



# The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

JANUARY '19 • ISSUE NO. 165



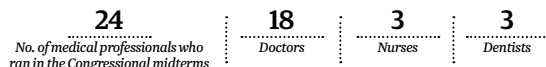
## GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:  
**HOW DO YOU DO PROTECT AGAINST THE FLU?**  
A: VACCINE SHOT; B: VACCINE NASAL SPRAY; C: NEITHER  
Respond to: [survey@nyshainc.org](mailto:survey@nyshainc.org)



## HEALTH STAT

THE DOCTOR (AND NURSE, ETC.) IS IN THE HOUSE



Source: Becker's Hospital Review



## HEALTH TIP

**STAY WARM IN THE COLD: DON'T COVER (JUST) YOUR HEAD**  
Science-based tip? Cover everything! Contrary to popular myth, the majority of body heat does not escape from your head.

## INSIDE

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02 Newly-approved blood-donor matching test based on DNA

04 More doctors using anesthetic ketamine to treat depression

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08 Sound-blocking NYU research may improve autism understanding

## HAMASPIK NEWS

# HOMING IN ON DISABILITY HOUSING

AFTER YEARS OF EFFORT IN RESPONSE TO GROWING COMMUNITY CRIES FOR HELP, HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S CATHERINE BRIDERHEIM OF UPSTATE CHESTER (L) AND SUMMIT BRIDERHEIM IN CENTRAL VALLEY (R) ARE SLATED TO RESPECTIVELY OPEN IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY OF 2019. FOR TWO GROUPS OF YOUNG MEN, THEY'LL BE HOME—AND FOR THEIR GRATEFUL PARENTS, RELIEF.



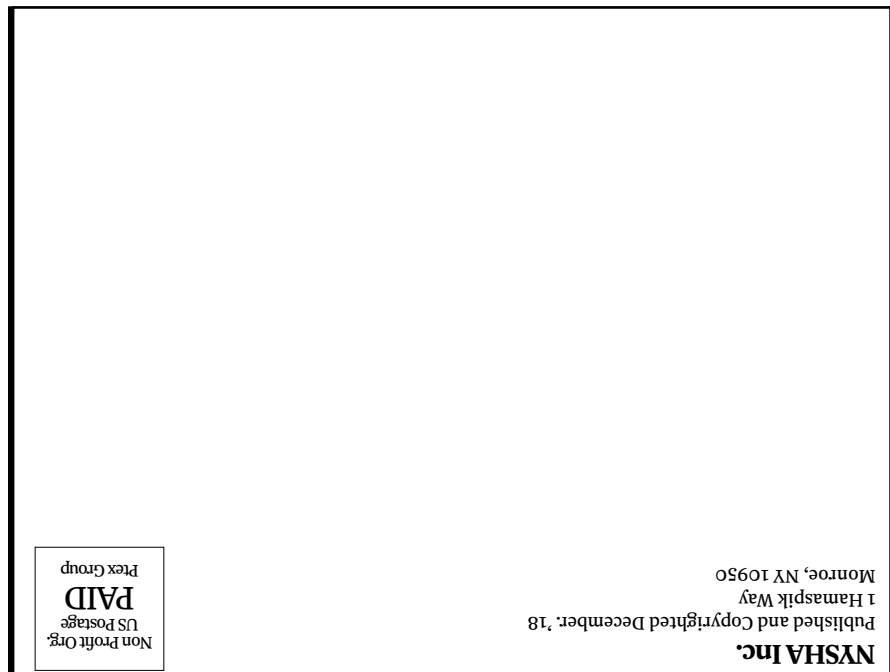
THE TWO NEW HAMASPIK HOMES WILL OPEN JUST A BIT OVER A YEAR SINCE GOV. ANDREW CUOMO'S DEC. 2017 AWARDING OF \$58.9 MILLION IN FUNDING TO 53 AGENCIES, INCLUDING HAMASPIK, TO OPEN 83 NEW GROUP HOMES ACROSS NEW YORK.

SEE PAGE E9 >>

## HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

# Hamaspik HomeCare Moves to Spacious New Headquarters

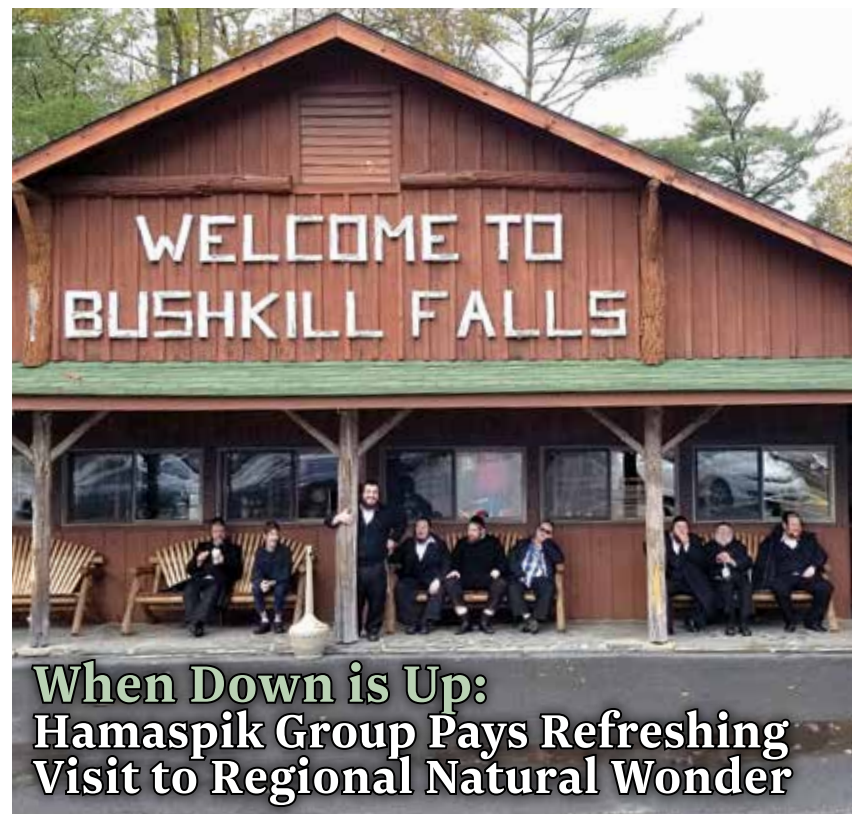
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## HAMASPIK NEWS



When Down is Up:  
Hamaspik Group Pays Refreshing  
Visit to Regional Natural Wonder

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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

#### CARE COORDINATION

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

#### FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

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

#### INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY (ICF)

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

#### INTENSIVE BEHAVIOR SERVICES (IBS)

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

#### PLAN OF CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing: Support for families of individuals with special needs

#### FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

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

#### PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

#### SELF DIRECTION

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

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

### DOH

#### CARE AT HOME

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

#### EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

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

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

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

#### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

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

#### CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Providing: Breakfast · lunch · supper · snack

#### HEALTH HOME SERVING CHILDREN (HHSC)

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

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

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

#### APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)

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

### LHCSA - HAMASPIK HOMECARE

#### 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

## New DNA-based Blood-Matching Test Approved by FDA



### BLOOD SIBLINGS: PROGENICA'S NEW TEST MATCHES DONORS BY BLOOD DNA TESTS

Washington, D.C. — On October 1, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the ID CORE XT test by biotech firm Progenika Biopharma.

In contrast to standard blood tests for donor compatibility, ID CORE XT tests actual blood DNA.

The three blood types, A, B and O, are based on *antigens*, or proteins on the surfaces of red blood cells. In addition to those antigens, the presence or absence of other antigens can be important when matching blood for transfusions. The new test uses new technology to help match donors and recipients based on those

other antigens.

People needing repeated blood transfusions, such as sickle-cell disease patients, are likelier to have these antigens—making the new technology vital for them.

That's because if a blood transfusion is based on a poor match of non-ABO antigens, a serious and even life-threatening reaction can occur in the transfusion recipient.

A study was conducted to compare the typing results of the ID CORE XT Test to existing compatibility tests, and the results demonstrated comparable performance between the methods. ★

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# Tri-County Care Hosts First “Regional Round Table” at State Capitol

## Region’s Leadership Meets at Albany Hotel for Daylong Exchange



If one word encapsulates Tri-County Care (TCC), the still-new Care Coordination Organization (CCO) sponsored by the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA), it'd be: proactive.

And in an effort to proactively empower Tri-County Care’s employee body with the right information and effective resources before problems arise, the CCO hosted its first Regional Round Table meeting at Albany’s Desmond Hotel this past Monday October 29, 2018.

The objective of the Regional Round Table was simply for agency leaders “to listen to each other and exchange information and ideas,” said Tri-County Care CEO Yoel Bernath.

Some 75 TCC managers and administrators from across the greater Albany region converged on the Desmond for a full day of sharing positives experienced, successes won and hurdles overcome during the non-profit’s three months since going live.

Subjects covered in the conversations included: maintaining an open-forum ethic between Tri-County’s leadership, member agencies and employees so as to constantly respond to industry

questions; enhancing the partnership between TCC’s top brass and its greater Albany region; and providing guidance on a range of topics.

Going forward, the CEO added, Tri-County Care will be hosting round table events every three months.

In coming away from the roundtable event, concluded Mr. Bernath, “the care management and admin workforce as a whole has demonstrated once again its commitment to the individuals and families we serve!” ★

●► HAMASPIK NEWS

# When Falls are Good for Your Mental Health

## Hamaspik Kings’ South 9th Residence Visits Scenic Bushkill Falls

Water is long associated with serenity—just look at any inspirational poster or appointment calendar featuring rich photos of tranquil lakes or endless seas.

That’s especially true for the natural wonder of waterfalls.

Besides their raw and rustic beauty, the rushing “white noise” hiss of waterfalls is long scientifically linked to increased calm, poise, relaxation and inner peace.

Plus, taking a trip of any kind is fun in its own right—especially if you’re visiting Pennsylvania’s Bushkill Falls, as the residents of Hamaspik of Kings County’s South 9th group home recently chose to do.

Departing early in the morning and returning home to Brooklyn late at night, the residents—accompanied by four Hamaspik Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)—spent a good few hours drinking in the untamed sights and sounds of the grand waterfall.

When they got back home, the residents were relaxed and ready for bed for all the right reasons. Besides having checked off another item on their to-do list (they plan their own activities on a monthly basis, reports Manager Mrs. Cziment), they also had brought home the best baggage—the mental-health benefits of visiting a real waterfall. ★



**UNIVERSAL BENEFITS:** THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY’S DAY HAB, SHOWN HERE ON A VISIT OF THEIR OWN, ALSO ENJOY THE THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCE

**WATER THERAPY:** THE ENDLESSLY RELAXING MAIN FALLS AT BUSHKILL

### Hamaspik Gazette

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# Happening in Health Today

## THE DOCTOR, AND NURSE, AND DENTIST, IS IN THE HOUSE

**Washington, D.C.** — In the Nov. 6 national midterm elections, a notable number of trained medical professionals ran for reelection in either branch of Congress, or were elected for the first time, making history in several ways.

Washington State's Kim Schrier, MD, a pediatrician, became the first female physician to serve in the U.S. House. She joins several male colleagues of several specialties, including surgeons and obstetricians, successfully running for the first time or winning reelection.

A handful of registered nurses (RNs) vied for public office. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, RN of Texas won her reelection bid; upon winning her first Congressional term in 1993, she became history's first nurse in the House. Wisconsin nurse Leah Vukmir, MSN, BSN, a sitting State Senator, lost her U.S. Senate bid. But Lauren Underwood, RN of Illinois snagged a win—and, at 31, the distinction of the youngest black woman in the House.

Not to be left out, though, no less than three dentists took public office: New Jersey's Jeff Van Drew, DDS, Georgia's Drew Ferguson, DDS, and Idaho's Mike Simpson, DDS.

Guess the medical and dental health of Congress is secured. We'll see about the rest of us!

## ENERGY DRINKS REDUCE BLOOD FLOW, DAMPENING PERFORMANCE

**Houston, Texas** — A recent study by the University of Texas Health Science Center now suggests that “energy drinks” may hurt the cardiovascular system by making blood vessels less efficient.

The study included 44 healthy, non-smoking medical students in their 20s. The researchers tested the effect of a 24-ounce energy drink on cells lining blood vessels, called *endothelial cells*.

The function of these cells was tested before and after the

participants consumed the energy drink, and again 90 minutes later.

After 90 minutes, the internal diameter of blood vessels tested was dramatically smaller, on average, than before, the investigators found.

Exercise and sports, at which youths commonly consumer energy drinks, require maximum blood flow so oxygen can get to cells quickly, according to researchers.

But energy drinks reduce the



## GOVERNMENT REPORT: CELL PHONES DON'T CAUSE HUMAN CANCERS

**Washington, D.C.** — According to a final report released Nov. 1st by the federal government's National Toxicology Program, the verdict on whether cell phones cause cancer is: high and continuous doses of phone radiation may sometimes cause tumors in rats, but not in people.

The final report isn't much different than a preliminary report released in February.

Its most significant finding is that male rats bombarded with high doses of cellphone radiation

had a higher risk of a type of rare cancer called a *schwannoma* in the nerves surrounding the heart.

However, “the exposures used in our studies are not directly comparable to the exposures that humans typically experience when using a cellphone,” the National Toxicology Program's John Bucher told reporters.

What's more, according to American Cancer Society tracking studies, there has not been a noticeable increase in cancer types that might be associated with increased cellphone use. ★

vessels' diameter, effectively reducing blood flow and oxygen delivery. In turn, the heart must pump harder to deliver oxygen—supply of which is already reduced due to vessel contraction.

## KETAMINE INCREASINGLY USED TO TREAT DEPRESSION

**New York, New York** — Despite limited research, a growing number of doctors are using the anesthetic *ketamine* to treat depression—with significant success, according to a recent report by the Associated Press.

Despite not being approved for that usage by the FDA, physicians and patients alike have found that one injection of the drug can provide relief from depression and anxiety for well over a week, read the article.

Doctors aren't sure how it works. It is believed to effect the brain's levels of *glutamate*, a chemical messenger that may be involved in depression.

What is known, however, is that ketamine seems to kick in far faster than other antidepressants, which can take days, not ketamine's hours, to produce noticeable relief from symptoms of major depression.

According to the American Society for Ketamine Physicians, there are currently about 150 ketamine clinics across the U.S., compared to about 20 in 2015.

## OPIOID PAINKILLER 1,000X STRONGER THAN MORPHINE APPROVED BY FDA

**Silver Spring, Maryland** — A new opioid tablet that is 1,000 times more potent than morphine and ten times stronger than fentanyl was approved by the FDA on Nov. 2 as a fast-acting alternative to IV painkillers used in hospitals.

The new painkiller, Dsuvia, will be restricted to limited use in hospitals, surgery centers and emergency rooms.

However, critics worry the opioid will fuel an already grim opioid epidemic.

“An opioid that is a thousand times more powerful than morphine is a thousand times more likely to be abused, and a thousand times more likely to kill,” said Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts in urging the FDA last month to not approve Dsuvia.

But “very tight restrictions” will be placed on Dsuvia, said FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb in a statement. According to Gottlieb, it will not be available at retail pharmacies or for any home use. ★



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# “One Big Happy Family!” at Hamaspik Children’s Shabbos Getaway

*Hundreds of Kids, Staff at Raleigh Hotel for Exciting Respite Weekend*

They converged from every corner of Orange and Rockland Counties. They arrived on big buses. They came with little suitcases. And they didn’t leave disappointed.

It was Hamaspik’s grand annual Shabbos weekend getaway for the children with special needs that it serves through its Community Habilitation and After-School Respite programs.

It was nearly 48 hours of personalized therapeutic activities, all cleverly disguised as an ordinary Shabbos hotel vacation getaway at the Raleigh Hotel in South Fallsburg, New York.

But it was anything but ordinary. “It was so beautiful! It was one big happy family!” correctly exulted Mrs. Brenda Katina, Hamaspik’s very own Special Events Coordinator.

**SERVED UPON ARRIVAL**

Mrs. Katina and team were on site well before the first bus rolled into the lot on Friday, October 26. But upon bouncing into the Raleigh’s front lobby, each guest found a smiling Special Events Coordinator waiting with a personal greeting.

Each youthful individual received his or her room key—plus a delightful welcome package that is Hamaspik’s trademark.

Once unpacked and ready for their stay, the children enjoyed a indoor carnival including “bounce houses,” game booths, a motorized “animal” go-kart track and even a bubble show!

A traditional pre-Shabbos buffet of Shabbos foods was also on hand.

With the approach of the sundown Shabbos onset, the children repaired to their rooms to prepare for the Day of Rest. And at a table set safely to one side of a ballroom, several staff members shortly lit the customary Shabbos candles, ushering in that imperceptible spirit of the day.

**FOOD FOR BODY AND SOUL**

Throughout the entire Shabbos, children were divided into function-delineated “Gold,” “Silver” and “Copper” groups—each led by trained counselors through exciting races, games and even a grand “Color War” competition.

In the run-up to the 7:00 p.m. dinner, the kids played with a range of provided toys on the ballroom floor—followed by a Friday-night meal with time-tested



**ONE IN THE BAG: WELCOME PACKAGES**



**OH, GOODY! TREATS AND PRIZES AWAIT**



**WELL-ROUNDED: THE BUBBLE SHOW**



**FIRE, MAN! A FIERY PERFORMANCE BY A “ONE-MAN CIRCUS” IS TEMPERED BY THE FLUID FACILITY OF ONE HAPPY VOLUNTEER**



**WALL OF SOUND: FROM BEHIND A BOOTH SET UP FOR A LIVE DJ, A SONIC WAVE OF EXCITEMENT ENGULFS THE CROWD**

favorites: challah, gefilte fish, and the critically vital chicken soup.

After dinner, the kids enjoyed a “Shabbos party”—an informal get-together complete with an array of snacks. But that was just when the real action began. Led by a group of professional vocalists, the kids were treated to a *kumzitz* (Yiddish for “come and sit”), a singalong in which the audience is very much part of the show. The *kumzitz* lasted a good hour, with children heading off to bed at their leisure accompanied by supportive staff.

**A DAY TO REMEMBER**

In the morning after rising at their leisure, the children found breakfast waiting for them in the ballroom. Cereal, milk, fruits and pastries were all on hand.

The rest of the morning was spent informally, with toys and games fueling free play as one-on-one staff hovered

ever-presently by.

A formal Shabbos meal convened at 12:00 p.m., with the same lavish attention to detail and plenty of culinary choice. Staff were seen helping children eat as needed, even lovingly feeding their charges one utensil-full at a time.

At 4:00 p.m., an interactive game show (minus any Shabbos-prohibited lights and electronics, of course!) for all guests was held. It was followed by several races and competitive games that left all competitors feeling like winners.

But the highlight of the whole day only came at night.

**MUSIC AND THRILLS IN THE AIR**

After the Shabbos-closing Havdalah ceremony, the real action only heated up as Mrs. Wasserman of the popular Fun ‘n’ Fit program led everyone in a group percussion session. Giant exercise balls placed in equally giant cups, along with

drumsticks for those who wished, were set out, with the instructor leading everyone in a heart-pounding feast for the senses.

Shortly after that, a live DJ had everyone moving to his rollicking rhythms.

The next morning, after a restful night’s sleep and a healthy breakfast, the entire staff and guest body enjoyed an enthralling one-man circus performance, replete with juggling and balancing.

With that show’s 12:30 p.m. ending, the children headed straight to the buses home—feeling, as Mrs. Katina later put it, “like a million dollars... The joy on the kids’ faces is priceless.”

And for all their hardworking and devoted parents, a precious respite weekend to themselves while knowing that their precious children were being well cared for was equally priceless. ★



▶ HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



## Exercising Choices Towards Better Health

### Rockland Men's Day Hab Hit the Cold Season Running

Several days a week, for at least a good 20 minutes at a time, you'll hear plenty of whirring, thumping and clanging from an upstairs room at the Hamaspik of Rockland County Men's Day Hab building.

But that's no equipment malfunction up there. If anything, it's the sound of improved body function.

That's because it's the facility's regularly-used exercise room. And, filled with high-tech treadmills and other fitness machinery as it is, the gentlemen who attend Day Hab daily walk in perhaps feeling a bit out of shape, but leave feeling reinvigorated.

What with the fall season through and chilly December days now here, the "Day Habbers" are spending much more time indoors—including using the exercise room, which Manager Pinchas Knopfler encourages them to choose to do. (The daily schedule is flexible enough to allow them to get up there whenever they should want, the Manager happily explains.)

It may be cold out there. But with the gentlemen walking or even jogging those treadmill miles, or otherwise making usage of the exercise machines, better health at Day Hab this winter is only beginning to warm up. ★

## Laying Down a Lot of Clean Space

### Hamaspik OC Improves Main Building's Parking

The sizable parking lot hugging two sides of Hamaspik's giant Admin/Day Hab Building in Kiryas Joel is looking even better these days—with the addition of two major improvements.

For starters, two perfectly-placed bus-sized parking spots have been added to the lot—allowing Hamaspik's fleet of transportation vehicles to even better pick up, drop off and otherwise support the individuals with disabilities at the center of Hamaspik.

Additional designated spots for people with disabilities have also been added, in anticipation of the delivery of three accessibility transport vehicles recently secured through a federal "5310" grant.

At the same time, the parking lot's

sanitation arrangements—and indeed, those of the entire building—have been significantly upgraded, with the replacement of its ordinary dumpsters with a state-of-the-art commercial compactor.

"It's much nicer, cleaner, and cheaper," says Hamaspik of Orange County Purchasing & Special Affairs Coordinator Joel Schnitzer of the new on-site machine.

A landscaping team, heavy equipment and all, began the lot-improvement project mid-October.

The team finished their work in early November—leaving behind a cleaner, greener and eco-friendlier environment and, like everything Hamaspik does, a job well done. ★

## Running on a Health Platform



AN EXERCISE IN PHYSICAL FITNESS: JOINED BY FRIENDS, "DAY HABBER" DUDI IS ON IT

## A Lot Better



NOW WITH AN MORE-MATCHING OUTSIDE: HAMASPIK OC'S MAIN LOBBY

## SHTICK!



SHTICK (MORE OF) IT TO THEM: A SNAP-SHOT OF WHAT'S IN STORE AT STARS

## Thanks to Robust Community Demand, Hamaspik's "Wedding Store" Seeking Larger Showroom

For some time now, acclimating people to the community mainstream in yet another way was the goal of STARS Shtick—yet another project by STARS, Hamaspik of Rockland County's day program for high-functioning women.

"Wedding shtick," in Orthodox Jewish slang, refers to the range of adorable accessories—frilly umbrellas, noisemakers, silk jump ropes and the like—not-uncommonly deployed by brides and their immediate friends at the excited heights of dancing at weddings.

For several months now, STARS has been operating STARS Shtick, an on-site community wedding-shtick "library" at

which brides can borrow these fun items.

During operating hours, community members can pop in and select the accessories they'd like—all while getting friendly expert advice from a STARS "librarian" on site. Most importantly, patrons and "librarians" mutually provide community acclimation to one another.

The community response remains robust, reports Hamaspik of Rockland County Director of Day Services Shlomo Kornbluh—so much so that STARS Shtick is now seeking a standalone showroom.

Seems that at Hamaspik, growth means more than one thing. ★



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

## New Location, Status and Neighbors, Same Loving Care for Dinev Residents

After years of planning, Hamaspiik of Orange County's Dinev Inzerheim Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) finally moved to its new home in the Village of Kiryas Joel: 27 Karlsburg Rd.

The change from the original 10 Dinev Rd. address, and from ICF to an Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) per New York State mandate, was officially completed on October 31—the first night on which residents slept in their new bedrooms.

But 27 Karlsburg is only temporary.

The now-empty house on Dinev will be replaced by a community residential complex—with four ground-floor IRAs.

Those four separate new IRAs are part of Hamaspiik's ongoing response to the newest Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) rules issued by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which call for a reduction in IRA size—as well as the new "Person-Centered" approach.

As such, the independent new IRAs will ultimately house four residents each—with less in each than before.

Upon completion of that complex in a few years, residents will return to four separate kitchens, dining rooms and laundry rooms. They'll also have plenty of outdoor playgrounds and lots of new

neighbors for integration.

For the newly-renamed Dinev Shvesterheim IRA, the move culminates extensive outreach.

That outreach began mid-winter 2017 with a series of meetings between staff and future neighbors, followed by those neighbors' personal visits to 10 Dinev Rd. It culminated with a lovely "meet and greet" brunch on the new premises this past October 25.

On hand to personally greet a good few mothers and young children living nearby was devoted longtime Program Director Mrs. ETTY BRACH, who spoke eloquently about the home, Hamaspiik's mission, and the role it plays with the special souls entrusted to it.

Also sharing a few words was social worker Joy Stimmel, Hamaspiik's very own Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional (QIDP). Mrs. Stimmel had worked hard in recent months to implement personalized transition plans for each resident; the meet-and-greet idea had been hers. Likewise sharing a few words was staff psychologist Mrs. KAYLA STIMMEL.

It's a new location, new neighbors and new day for Dinev's residents. But one thing's the same—the same loving care they've always gotten. ★

## Building a Family, One Careful Meeting at a Time

Chances are you'll find Mr. Fisher, Mrs. Sashitzky, Mrs. Schwartz, and Mr. Solomon in a meeting should you walk into Hamaspiik of Kings County's offices these days.

That's because all four Hamaspiik Brooklyn leaders are busy with painstaking planning for the upcoming 49th St. Shvesterheim group home these days.

Mr. Cheskel Fisher is Hamaspiik's caring Director of Residential Services. Mrs. Shalva Sashitzky, RN will be its nurse. Mrs. Judy Schwartz, RN is Hamaspiik's longtime nurse for the agency's existing Brooklyn residences. Mr. Abraham "Mutty" Solomon, LMHC is Hamaspiik's devoted mental-health counselor.

And all four are currently working on assembling the most delicate of puzzles, says Hamaspiik of Kings County Executive Director Tzvi Wertheimer: putting together a veritable family.

Interpersonal compatibility, and

the remarkably intricate groundwork underlying it, is one of the several success secrets of Hamaspiik Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs).

That's why the quartet of staffers are working hard today—scrutinizing such variables as medical conditions, mental-health diagnoses and more to ensure that the 12 young women slated for eventual Shvesterheim residency are matched up for maximum harmony, right down to the perfect roommate(s).

Presiding over all of that will be the yet-to-be-hired "home mother"—the perfect combination of professionalism, homemaking command and loving maternal instinct that is every Hamaspiik Shvesterheim Manager.

"It's a big responsibility" to fuse 12 strangers, and their staff, into a family, Mr. Wertheimer says.

But it's a responsibility that Hamaspiik still takes with the height of gravity—one meeting at a time. ★

## Good Food for a Change



THINGS ARE COOKING: THE SPACIOUS KITCHEN AT DINEV'S NEW 27 KARLSBURG HOME



PUTTING IT ALL ON THE TABLE: AT THIS LUNCH, NEIGHBORS GOT TO KNOW HAMASPIK

## Working to Make it Work



IN THE FIELD (L-R): TZVI WERTHEIMER, CHESKEL FISHER, AND NAFTALI TESSLER ON SITE AT THE 49TH ST. HOME, TENDING TO TINY DETAILS THAT MAKE BIG DIFFERENCES



# The Autism Update

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

## ORLANDO HOSPITAL PILOTING AUTISM-FRIENDLY ER

**Orlando, Florida** — Nemours Children's Hospital of Orlando is currently running a pilot program in its emergency room (ER) department that will help reduce stress for children with autism visiting the ER.

The pilot program consists of private, quieter waiting areas for kids with autism and their families; headphones; non-usage of unneeded loud equipment; and faster waiting times for medication and tests. Treatment areas in the program also feature dimmed lighting, relaxing moving wall projections, and stress-reducing sensory toys.

The Nemours hospital chain is also piloting a similar program at its Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children, a sister hospital in Wilmington, Delaware.

Nemours' program is yet another of its kind slowly growing nationwide. In August of 2016, for example, the Myrtle Beach Airport in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina became the first in the nation to open a "quiet room" for young travelers with autism.

## RELATED CONDITIONS TIED STRONGER TO SOME 'AUTISM GENES': RESEARCH

**San Diego, California** — New research indicates that 99 genes are implicated in autism—but at the same time, nearly half show tighter ties to intellectual disability or developmental delay than to autism.

Presented mid-October at the 2018 American Society of Human Genetics conference in San Diego, California, the findings may seem discouraging but in fact offer hope, because they suggest it is possible to pin down genes involved specifically in autism.

Researchers analyzed the genes of over 6,000 families with at least one child with autism and unaffected parents. They also analyzed the genetic sequences of another 5,556 people with autism and nearly 9,000 controls.

Researchers then compared their findings with mutations in a separate group of 5,264 people who have intellectual disability or developmental delay but not autism.

The statistical analysis drew a clear line between 46 genes with a strong connection to intellectual disability and 50 with closer ties to autism, according to researchers.

## DISNEY WORLD ACTIVELY OPPOSING AUTISM LAWSUITS GOING TO TRIAL

**Atlanta, Georgia** — In mid-October, the Walt Disney Co., which operates Disney World, filed a petition with the U.S. Court of Appeal's 11th Circuit in Atlanta, asking for a rehearing following an August court decision that ruled that the plaintiffs'

complaints should be heard at trial.

Those complaints consist of some 30 lawsuits in which people with autism contend the parks didn't accommodate their disabilities because they had to wait in line for rides.

The lawsuits stem back to Disney's complete overhaul in 2013 of its line-waiting system for park guests with disabilities.

Now, Disney requires people with disabilities, and their family members, to reserve rides and use special access cards.

But many autism parents complain that the new policy doesn't eliminate ride waiting—which is especially meltdown-prone for children with severe autism—and have in turn filed suits. ★



## ABILITY TO "TUNE OUT" OWN FOOTSTEPS MAY IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM

**New York, New York** — Research has uncovered the brain processes that mice use to ignore their own footsteps while hearing those of other mice. The discovery offers new insights into how human beings learn how to speak and play music, information that may eventually help understand and treat autism.

"The ability to ignore one's own footsteps requires the brain to store and recall memories and to make some pretty stellar computations," says researcher Dr. David Schneider, an assistant professor at New York University's Center for Neural Science. "These are the building blocks for other, more important sound-generating behaviors, like recognizing the sounds you make when learning how to speak or to play a musical instrument."

Researchers created a system allowing them to control sounds that lab mice made while walking on a treadmill. At the same time, they monitored the animals' brain activity, allowing them to identify the

brain mechanisms that learn to suppress movement-related sounds.

The researchers found that the mice developed an adjustable "sensory filter" allowing them to ignore the sounds of their own footsteps—and better detect other sounds in their surroundings.

"When we learn to speak or to play music, we predict what sounds we're going to hear... and we compare this to what we actually hear," according to Dr. Schneider. "We use mismatches between expectation and experience to change how we play—and we get better over time because our brain is trying to minimize these errors."

"An inability to learn the consequences of one's actions could lead to debilitating social paralysis, as in autism," explains Schneider. "By figuring out how the brain normally makes predictions about self-generated sounds, we open the opportunity for understanding a fascinating ability—predicting the future." ★



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# With Two New Group Homes, Hamaspik to Reach another Summit of Responsiveness

*Residences to Help Relieve Still-Desperate Community Needs for Disability Housing*

The Summit Briderheim is located in Central Valley. The Catherine Briderheim is located in Chester.

Both are the new and about-to-open Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs) located in breezy upstate Orange County, and each on parcels of several open acres. Both spearhead new Orthodox Jewish communities in those locales.

They're also among Hamaspik of Orange County's latest and most involved projects.

And, given the ten desperate families whose precious sons they'll be embracing with 24/7 residential supports, they're perhaps the most communally necessary ones, too.

The Summit Briderheim IRA, located at 100 Summit Ave. in Central Valley, is a convenient five-minute drive from Kiryas Joel, the village that is home to Hamaspik of Orange County and the thriving community that it supports.

When it opens in early January of 2019, some four young men with significant intellectual disabilities, whose parents are increasingly unable to care for them, will be calling it home.

Ditto for the Catherine Briderheim IRA, situated at 15 Catherine Rd. in further-upstate Chester, slated to open its doors a mere month later. Upon becoming operational in February of 2019, it'll likewise be called home by six worthy souls whose fathers and mothers, to their anguish, cannot match their fierce love for them with the energy needed.

But, not to worry: both Summit and Catherine will be imprinted with the Hamaspik standard of family-centric caring that is the live-in couple—giving the residents the love they crave and upon which they'll surely thrive.

At the Summit IRA, the highly experienced Mr. and Mrs. Yaakov Safdi will serve both as Managers and 24/7 on-site staff. Having spent weekends manning Hamaspik's Dinev Inzerheim over a period of several years (as well as routinely hosting individuals nights and weekends at their own home), the Safdis are well-trained and prepared for the challenges ahead.

Catherine's live-in staff will consist of Mr. and Mrs. Yirmi Tessler, who boast extensive front-line familiarity with disability direct support, having served as volunteer staff for numerous



**A HIGH POINT OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES:** 15 CATHERINE RD. IN CHESTER IS NOW A HAMASPIK RESIDENCE

Hamaspik Shabbos getaway events.

Rounding out that emotional haven with a corresponding physical oasis of comfort and safety are the final construction touches at both homes.

At the Summit Briderheim, reports Hamaspik of Orange County Residential Manager Mr. Solomon Gelb, those touches include installing a new septic system as required by regulations of the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Hamaspik's longtime public-sector partner.

Other improvements newly made to the four-bedroom, single-family home are the addition of an interior wall between the kitchen and the dining room, as well as the installation of a fence around the backyard. An on-site apartment for the live-in family is complete, and architectural paperwork has also recently been wrapped up.

Further up north at the Catherine Briderheim, required renovations have consisted of several significant modifications of the house. These include rendering restrooms fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—grab bars, walk-in showers and all.

Other additions include the OPWDD-standard septic system, raising finished floors in several rooms for accessibility, new accessibility ramps and walkways around the house, raising the backyard deck and doors, modifying the kitchen per kosher standards, and even an interior wheelchair lift from the first to the second level.

Come January, a small set of Kiryas Joel parents will heave sighs of relief as



**THE VERY PICTURE OF INTEGRATION:** DOES 100 SUMMIT AVE. LOOK LIKE AN AVERAGE SUBURBAN HOME? THAT'S THE IDEA!

their boys move on to a better life just outside of town.

In February, another six couples will repeat that blessed experience. "They've been waiting for a very long

while," notes Mr. Gelb.

But thanks to his hard work and that of his fellow Hamaspik staffers, twenty fathers and mothers will be waiting no more. ★



## NYSHA Article 16 THERAPY CLINIC

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NYSHA's Article 16 Clinic provides clinical services to individuals who are developmentally disabled. Following a comprehensive evaluation, we offer a full range of clinical services. Our professional service team develops specialized treatment planning based on each individual's needs.





# Public Health and Policy News

the nation's 27-division medical research agency, now have a partnership between the company's cloud computing services and the NIH's STRIDES Initiative.

Under the partnership, the Science and Technology Research Infrastructure for Discovery, Experimentation, and Sustainability (STRIDES) Initiative will tap into the massive computing resources of Amazon Web Services (AWS).

The partnership will help NIH researchers, and researchers at over 2,500 U.S. academic institutions getting NIH support, make use of AWS's wide range of technologies.

The STRIDES Initiative's mission is to make high-value data sets more accessible to researchers, and experimenting with new ways of optimizing technology-intensive research.

## ROCKY START FOR ARKANSAS' 1ST-IN-COUNTRY MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENT

**Little Rock, Arkansas** — Free healthcare for the poor and/or people with disabilities via Medicaid has been a pillar of U.S. public health policy for decades—with debate, and legislation, to reduce, expand or otherwise modify the state/federal healthcare program a pillar of state and national politics for decades, too.

This June, Arkansas became the first U.S. state to implement a Medicaid work requirement.

While intended to incentivize gainful employment with free healthcare, over 4,300 Medicaid members have lost coverage as of September and another 5,000 are at risk, the state now reports.

A key reason for the problem is that many Arkansas Medicaid members live in low-employment, low-education rural areas where they remain difficult to contact—in addition to the complexity of signing up and participating in the program, which requires regular submission of work reports.

## NEW ACA RULE WOULD GIVE BUSINESSES MORE MONEY FOR EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN REIMBURSEMENT

**Washington, D.C.** — A proposed rule change to the existing Affordable Care Act (ACA) would allow businesses to give employees money to purchase

health insurance on the individual marketplace.

The proposed rule, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of the Treasury, would restructure existing regulations that limit usage of employer-funded accounts called *health reimbursement arrangements* (HRAs).

Under the proposed new rule, HRA money would stay exempt from federal and payroll income taxes for employers and employees.

Additionally, employers with traditional coverage would be permitted to reserve \$1,800 for vision, dental and short-term health plans.

According to senior officials, the move will expand choices for employees—with most concentrated in small and mid-sized businesses—by bringing more competition to the individual marketplace. Officials estimate that ten million people would purchase insurance through HRAs,

including one million people that were not previously insured.

## FIRST NEW FLU DRUG IN 20 YEARS APPROVED BY FDA

**Washington, D.C.** — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has now approved Xofluza, the first new antiviral flu drug to be approved by the federal agency in two decades.

Unlike vaccines, which help prevent or minimize cases of the flu, an antiviral is only used once a person has an active case of the flu.

Xofluza joins the five existing flu antivirals approved by the FDA for usage, including Tamiflu, Relenza and Rapivab. It works by blocking an enzyme that the flu virus needs to copy itself.

According to the FDA, Xofluza is a single-dose pill for use only in those ages 12 and up, and should be taken only in the first two days after the appearance of symptoms. ★



**xofluza™**  
(baloxavir marboxil) tablets 20mg/40mg

**TAKING THE FLU FIGHT UP:** THE OSAKA, JAPAN HEADQUARTERS OF SHIONOGI, MAKER OF XOFLUZA, THE FIRST NEW FLU ANTIVIRAL FDA-APPROVED IN 20 YEARS

## COMPETITION IN ACA EXCHANGES HAS PLUMMETED SINCE 2016

**New York, New York** — According to a new report in *Health Affairs*, the number of counties country-wide that have at least three Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace payers dropped in 2017 and again in 2018.

Payer participation at the county level stayed mostly stable in 2015 and 2016 as 80% of counties had at least three marketplace payers. That equaled 93% of the population. The percentage dropped to only 36% of counties and 60% of the population in 2018 as more payers left the exchanges, especially in low-population areas.

However, competition was more common in states with a higher proportion of Hispanic citizens between the ages of 45 and 64 and in states that expanded Medicaid under the health law.

## AMAZON JOINS FORCES WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH) ON RESEARCH DATA PROJECT

**Bethesda, Maryland** — Amazon and the National Institutes of Health (NIH),



► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

# More Social Security Changes Coming in 2019

**Washington, D.C.** — For 2019, Social Security beneficiaries will be getting a 2.8-percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). But that's just one of several announced new Social Security changes tied to rising prices.

Besides beneficiaries getting a raise—with an estimated average benefit paid to all retired workers to increase from \$1,422 to \$1,461 as a result—Social Security's *maximum taxable earnings* are rising.

Each year, Social Security tax is assessed at a rate of 6.2 percent for employers and employees, but only on earnings up to a certain threshold.

This is known as the Social Security maximum taxable earnings—and for 2019, the maximum



**CASHING IN:** RAISED PAYMENTS ARE JUST ONE OF SEVERAL CHANGES

taxable earnings will increase by \$4,500—from \$128,400 to \$132,900. This increases the maximum Social Security tax an employee could pay from \$7,960.80 in 2018 to \$8,239.80 in 2019.

Also, one Social Security credit will require more earnings.

You need to earn 40 Social Security “quarters of coverage,” which are also known as Social Security credits, to even qualify for Social Security benefits. And for 2019, one credit translates to \$1,360 in earnings, an increase of \$40 from 2018.

It may not seem like a lot of money (and for most workers, it isn't), but it's important to note that you can only earn four credits per year. ★

🍴 **HEALTHY EATING**

<h2 style="color: #008000; margin: 0;">Cauliflower</h2>	<p><b>EASY</b>   YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS</p> <p>PREP TIME: 0:05   READY IN: 0:25</p> <h3 style="color: #008000; margin: 0;">Roasted Cauliflower</h3> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 head cauliflower cut into bite-size florets (or 1 bag defrosted cauliflower)</li> <li>• 1/4 cup olive oil</li> <li>• 2 cloves garlic, crushed</li> <li>• 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper</li> <li>• 1/2 teaspoons salt</li> <li>• 1/2 teaspoon onion powder</li> <li>• Dash black pepper</li> </ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preheat the oven to 450°</li> <li>• Toss the cauliflower with the olive oil, garlic, black pepper, and red pepper</li> <li>• Spread seasoned cauliflower on a lined baking pan</li> <li>• Season with salt</li> <li>• Roast until golden and tender, about 20 minutes</li> <li>• Transfer to a serving bowl and serve</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADVANCED</b>   YIELDS: 10 SERVINGS</p> <p>PREP TIME: 0:15   READY IN: 1:15</p> <h3 style="color: #008000; margin: 0;">Cauliflower kugel</h3> <p>PERFECT POTATO KUGEL SUBSTITUTE</p> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2lbs frozen cauliflower- defrosted</li> <li>• 1/3 cup oil</li> <li>• 1 onion</li> <li>• 1 cloves garlic - crushed</li> <li>• 4 eggs - beaten</li> <li>• 3/4 cup matzo meal</li> <li>• Dash of black pepper</li> <li>• Salt to taste</li> </ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preheat oven on 425•</li> <li>• Sauté onion</li> <li>• Mash cauliflower</li> <li>• Stir together all ingredients and pour in 9/13 baking pan</li> <li>• Bake uncovered for 1 hour</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADVANCED</b>   YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS</p> <p>PREP TIME: 0:30   READY IN: 1:30</p> <h3 style="color: #008000; margin: 0;">Cauliflower Pizza</h3> <p>DELICIOUS GLUTEN-FREE PIZZA</p> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 head cauliflower, cut into florets</li> <li>• 2 garlic cloves</li> <li>• 1/2 cup shredded cheese</li> <li>• 2 eggs, lightly beaten</li> <li>• 2 tablespoons oregano</li> <li>• 1/2 teaspoon salt</li> <li>• Dash of ground black pepper</li> <li>• 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder</li> <li>• 1 cup marinara sauce</li> <li>• 2 cups pizza cheese</li> </ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line a baking sheet with parchment paper</li> <li>• In the bowl of a food processor, combine the cauliflower with the garlic. Pulse until the mixture resembles a fine meal, about 2 to 3 minutes.</li> <li>• Transfer to a large mixing bowl</li> <li>• Add the shredded cheese and eggs, mix to combine</li> <li>• Add seasonings</li> <li>• Press the cauliflower mixture into a 1/2-inch-thick circle on the prepared baking sheet</li> <li>• Bake the crust until it's crisp and golden around the edges, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the crust from the oven</li> <li>• Spread the marinara sauce on top of the crust</li> <li>• Top generously with pizza cheese</li> <li>• Bake until the cheese is melted and bubbly, about 15 to 20 minutes</li> <li>• Cool for 5 minutes before serving</li> </ul>
	<b>CHEF'S TIP:</b>		
	<p>Add 1/4 cup milk to the water when boiling cauliflower, this will keep the cauliflower bright white!</p>		
	<p><b>BENEFITS:</b></p> <p>Cauliflower health benefits include boosting ultraviolet radiation protection, fighting inflammation, lessening heart and circulatory system issues, lessening cancer risk, supplying vitamin K to the body, improving digestion and detoxifying the body, supporting healthy weight loss, boosting brain health, and fortifying the immune system.</p>		



# In the Know

## ALL ABOUT... RHEUMATISM

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

As far as modern medicine goes, “rheumatism” is a fairly old-fashioned phrase.

There was a time when it was commonly used to refer to inflammation (which is basically what the word means)—and specifically, arthritis.

Today, however, modern medicine sees rheumatism as a general or primary symptom of many different diseases—primarily arthritis in its several forms, plus lupus, gout and, yes, about 200 others.

In this article, then, we’ll write about rheumatism not as a disease in its own right—rather, we’ll write about it as a condition that is the primary symptom of many other diseases.

### DEFINITION AND SYMPTOMS

*Rheumatism* is any inflammation of the joints, tendons, ligaments, bones or muscles. This inflammation is commonly treated by a specialist called a *rheumatologist*. Rheumatism is also defined by joint pain or loss of joint motion.

*Rheumatism* is sometimes called musculoskeletal disease.

The most common rheumatic diseases include:

- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Gout
- Infectious arthritis
- Juvenile idiopathic arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Lupus
- Polymyalgia rheumatica
- Psoriatic arthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Scleroderma
- Sjogren’s syndrome

Here are brief definitions and symptoms of some of the most common rheumatic diseases:

#### Ankylosing spondylitis

This condition usually starts slowly as lower back pain in the joints where the spine attaches to the pelvis. It’s more common in young men, especially from the teens through age 30. Symptoms revolve around the back, beginning with lower back pain that works its way up.

#### Gout

Gout is a buildup of uric acid crystals in a joint—usually the big toe or another part of the foot. Symptoms, which almost always strike suddenly, include intense joint pain, stiffness, inflammation and redness.

#### Infectious arthritis

This arthritis caused by an infection in a joint. Symptoms, which start quickly, include intense joint swelling and pain (usually in just one affected joint), most likely in the knee.

#### Juvenile idiopathic arthritis

This is the most common form of arthritis in children, in which a child’s immune system mistakenly attacks its own tissues. In turn, this causes inflammation in joints and other organs and systems. Symptoms include painful and swollen joints, along with fever and rash.

#### Lupus

This autoimmune disease can affect many organs. Symptoms include joint pain and stiffness, fatigue, “butterfly” rash on the cheeks, sun sensitivity, hair loss, kidney problems, blood disorders, inflammation of heart or lung linings, and even seizures or strokes.

#### Osteoarthritis (OA)

Unlike most rheumatic diseases, osteoarthritis isn’t linked to the immune system. It results from worn-down bone cartilage, making joints hurt and harder to move. Symptoms include joint pain, swelling, warmth, and stiffness.

#### Rheumatoid arthritis

This occurs when the immune system attacks the body’s tissues, causing joint pain, swelling, and stiffness. Symptoms include pain and swelling in multiple joints (like both wrists or both ankles), problems in other organs like the eyes or the lungs, morning joint stiffness, and fatigue.

#### Sjogren’s Syndrome

Sjogren’s syndrome causes parts of the body, like the eyes or mouth, to dry out. Some people with Sjogren’s also have rheumatoid arthritis and/or lupus. Its cause is unknown, but it happens when the immune system attacks the body parts experiencing dryness. It’s more common in women. Symptoms include dry eyes (due to the glands not

producing sufficient tears), eye irritation and burning, dry mouth (due to the glands not producing sufficient saliva), tooth decay, gum disease, or thrush, and swollen glands on the sides of the face.

### DIAGNOSIS

It is important to get a diagnosis to understand the underlying cause of a person’s rheumatism.

For conditions like osteoarthritis, the cause may be related to one’s weight, age or history of sports injuries. Other conditions, like rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis, are autoimmune disorders in which the body’s own immune system attacks healthy tissue.

A medical history, a physical exam and X-rays are all commonly used to diagnose joint conditions.

Some types of rheumatic diseases can be diagnosed by a general practitioner. Others may require a rheumatologist—the doctor who specializes in the treatment of arthritis and related conditions.

Based on the patient’s symptoms, the general practitioner, rheumatologist or other specialist can determine what types of tests are needed.

Many of the tests to diagnose rheumatic diseases involve blood-based DNA tests. Blood samples first need to be drawn, followed by one or several DNA tests for specific genes that allow doctors to isolate the precise cause and render an accurate diagnosis.

### CAUSE

Many conditions caused by rheumatism occur when the immune system attacks the body’s own tissues. Doctors aren’t sure why, but genetics, environmental factors (cigarette smoke





or pollution), or an infection play a role. Gender also plays a role—rheumatism seems to affect more women than men.

Regardless of what disease causes inflammation, the following biological process occurs in every case of inflammation:

- Chemicals from the body's white blood cells are released into the blood or affected tissues to protect the body from foreign substances
- Blood flow to the area of injury or infection is increased by those chemicals, possibly resulting in redness and warmth
- The chemicals cause a leak of fluid into the tissues
- Fluid in the tissues results in swelling
- Swelling may stimulate nerves and cause pain
- Increased number of cells and inflammatory substances within the joint cause irritation, swelling of the joint lining and, eventually, the wearing down of cartilage (the cushions at the end of bones)

## TREATMENT

With inflammation of rheumatism, the goals of treatment are to:

- Correct, control, or slow down the underlying disease process
- Avoid or modify activities that aggravate pain
- Relieve pain through pain medications and anti-inflammatory drugs
- Maintain joint movement and muscle strength through physical therapy

With proper treatment, rheumatic disease in its many forms can be managed, with patients still living good and productive lives. There are several effective medications and therapies, along with health professionals who can help.

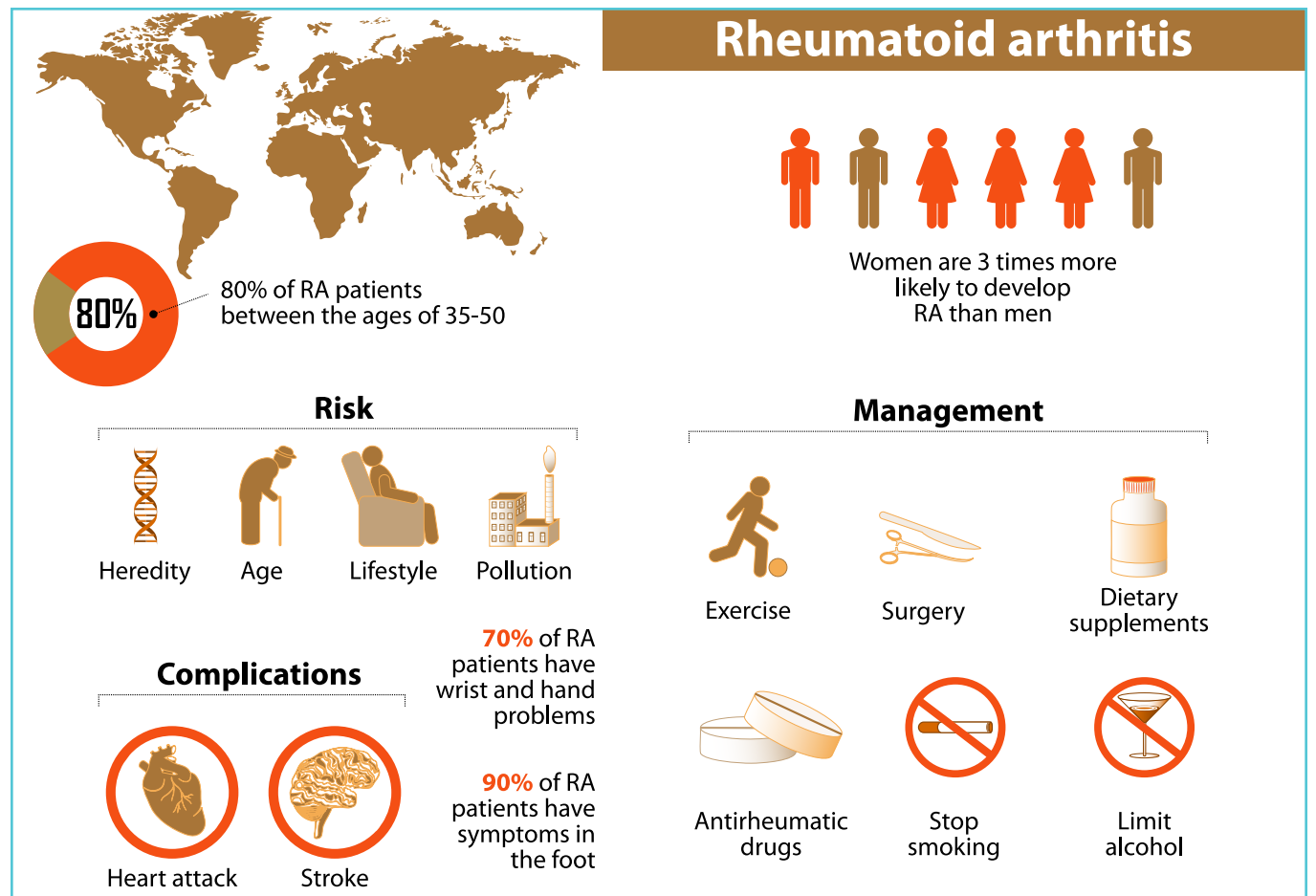
However, the patient must take control of the situation: ensuring adequate exercise, rest and nutrition, for starters.

Taking control also means learning about the disease and taking steps to address personal needs. Knowledge—and a positive approach—can and will make all the difference between just coping or living well despite the diagnosis.

As rheumatism-related diseases are quite diverse, so are their treatments—with specific approaches, medications and therapies for each individual diagnosis.

### Anti-inflammatory drugs

There are many over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription drugs available to decrease joint pain, swelling and inflammation, and possibly prevent or minimize the progression of the inflammatory disease. They are often used in combination due to differing



effects.

Many OTC drugs are categorized as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Such common NSAIDs include several brand-name drugs like Tylenol or Motrin whose active ingredients are aspirin, ibuprofen or naproxen.

Other drugs include:

- Corticosteroids (like prednisone)
- Antimalarial medications (like hydroxychloroquine)
- Oral drugs known as DMARDs (disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs), like methotrexate, sulfasalazine, leflunomide, azathioprine, and cyclophosphamide
- Biologic drugs such as infliximab, etanercept, adalimumab, certolizumab, golimumab, abatacept, tocilizumab, and rituximab

Some of these medications are also used to treat other conditions such as cancer or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or to reduce the risk of rejection of a transplanted organ. However, when such “chemotherapy” medications (like methotrexate or cyclophosphamide) are used to treat inflammatory diseases, the doses are sometimes significantly lower and the risks of side effects tend to be less than when prescribed in higher doses for cancer treatment.

When you are prescribed any medication, it is important to meet with your doctor regularly so he or she can detect the development of any side effects.

Other treatments for the inflammation of rheumatism include surgery, physical therapy, and exercise.

No matter what type of rheumatic condition a patient has, doctors most often prescribe exercise as part of their treatment plan. Exercises that focus on

strength, range of motion, flexibility and cardiovascular health can help ease joint pain and improve overall health.

## PREVENTION

Medications and other treatments can prevent existing inflammation from worsening, and help reduce inflammation. But what about keeping inflammation from striking in the first place?

According to Harvard University, doctors are learning that one of the best ways to quell inflammation lies not in the medicine cabinet but in the fridge.

“Many experimental studies have shown that components of foods or beverages may have anti-inflammatory effects,” says Dr. Frank Hu, professor of nutrition and epidemiology in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Choose the right foods, and you may be able to reduce your risk of illness. Consistently pick the wrong ones, and you could accelerate the inflammatory disease process. And, not surprisingly, the same foods that contribute to inflammation are generally considered bad for our health, including sodas and refined carbohydrates, as well as red meat and processed meats.

According to current research, then, the following foods should be limited or avoided to the extent possible:

- Refined carbohydrates, such as white bread and pastries
- French fries and other fried foods
- Soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages
- Red meat (burgers, steaks) and processed meat (hot dogs, sausage)

- Margarine and shortening

Unhealthy foods also contribute to weight gain, which is itself a risk factor for inflammation. Yet in several studies, even after researchers took obesity into account, the link between foods and inflammation remained, which suggests weight gain isn't the sole driver.

On the flip side are foods and beverages that have been found to reduce the risk of inflammation, and with it, chronic disease, says Dr. Hu. He notes in particular fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, apples, and leafy greens that are high in natural antioxidants and polyphenols—protective compounds found in plants. To combat inflammation, then, include plenty of these foods in your diet:

- Tomatoes
- Olive oil
- Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, and collards)
- Nuts (almonds, walnuts)
- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines)
- Fruits (strawberries, blueberries, cherries, and oranges)

## PROGNOSIS

You are not alone. An estimated 50 million people in the United States of all ages and genders have arthritis or other rheumatic conditions. As such, rheumatic diseases are being heavily researched, with new drugs and treatments not infrequently appearing.

Because many rheumatic diseases are chronic conditions, they're unlikely to go away. But while there may be no cure, effective management is available for most. ★



## Status Report

# Happening In Hospitals Today



### HOSPITAL LINENS MAY BE SOURCE OF BUG OUTBREAKS: STUDY

**London, England** — According to a recent study in *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, commercial laundering processes using industrial detergent and high disinfecting temperatures do not completely eliminate *Clostridium difficile* (C. diff) bacteria on hospital sheets.

In the study, researchers assessed bacterial contamination before and after washing sheets naturally or artificially contaminated with C. diff spores. In one washing process, researchers inoculated cotton sheets with C. diff spores and washed them with sterile uncontaminated pieces of fabric using an industrial bleach detergent in a simulated washing extractor cycle.

Researchers also assessed spore survival on naturally contaminated bedsheets from C. diff patients using the United Kingdom National Health System (NHS)'s healthcare laundry decontamination process. The sheets were washed with industrial detergent at a high disinfecting temperature in a commercial washer before being pressed and dried.



**HOSPITABLE TO MORE THAN PATIENTS? A STUDY SAYS LINENS MAY BE THE PROBLEM**

Neither washing process eliminated the presence of pathogenic bacteria, reported industry outlet *Becker's Hospital Review*. The U.K.'s commercial laundry process only reduced C. diff spore counts by 40 percent.

Researchers concluded current thermal disinfection standards for hospital sheets do not adequately remove C. difficile spores.

### STATES OF NURSE EMPLOYMENT, PAY TODAY

**New York, New York** — According to a recently-released national survey of nurses, New York's nurses are not doing too badly—although those in rival coastal state California seem to be doing even better.

According to the ADVANCE Healthcare Network survey of some

22,000 registered nurses (RNs) coast to coast, full-time nurses in California have the highest annual average salary of nurses in all 50 states: an average of \$106,000 a year.

California was followed in that roster by Oregon (\$104,844) and Nevada (\$104,167), while New York nurses took eighth place at \$98,869. West Virginia took last place at \$63,416.

As for the highest-paying nursing jobs nationwide, nurse anesthetists had the highest average salary in 2018 out of 27 nursing job titles, earning about \$150,900 on average.

About half of the 13,038 respondents who offered a specific job title said they were staff nurses. The average salary was \$73,287 for these professionals.

According to the survey, nurse midwives (\$115,000) actually earned more on average than nurse practitioners (\$114,901). Clinical nurse specialists rounded out the bottom of the list at \$88,271.

### HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY GETS \$10 MILLION FOR COMPLEX JOINT REPLACEMENT CENTER

**New York, New York** — Manhattan's very own Hospital for Special Surgery was endowed with \$10 million by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation to rename its complex joint reconstruction center.

The center will now be named the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Complex Joint Reconstruction Center. The hospital plans to use the \$10 million for the operation and expansion of its clinical, research and educational programs.

The center has expanded in the past year to comprise 16 orthopedic surgeons who have developed a patient registry with more than 800 surgical cases. Last year, the now-renamed Stavros Niarchos Foundation Complex Joint Reconstruction Center performed 534 surgeries. ★



**NEW VISTAS FOR JOINT EFFORTS: THIS NEW YORK NICHE HOSPITAL IS NOW HOME TO THE NEW STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION COMPLEX JOINT RECONSTRUCTION CENTER**





# The Senior Care Gazette

News from  
the World of  
HamaspikCare  
and Senior  
Health

## Opening New Doors, Expanding Home Care to Greater Community

*Hamaspik HomeCare's New Corporate Headquarters*



**IN A GOOD SPACE:** HAMASPIK HOMECARE'S STANDALONE NEW MAIN OFFICE, INTERIOR SPACES DAYS BEFORE COMPLETION (INSET)

In recent weeks, it was a study in organized chaos—dust, tools and scrap everywhere; workers buzzing about like bees; tools roaring and clanging like, well, an active construction site.

But now, plumbing, electricity and technology wiring is in place. Bare steel 2x4s are sheathed in sheet rock. Walls are painted. Floors are carpeted. Brand-new furniture fills the private offices and open workplaces.

It's the brand-new Hamaspik HomeCare corporate headquarters at 5 Perlman Drive in Spring Valley, New York. The new location was chosen not just for its ample floor space, says Hamaspik HomeCare Chief Operating Officer Mordechai Wolhendler, but also for its ample parking spaces.

With robust growth over the past several years, Hamaspik HomeCare had vastly outgrown its previous offices at Hamaspik of Rockland County's Rt. 59 hub in the heart of Monsey.

The new location is just a bit down the road—but still well within the greater Monsey area, adjacent as it is to Rt. 59 in

Spring Valley, as well as to several active businesses.

Of significant note is the new location's proximity to Spring Valley's Haitian community, many members of which serve as outstanding home health aides (HHAs) and personal care aides (PCAs) with Hamaspik HomeCare.

And in contrast to the overcrowded desks and preciously scarce floor space at its old location, Hamaspik HomeCare's new digs are a study in aesthetics, technology and efficiency.

Large windows allow plenty of sunshine. Several conference rooms of varying sizes will allow beneficiaries and staff the privacy they need on demand. Employees will no longer be practically piled up on top of each other.

And most importantly, the fresh new workspace will inject fresh new motivation into employees, enhancing performance and increasing efficiency, according to Hamaspik HomeCare Executive Director Asher Katz.

"It's amazing what we were able to accomplish in the cramped offices that

we had," he says. "Just imagine what we'll be able to do with all this new space!"

Given Hamaspik HomeCare's record, that's probably not an exaggeration. ★

## 'Right to know the lowest price' bills now law

Washington, D.C. — In a little-reported development that experts say has major repercussions, the Patient Right to Know Act and the Know the Lowest Price Act were signed into law on October 10.

Both bipartisan bills ban the long-standing "gag clause," which made it illegal for pharmacists and counter clerks to tell patients they could save money on drugs by paying cash or trying lower-cost alternatives.

Gag clauses were a key piece of the high-drug-price puzzle. Recent studies suggest that 23 percent of commercially insured patients overpay for medications, a significant piece.

The ratification "puts an end to gag clauses, so all Americans will know how to get the best deal on prescription drugs and will no longer be left in the dark," said Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma.

The development stands to especially benefit seniors, who increasingly depend on an increasing—and increasingly expensive—array of medications to maintain their health. ★

## Seniors benefit more from supportive housing

*Study finds less hospitalization for Medicare patients living in supportive housing*

**New Brunswick, New Jersey** — A new study by Rutgers University finds that Medicare-eligible residents of housing with supportive services have lower hospital utilization than a comparable group of seniors living in housing without supportive services.

The study compared hospital use by a group of seniors living in supportive housing to another group of seniors living without supportive housing. The study found that hospital discharge rates were 32 percent lower, hospital lengths-

of-stay one day shorter, and ACSC rates 30 percent lower for supported seniors than those in the non-supported group.

The research supports the hypothesis that stable housing with supportive services can reduce the use of expensive medical care—especially hospitalizations for ambulatory care sensitive conditions, according to Rutgers researchers. This is because social work staff can identify people who require community-based services and facilitate their use. ★





# CHUNY IS YOUR GUY.

**At Hamaspik HomeCare, you've got a guy on the inside.** Whether you need advice on a discharge from a facility or general questions, please call or visit us anytime and speak to Chunya, your dedicated homecare planner.

**Home Health Aides  
Therapy Services  
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Choose your own aide,  
it can even be a  
family member!



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