joins similar initiatives already long in place for Hamaspik employees in Kings and Rockland Counties.

When Hamaspik says it supports people, it means everyone—including the people who support people. ★

HAMASPIK IN THE HOUSE



A GROWING WELCOME: A FINE-MOTOR SKILLS GAME; A HELLO TO HAMASPIK

IT'S ALL IN THE CARDS



THERAPY TABLE: TWO HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY "DAY HABBERS" STROKE MINDS

TRAINING, MANUAL



HANDS-ON: TWO YOUNG MEN WORKING THEIR FOOD AND SHOPPING SKILLS

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

KIDS WITH AUTISM MAY INHERIT DNA MUTATIONS FROM DADS

San Diego, CA — A new study probing so-called *noncoding DNA* has found that alterations in regions that regulate gene activity may also contribute to autism.

What's more, these variations tended to be inherited from fathers who do not have autism. The researchers found that over 50 percent of alterations in noncoding genes came from the fathers of children with autism.

IN AUTISM, BRAIN'S EMOTION HUB BEGINS WITH TOO MANY CELLS: STUDY

Davis, CA — According to a study newly published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, extra neuronal connections may sprout from the amygdala in young children with autism, possibly helping to explain such children's difficulty in emotional self-regulation. The amygdala is a brain region that governs fear and other emotions.

The data dovetails with existing research indicating that an enlarged amygdala in children with autism gradually assumes a typical size as they get older. Researchers have also seen a similar trend for overall head size in autism.

TOP AUTISM GENE MAY ALTER SENSORY PERCEPTION

Seattle, WA — An unusual brain response to sound may distinguish children with mutations in SCN2A,

a leading candidate gene for autism, according to a new University of Washington study in the journal *Brain Cognition*.

The researchers characterized the effects of SCN2A mutations in ten children. Most of the children were too severely impaired for cognitive tests, so the researchers turned to *electroencephalography* (EEG), a brain imaging technique that can pick up on responses to sound. The researchers outfitted the children with a flexible cap covered in tiny electrodes and played a series of tones. Their brains automatically detected the tones.

The researchers plotted the EEG readings across the group to look for boosts in activity in response to the altered tones. They focused on seven children with a type of SCN2A mutation linked to autism, and compared them with their unaffected parents. Like their parents, the children noted a change in pitch, but their response came early, suggesting they are hypersensitive to sounds—a common symptom of autism.

ADVOCATES PUSH AGAIN FOR FDA CORRECTIVE SHOCK DEVICE BAN

Washington, D.C. — This March, members of disability rights group ADAPT demonstrated for 12 consecutive days outside FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb's condo. And this past April 13, ADAPT and two other disability groups

held the first of two planned call-in days.

Their concern? The highly limited but ongoing usage of corrective shock devices by the Judge Rotenberg Center in Canton, Massachusetts.

The handful of devices are worn by youths at the Center with extremely challenging behavioral disabilities. They deliver non-harmful electric shocks to wearers in the event of adverse behaviors that are injurious to themselves and/or others—and then, only for a few seconds at most and only after repeated verbal warnings by staff.

The Center has built a decades-long following for treating the most extreme cases that failed treatment everywhere else. It will only put the devices on students in the first place after its in-house expert panel extensively reviews of the individual's profile and history.

As such, few Center students are ever fitted with them in the first place.

Rotenberg Center staff and supporters have for years claimed humane and successful usage of the devices, arguing that they work where all else fails. Critics call them torture tools.

In 2014 and 2016, the FDA issued proposals banning the devices; advocates are now renewing their call for the federal agency to finalize and enforce those proposals.

ZAPPUS, PBS KIDS LAUNCHING LINE OF ADAPTIVE APPAREL

Arlington, VA — The popular

children's program PBS KIDS is developing a line of clothing aimed at meeting the unique sensory and adaptive needs of kids with disabilities.

The non-profit company will be working with online apparel retailer Zappos to introduce the new line to the retail market, *Disability Scoop* recently reported.

Apparel in the line will include t-shirts and lounge pants showcasing dinosaurs, rainforests, oceans and air travel, all designed to be sensory friendly with no buttons, dissolvable tags and soft fabric.

The pieces are gender-neutral and reversible in order to allow for greater independence in dressing, according to Zappos and PBS Kids. Prices will range from \$26 to \$32 and the clothing will be available in sizes 18m to 6x.

APRIL: NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Bethesda, MD — National Autism Awareness Month, the annual advocacy effort created by the Autism Society, was marked for the 25th consecutive year this April.

The month-long effort, which kicked off with the April-2nd World Autism Awareness Day, is meant to "to promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life," according to the U.S. group. ★

► AUTISM NEWS

Built by Boy with Autism, World's Biggest Lego Titanic Sailing to U.S.

Replica from Reykjavik, Iceland Took 700 Hours, 56,000 Bricks to Create

It's five feet tall. Twenty-six feet long. It's the world's largest replica of the fateful Titanic ocean liner of its kind. It's made entirely of Lego blocks. And it was conceived and created by 15-year-old Brynjar Karl Biggisson, a Reykjavik, Iceland native who has autism.

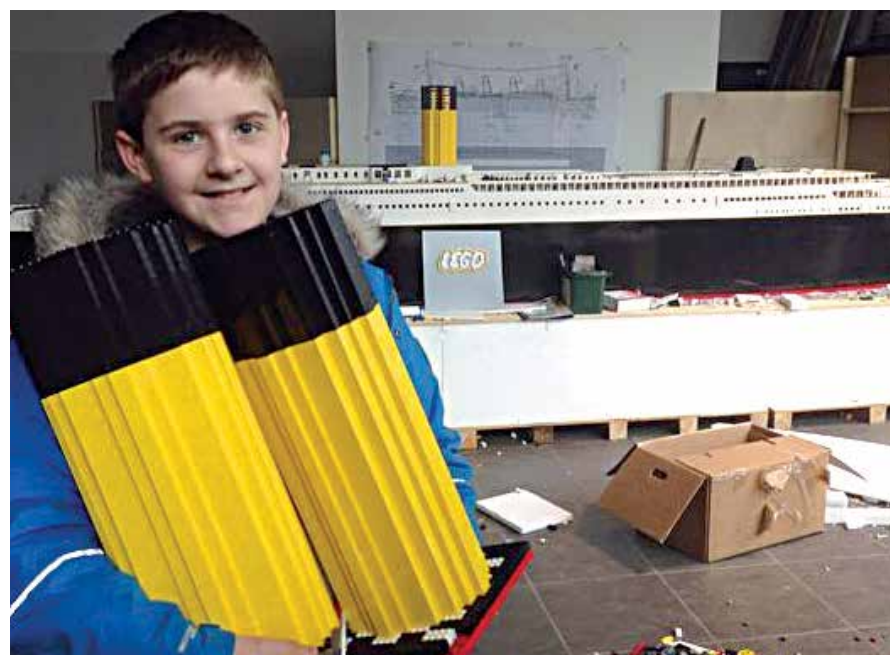
Young Mr. Biggisson thought of the Titanic project back when he was merely 11. With the loving assistance and support of his mother and grandparents, he constructed a painstakingly realistic scale model of the legendary sunken ship brick by Lego brick.

This April 16, the Lego Titanic

sailed into U.S. waters, docking for its American debut at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Brynjar Biggisson remembers playing with Legos for hours when he was five, he recently told CNN—and that he knew everything there was to know about the Titanic by the time he was ten.

Most significantly, Brynjar Biggisson says he was able to embrace his autism through building the Titanic replica. Before the project, he had difficulty communicating. Now, he reports, he has confidence and is giving interviews about his accomplishment. ★



A TITANIC ACHIEVEMENT: BRYNJAR BIGGISON WITH PARTS OF HIS LEGO SHIP

► HAMASPIK NEWS

Under NYSHA Banner, Community Thrills to Another Hamaspik Passover Carnival

Exciting Rides, Shows, Music, Magic and More at Exhilarating Annual Family Outing



SCALING THE HEIGHTS OF FUN

It may have been windy and on the cold side outside. But inside the sprawling New York Expo Center in the Bronx, that holiday spirit of excitement and warmth could be felt in the air.

It was Hamaspik's grand annual Passover family event. And for the hundreds of individuals with disabilities converging on the colorful event—and the collective thousands of loving family members and supportive professionals accompanying them—it was six consecutive hours of fun.

The yearly event was hosted under the auspices of NYSHA (the New York State Hamaspik Association), Hamaspik's umbrella organization that was most recently tapped by Albany officials to operate Tri-County Care. That so-called *Care Coordination Organization* (CCO), the newest member of the NYSHA family of agencies, will independently assume all Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) duties currently offered by Hamaspik's excellent MSCs in Kings, Orange and Rockland Counties.

The event kicked off at 10:00 a.m., as the first of dozens of charter buses brimming with boys and girls of all ages pulled up to the Expo Center in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx.



PUTTING A HOLIDAY SPIN ON A CLASSIC CARNIVAL RIDE

Under the watchful eye and smiling countenance of Special Events Coordinator Mrs. Brenda Katina and her staff, children, parents and family members streamed past the front-door greeting table to encounter a vast cavern chock-full of life and color.

Mechanical carnival rides and inflatable attractions of all sizes and shapes awaited the enthralled guests, from the towering Giant Slide (no explanation required!) to a rock-climbing tower.

A carnival train, miniature Ferris wheel, "pirate ship" swing and even bumper cars—which proved wildly popular—filled the room, along with electronic games, air hockey and ping-pong tables.

Keeping spirits up were a club-juggling clown and a roving magician, both plying their trades to the amusement and amazement of the crowds that congealed around them as they worked the room—which was filled with upbeat Jewish music provided by a live DJ.

And as if that weren't enough, children's performers Dr. Schnitzel and "Uncle Moishy" took the stage in a sizable side room, with two performances by each throughout the day thrilling the crowds.

All that excitement would make you hungry, wouldn't it? Good thing Hamaspik provided ample healthy snacks, then—with a concession area serving cheese snacks, fresh fruits and Passover pastries from several corner tables. That concession area was a constant beehive of families breaking for refreshment and rest.

Everywhere you looked, people of all ages and stages were all freely interacting, delighting to the unifying force of healthy recreation—with disability hardly an afterthought (if at all).

And above it all, three crowd-wel-

coming banners from Hamaspik and Tri-County Care looked down from a balcony—perhaps symbolizing the comprehensive umbrella of support and cov-



AN INDIVIDUAL WITH "UNCLE MOISHY"

erage that NYSHA member agencies lend the community, and portending the air of positive change sure to shortly come with Tri-County Care. ★

CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

HAMASPIK EI PROGRAM

CAN HELP!

Our Services:

Birth- 3 Yrs

- **Evaluations**
- Ongoing Service Coordination
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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

WITH BUGS AND HYGIENE, PUBLIC RESTROOM AIR DRYERS BLOW IT

Hamden, CT — The next time you use that public facility at an airport or medical office and feel like helping the environment, skip that hot-air hand dryer and reach for the paper towel.

That's because yet another study, this one by Quinnipiac University, finds that restroom air dryers—invented long ago to reduce paper usage as well as germ proliferation—actually spread a lot of germs, especially onto your hands after you've washed them.

In the study, published recently in *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, researchers compared different bacteria culture plates that had been exposed to dryer-blown air or general restroom air.

The plates exposed to hot air from hand dryers grew an average of 18 to 60 colonies of bacteria, while those exposed to general restroom air grew an average of one or less.

At least four other studies since 2014 have come to the same conclusion: restroom hand dryers spread more germs than paper towels.



NOT GIVING HYGIENE A HAND: A STUDY SAYS THAT THESE BLOW LOTS OF GERMS

experimental therapies without receiving permission from the FDA. The legislation failed on a vote of 259 to 140.

The FDA's existing expanded-access program, which gets over 1,000 requests a year for experimental drugs, already approves 99 percent of such appeals.

The Senate passed a similar measure last summer that was pushed by Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.). Thirty-eight states have passed right-to-try laws, and a federal law would block the government from preventing patients from taking advantage of them.

The vote came after a spirited debate in which supportive lawmakers portrayed the measure, which had been strongly backed by the White House, as a last chance at survival for desperately ill patients. Congressional opponents, along with over 75 patient groups, said the bill would weaken critical FDA protections without addressing the fundamental obstacles to experimental drugs.

HOUSE DEFEATS 'RIGHT-TO-TRY' EXPERIMENTAL DRUG LEGISLATION

Washington, D.C. — On March 13, the House defeated a "right to try" bill that would allow seriously ill patients to get



WHERE THERE'S NO SMOKE, THERE'S STILL FIRE: IN A LAWSUIT AGAINST THE FDA, SEVERAL GROUPS ARE DECRYING THE PUBLIC-HEALTH THREAT POSED BY E-CIGS

UPPED SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENT PROTECTIONS NOW LAW

Washington, D.C. — After unanimous approval by Congress, the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018 was ratified by President Trump on April 13.

Under the new law, individuals tasked with handling Social Security payments for people with disabilities—representative payees ("rep payees")—will be subject to greater scrutiny. The law specifically bars people with certain types of criminal convictions from being rep payees.

The measure also eliminates the requirement that parents or spouses living with a person with a disability complete an annual accounting form for representative payees. It blocks people who have representative payees themselves from serving in that capacity for others. And it also allows Social Security recipients to make a list of their preferred payees in order of preference.

According to the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General, some 6.2 million individuals or organizations act as representative payees on behalf of about 8 million beneficiaries. Such representatives are assigned if the agency determines that a person's mental or physical condition prevents them from being able to manage their benefits.

American Medical Association (JAMA) finds that the U.S. spends nearly twice as much as ten high-income countries on medical care and performed less well on many population health outcomes.

According to the research, the median per capita spending in the U.S. was \$9,403. Sweden was second-highest at \$6,808. The United Kingdom was the lowest, at \$3,377.

But researchers also found that the notions that the U.S. spends money on too many doctor visits, hospitalizations, procedures and specialists, and spends too little on social services that could mitigate healthcare needs—may be wrong. Instead, they found that prices of labor and goods, including pharmaceuticals and devices, and administrative costs appear to be the main drivers of the differences in spending.

FDA SUED FOR DELAYING E-CIG REGULATIONS

Washington, D.C. — Several major public health groups sued the FDA in March for delaying certain rules for electronic cigarettes (e-cigs), saying that consumers as a result will be exposed for years to "lethal and addictive components" in tobacco products.

The lawsuit is challenging an agency decision last summer to grant lengthy deadline extensions to manufacturers seeking FDA approval for their products. Originally, the companies were required to submit such product-review applications by August 2018 for any item that went on the market after February 2007.

The revised timeline changed that to August 2021 for cigars and August 2022 for e-cigarettes.

The organizations suing include the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and Truth Initiative.



HEALTH NEWS

High-tech Helmet Tracks Brain Activity While Body Moves

Nottingham, England — Just when you thought biomedical technology couldn't get more high-tech, it does. (And there's plenty of room to grow! Nano-machine surgery, anyone?)

Everyone's been in an MRI or CAT-scan machine nowadays. But now, University of Nottingham researchers have got a machine that can not only track your brain's activity in real time, but do so without you having to lie still inside a giant tube.

As a matter of fact, this machine is basically a helmet. And you wear it while you walk, talk, type, drink tea or otherwise engage in ordinary daily activity.

The powerful new wearable device, called a magnetoencephalography (MEG) brain scanner, is equipped with specialized "quantum" sensors. When placed directly on the scalp surface, the sensors pick up magnetic fields generated by electrical activity in the brain.

Altogether, the experimental helmet-



like device—capable of generating 3D images even when the wearer is moving—weighs under two pounds (compared to existing brain scanners weighing nearly 1,000 pounds).

The device, which is still years away from mainstream medical usage, is the result of years of work to miniaturize the main parts of today's MRI machines, including brain sensors and scanners—as well as successfully figuring out a way to cancel out the powerful natural signals from the Earth's magnetic fields. ★

TO BE HISTORY? MRIS LIKE THIS COULD GO IF A NEW MRI HELMET GOES BIG

HEALTHY EATING



Broccoli

EASY

YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

READY IN: 1:10

Simple Easy Salad

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 fresh broccoli
 - 1 cup dried cranberries (craisins)
 - 1 cup slivered honey coated almonds
 - 1 purple onion thin sliced
 - 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese (optional)
- DIRECTIONS:**
- Cut broccoli into small bite size pieces
 - Slice thinly the onion
 - In a bowl, combine the broccoli, cheese, onions, almonds, craisins
 - In another bowl, whisk the mayonnaise, vinegar and sugar
 - Pour dressing over broccoli mixture and toss to coat
 - Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving
- DRESSING:**
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
 - 2 tablespoons vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon sugar

EASY

YIELDS: 4-6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

READY IN: :30

Easy Broccoli Side Dish

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 bag frozen broccoli
 - 1 onion diced
 - 5 cloves garlic - crushed
 - Oil for sautéing
 - Salt to taste
 - 1/4 tsp Black pepper (or to taste)
 - 1 tablespoon consommé soup mix
 - 1 cup shredded cheese
- DIRECTIONS:**
- Preheat oven on 400°
 - Defrost broccoli
 - Sauté onions and garlic - till golden
 - In a baking pan spread out evenly the broccoli
 - Top with sauté onion and garlic
 - Season with salt, black pepper, and soup mix
 - Top with shredded cheese
 - Bake uncovered for 20 minutes

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:20

READY IN: 1:20

Broccoli Soup

- HEALTHY SOUP**
- INGREDIENTS:**
- 2 bags frozen broccoli
 - 1/4 cup oil
 - 2 onions - diced
 - 4 cloves garlic - crushed
 - 4 potatoes - cubed
 - Salt to taste
 - 2 tablespoons consommé soup mix
 - Water
- DIRECTIONS:**
- Sauté onions and garlic
 - Spread 1/2 bag broccoli on a cookie sheet, roast in the oven on 400° for 20 minutes
 - Add 1 1/2 bag broccoli and Sauté a bit longer
 - Add potatoes and seasoning
 - Fill pot with water enough to cover the vegetables
 - Bring to boil then simmer for 1/2 hour, stirring every few minutes to prevent burning
 - Blend with an immersion blender
 - Add the roasted broccoli
 - Simmer for additional 1/2 hour

CHEF'S TIP:

When buying fresh broccoli make sure the florets are tightly closed, and the greener the better.

BENEFITS:

Broccoli is a great source of vitamins C and K, a good source of folate (folic acid) and also provides potassium and fiber. Vitamin C builds collagen, which forms body tissue and bone, and helps cuts and wounds heal. Vitamin C is also a powerful antioxidant and protects the body from damaging free radicals.

In the Know

ALL ABOUT... LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

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

You may have heard of lactose intolerance. Perhaps a close relative—a spouse, a child, a parent—has it. Perhaps you do.

That's because lactose intolerance, or the reduced ability to digest lactose, is a condition that strikes approximately 65 percent of the human population to some degree. Among adults, it is most prevalent in people of East Asian descent, but is also very common in people of West African, Jewish, Greek, and Italian descent—making it quite the common diagnosis.

Lactose intolerance is caused by the digestive system being unable to fully digest lactose, the sugar that is found naturally in milk. People with lactose intolerance typically get such symptoms as diarrhea, gas and bloating after eating or drinking dairy products.

Other than those uncomfortable symptoms, lactose intolerance is usually harmless. What's more, most people with lactose intolerance can manage the condition without having to give up all dairy foods. And contrary to popular misconception, lactose intolerance is not an allergy. Do read on!

DEFINITION

There are three types of lactose intolerance. Different factors cause the *lactase deficiency* underlying each type.

Primary lactose intolerance

This is the most common type. People who develop primary lactose intolerance start life producing plenty of lactase—a necessity for infants, who get all their nutrition from milk. As children replace milk with other foods, their lactase production normally decreases, but remains high enough to digest the amount of dairy in a typical adult diet.

What happens in primary lactose intolerance is that the body's natural production of lactase drops sharply, making milk products difficult to digest by the time the person reaches adulthood. Primary lactose intolerance is genetically determined, occurring in a large

“

AVOIDING AND LIVING WITH LACTOSE INTOLERANCE IS LARGELY A MATTER OF EXPERIENCE—KNOWING WHAT FOODS TO AVOID SO AS TO AVOID THE UNPLEASANT SYMPTOMS.

”

proportion of people with Asian ancestry. The condition is also common among those of Mediterranean or Southern European descent.

Secondary lactose intolerance

In secondary lactose intolerance, lactase production drops sharply not due to natural reasons (as in primary lactose intolerance) but as a result of an illness, injury or surgery involving the small intestine (which produces lactase). Among the diseases associated with secondary lactose intolerance are celiac, bacterial overgrowth and Crohn's. Treatment of the underlying disorder may restore lactase levels and improve signs and symptoms, though it can take time.

Congenital or developmental lactose intolerance

It's possible (although rare) for babies to be born with lactose intolerance caused by a complete absence of lactase activity. Such a disorder is passed from generation to generation in a pattern of inheritance called *autosomal recessive*. That means that both mother and father must pass on the same gene variant for a child to be affected.

SYMPTOMS

The signs and symptoms of lactose intolerance usually begin 30 minutes to two hours after eating or drinking foods

that contain lactose. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea, and sometimes, vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Bloating
- Gas

When to see a doctor

Make an appointment with your doctor if you frequently have symptoms of lactose intolerance after eating dairy foods, particularly if you're worried about getting enough calcium.

CAUSE

Normally, the small intestine produces an enzyme called lactase. Lactose intolerance is usually caused when the small intestine doesn't produce enough lactase. Without enough lactase, the digestive system will have difficulty digesting milk products.

Normally, lactase turns milk sugar (lactose) into two simple sugars—glucose and galactose—which are absorbed into the bloodstream through the intestinal lining.

But if someone is lactase deficient, lactose in the food moves into the colon instead of getting processed and absorbed. Once in the colon, the undigested lactose interacts with the normal bacteria that are already there, causing the signs and symptoms of lactose intolerance.



In lactose intolerance, the general rule is this: the less lactase, the more the milk-based indigestion.

Therefore, many people have low levels of lactase but are able to digest milk products without problems (because they still have enough).

Risk factors

Factors that can make one more prone to lactose intolerance include:

- Increasing age. Lactose intolerance usually appears in adulthood. The condition is uncommon in babies and young children
- Diseases affecting the small intestine. Small intestine problems that can cause lactose intolerance include bacterial overgrowth, celiac disease and Crohn's disease
- Certain cancer treatments. If someone has received radiation therapy for cancer of the abdomen, or has intestinal complications from chemotherapy, they have an increased risk of lactose intolerance

DIAGNOSIS

A doctor may suspect lactose intolerance based on symptoms and the patient's response to reducing the amount of dairy foods in the diet. The doctor can confirm the diagnosis by conducting one or more of the following tests:





- Lactose tolerance test. The lactose tolerance test gauges the body's reaction to a liquid that contains high levels of lactose. Two hours after drinking the liquid, the patient will undergo blood tests to measure the amount of glucose in the bloodstream. If the glucose level doesn't rise, it means the body isn't properly digesting and absorbing the lactose-filled drink
- Hydrogen breath test. This test also requires the patient to drink a liquid containing high levels of lactose. The doctor then measures the amount of hydrogen in the breath at regular intervals. Normally, very little hydrogen is detectable. But if the body doesn't digest the lactose, it will ferment in the colon, releasing hydrogen and other gases, which are absorbed by the intestines and eventually exhaled. Larger-than-normal amounts of exhaled hydrogen measured during a breath test indicate that the patient isn't fully digesting and absorbing lactose.

TREATMENT

One would think that if lactose intolerance is caused by lack of lactase, then lactose intolerance should simply be treated by increasing lactase. But there's

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

swap *this* for *that*

 butter	for	 coconut, canola or olive oil
 milk	for	 soy milk
 coffee creamer	for	 almond milk
 cream cheese	for	 goat cheese
 pizza	for	 soy cheese pizza
 milk chocolate	for	 dark or semi-sweet chocolate

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins Medicine; Joshua Natchman, certified nutritionist

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE
www.hopkinsmedicine.org

currently no way to boost the body's natural production of lactase. However, people with lactose intolerance can usually avoid its discomfort by:

- Avoiding large servings of milk and

other dairy products

- Including small servings of dairy products in their regular meals
- Eating and drinking lactose-reduced ice cream and milk

- Drinking regular milk after adding lactase enzyme tablets or drops like Lactaids; these break down lactose and make it more digestible
- Saving milk for mealtimes. Drink milk with other foods. This slows the digestive process and may lessen symptoms of lactose intolerance

Lifestyle and home remedies

Most people with lactose intolerance can enjoy some milk products without symptoms. It may be possible to increase tolerance to dairy products by gradually introducing them into the diet. Some people actually find that they can tolerate full-fat dairy products, such as whole milk and cheese, more easily than dairy products with no or reduced fat.

Maintaining good nutrition

Reducing dairy products in the diet doesn't mean that the person won't get enough calcium. Calcium is found in many other non-dairy foods, including:

- Broccoli
- Calcium-fortified products like breads and juices
- Canned salmon
- Milk substitutes like soy or rice milk
- Oranges
- Pinto beans
- Rhubarb
- Spinach

People who have lactose intolerance should also make sure they are getting enough vitamin D, which people typically get from fortified milk. But vitamin D can also be gotten from eggs, liver, yogurt, or even direct skin exposure to natural sunlight. To be sure, to your doctor about taking vitamin D and calcium supplements.

Probiotics

Probiotics are living organisms present in the intestines that help maintain a healthy digestive system. Probiotics are also available as active or "live" cultures in some yogurts and as supplements in capsule form. Probiotics may also help the body digest lactose; they are generally considered safe and may be worth a try if other methods don't help.

PROGNOSIS

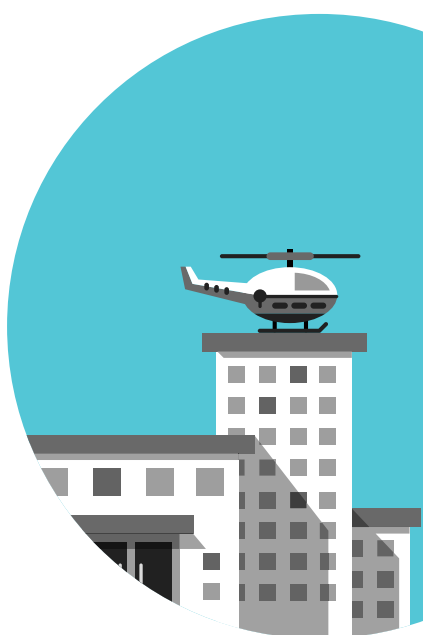
Avoiding and living with lactose intolerance is largely a matter of experience—knowing what foods, and how much of those foods, to avoid so as to avoid the unpleasant symptoms.

With some trial and error, a person who has lactose intolerance may be able to predict his or her body's response to different foods that have lactose.

Eventually, with enough practice, one can know how much foods with lactose that he or she can eat or drink and still live a symptom-free life. ★

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



URGENT CARE CLAIMS SKYROCKET; ER CLAIMS PALE IN CONTRAST

New York, NY — According to two new reports by healthcare market analyst FAIR Health, private insurance claims for services provided in urgent care centers grew 1,725 percent between 2007 and 2016.

That was well above the growth rate of 229 percent for emergency-room claims during the same period.

FAIR Health's *Healthcare Indicators* and *Medical Price Index* also found large differences in charges depending on location. While a new-patient visit at a retail clinic averaged \$109, the same patient visit would average \$242 at an urgent care center and \$294 at a doctor's office visit.

FAIR Health pointed to a huge increase in alternative places of service, including retail clinics, urgent care centers, telehealth and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs). However, the growth in urgent care centers, retail clinics and telehealth skyrocketed the most.

The data underscores the growing trend by payers to push more care to less-pricey while still medically appropriate settings rather than to



THE FACE OF MODERN MEDICINE: ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY DROPPING OF LATE, PHYSICIAN BURNOUT REMAINS AN ONGOING CONCERN TO THE HOSPITAL FIELD

more-expensive ERs.

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP SURVEY FINDS SLIGHT DROP IN PROFESSIONALS' BURNOUT

Waltham, MA — Burnout among doctors, nurses and other hospital medical professional is an ongoing industry problem.

But according to a new survey

by *NEJM Catalyst*, a new industry leadership forum hosted by the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the percentage of organizations labeling burnout a moderate or severe problem dropped slightly from levels reported in 2016 and 2017

Concerns around burnout have reached a point where major national medical organizations—including the Mayo Clinic, the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges—recently endorsed a medical charter encouraging stakeholders at all levels to address burnout.

A majority of NEJM survey respondents said they felt organizations ought to be responsible for the bulk of improvements, including system and infrastructure changes.

As organizations look for solutions, the report points out that the drivers of burnout differ in certain ways among different hospital professionals.

Where physician burnout seems most often driven by issues that take away face-to-face time with patients, nurses report burnout “due to compassion fatigue, moral distress, and work environment issues such as

psychological safety and hostility,” the authors write.

Not surprisingly, popular solutions among respondents involve improved records systems and administrative workflows to reduce clerical work and increase face time with patients.

AAMC CHIEF BLAMES MEDICARE CAP FOR DOC SHORTAGE

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. population is constantly growing. But for years now, the U.S. doctor population has not been proportionately growing with it—a concern drawing increasing attention as it becomes more acute.

Current data projects the U.S. doctor shortage will be between 42,000 and more than 121,000 by 2030.

Speaking to reporters about healthcare workforce challenges, Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) chief Darrell Kirch, M.D. said that Congress needs to pass a measure ending a longtime cap on Medicare funding for U.S. residencies, which has been frozen since 1997.

To address the projected shortfall, Kirch said, new medical schools were created and existing medical school programs expanded their class sizes which resulted in a 30 percent increase in medical school graduates since 2002. But that resulted in more people competing for a limited number of medical residencies rather than expanding the overall number of doctors.

According to Dr. Kirch, cap-ending legislation would create 15,000 new residencies between 2019 and 2023, half of which would be in specialties experiencing the most acute shortages.

Dr. Kirch's comments were made at the Association of Health Care Journalists' April 12-15 conference in Phoenix.

STUDY: MAJORITY OF C. DIFF HOSPITAL INFECTIONS SPREAD BY ASYMPTOMATIC CARRIERS

Toronto, Ontario — York University researchers determined that hospital-patient infections with the *Clostridium Difficile* (C. diff) bacterium depend heavily on patients carrying the bugs before developing any symptoms, or not developing any at all.

According to the research, published in a recent study in *BMC Infectious Diseases*, C.diff infections can develop rapidly even under the watchful eye of hospital staff. In fact, it is often spread in health care facilities or nursing homes due to proximity of the bacteria.

The study makes the case that C. diff transmission in hospitals can be drastically cut down by screening patients for highest likelihood to be silently carrying the bugs without symptoms.



YOU ARE HERE MORE OFTEN: IN LINE WITH THE STILL-BOOMING GROWTH OF RETAIL MEDICINE, A NEW REPORT SAYS THAT URGENT-CARE VISITS ARE BOOMING, TOO





The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
HamaspikCare
and Senior
Health

Employee Meritocracy Parallels Patient Care at HamaspikCare

In 2010, Christyna Cherubin came from her native Haiti to Miami, Florida and eventually to New York City. In 2016, she came to HamaspikCare straight out of home-care aide school.

Today, by virtue of hard work and merit, she's a proud HamaspikCare Case Manager.

Ditto for Elizabeth Siliezar, another daughter of immigrants (her parents are from Nicaragua), who followed a roughly parallel path to a well-earned Case Management position with HamaspikCare.

Both started as entry-level home-care aides with the still-growing home-care agency. In doing so, they brought the Hamaspik brand of extraordinary professionalism and genuine compassion not just to the Orthodox Jewish community

largely served by HamaspikCare, but to a growing contingent of New York's sizable Caribbean and Latino communities, too.

The duo exemplifies HamaspikCare's diverse team, which boasts fluency in Creole, Spanish, Yiddish and Portuguese—as well as Russian, French, Hungarian and even German.

But as important as diversity is today, rewarding employees for giving

it their all is more important, according to HamaspikCare COO Mordechai Wolhendler. "I want employees to know that if you come in and do a great job, you can be promoted," he says.

"HamaspikCare cares about employees," Ms. Cherubin tells the *Gazette*.

And, at HamaspikCare, the higher the care they give their job, the higher the care their job gives them. ★

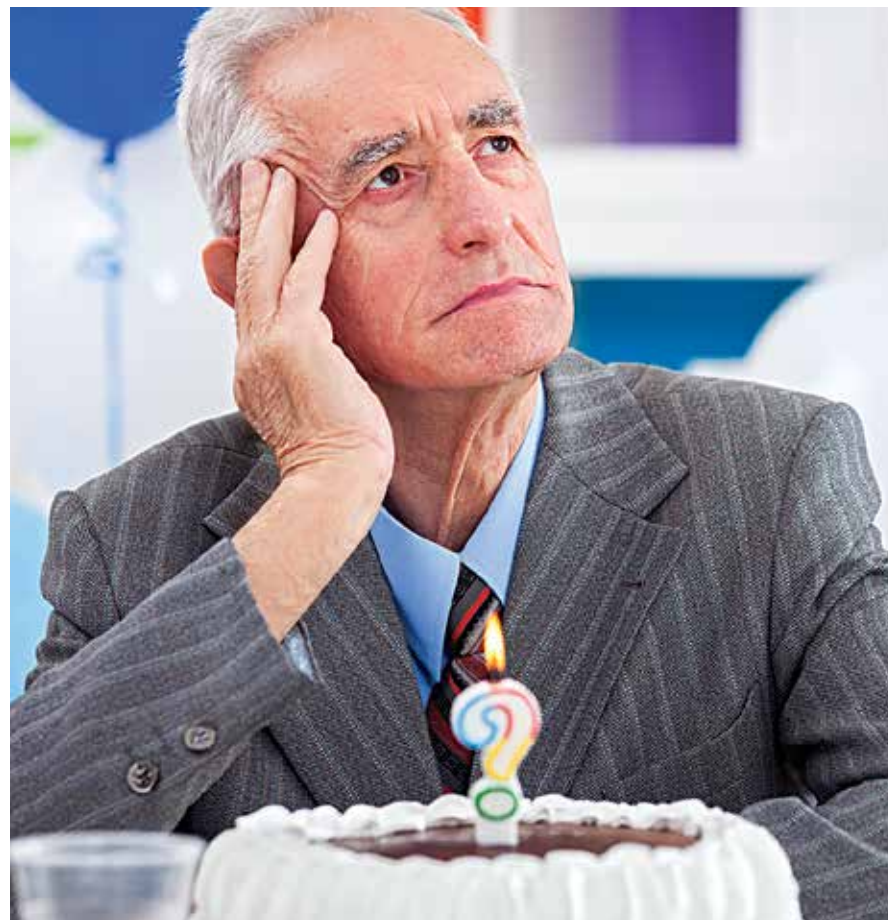
Two seniors with poor vision treated with stem-cell eyepatch implants

London, England — An 86-year-old man and a woman in her early 60s, both with severe age-related macular degeneration (AMD), had their vision significantly repaired after their eyes were surgically implanted with patches of retinal cells made from stem cells.

The stem-cell-based eyepatches were surgically implanted behind the retinas of the patients' diseased eyes. They worked by replenishing the eyes' diseased cells that were causing AMD, effectively reducing or eliminating the cause.

Both patients were monitored for twelve months and reported improvements to their vision—going from being unable to read at all to reading up to 80 words a minute with normal reading glasses.

Macular degeneration accounts for almost 50 percent of all visual impairment in the developed world and usually affects people over 50 years of age. ★



GRIM STATISTIC: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE COSTS MEMORIES, NOT JUST MONEY

Report: Alzheimer's disease will cost U.S. \$277B in 2018

Chicago, IL — According to the new *Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report released in March, total payments to care for people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are predicted to exceed a quarter of a trillion dollars in 2018.

The new report also estimates that early diagnosis of Alzheimer's could save the United States as much as \$7.9 trillion

in long-term health care costs. Costs are expected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2050—at which point the report estimates that 14 million people will be diagnosed.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, according to the report. From 2000 to 2015, deaths from the disease increased 123 percent, while deaths from heart disease decreased 11 percent. ★

Prof. Victor Gurewich still fighting for two-drug heart attack/stroke treatment

Cambridge, MA — Major blood clots in the coronary arteries that serve the heart, or in blood vessels that serve the brain, are typically treated today with an artery-widening procedure called *angioplasty* or with a clot-busting drug called *tissue plasminogen activator* (tPA).

But physician and Harvard Medical School professor Dr. Victor Gurewich, 88, has long believed that both can be better treated by giving heart attack or stroke patients two drugs: First, a dose of tPA and then, a dose of a drug he developed called urokinase precursor (pro-UK).

Interestingly, tPA and urokinase occur naturally in the body—functioning as the opposite of the blood's natural ability to form clots and prevent cuts from bleeding to death. Using small amounts of tPA followed by larger deployments of urokinase, the body regularly dissolves minor blood clots that form inside blood vessels before they get too big.

For over 20 years, Dr. Gurewich has hawked his theory that giving blood-clot patients tPA followed by his pro-UK modified urokinase is more effective than angioplasty (for heart attacks) or just tPA (for strokes). And in a *STAT News* profile this April, Dr. Gurewich discussed his life's theory, the scientific evidence for it, and an upcoming June study of 100 Dutch stroke patients using his treatment approach.

"I'm stubborn," he told *STAT News*. "I don't give up." ★

May 18, 2018: 1st National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day

Rockville, MD — The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Administration for Community Living (ACL) are holding the first 1st National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day on May 18, 2018. The day will be marked by a live-broadcast expert panel discussion on evidence-based approaches to mental health and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery supports for older adults. ★

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