



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

MARCH '19 • ISSUE NO. 167



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

WHAT IS YOUR DAILY VITAMIN REGIMEN?

A: MULTIVITAMIN(S); B: SPECIFIC VITAMIN(S); C: NEITHER

Respond to: survey@nyshainc.org



HEALTH STAT

AVERAGE HOSPITAL EXPENSES PER INPATIENT DAY

U.S.-WIDE

State/local government hospitals: \$2,052
Nonprofit hospitals: \$2,488

NEW YORK

State/local government hospitals: \$2,813
Nonprofit hospitals: \$2,512

Source: 2016 American Hospital Association Annual Survey



HEALTH TIP

PLANT CLEAN AIR IN YOUR PLACE

People and plants—what a perfect, planet-balancing partnership! People inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide—while plants do the opposite. So, want constant fresh oxygen in your home or office? Put down a good few potted plants—your lungs, and the atmosphere, will thank you for it.

INSIDE

HEALTH

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HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

FOR SENIOR CARE, IT TAKES A VILLAGE (AND TOWN) VILLAGE OF SPRING VALLEY MAYOR ALLAN M. SIMON (L) AND TOWN OF RAMAPO SUPERVISOR MICHAEL SPECHT (R) TURN OUT ON JAN. 7 TO SHARE WORDS OF SUPPORT FOR HAMASPIK AT THE INAUGURATION OF ITS HAMASPIK HOMECARE DIVISION’S NEW SPRING VALLEY HEADQUARTERS



LOCATED AT 5 PERLMAN DRIVE IN THE HEART OF SPRING VALLEY, HAMASPIK HOMECARE’S SPACIOUS NEW COMPLEX IS PERFECTLY SITUATED TO ACCOMMODATE AND GROW WITH ITS DIVERSE BODY OF CAREGIVERS, CLIENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY



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DISABILITY NEWS

Infections in Childhood Increase Risk of Mental Disorders: Study

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HAMASPIK NEWS



All in the Family
Children’s Performer Uncle
Moishy Back at Hamaspik!

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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 Hamaspik services

THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

Providing: A bilingual monthly newspaper keeping the community up-to-date on all major news in medicine, public health, disability, hospitals, senior care, and general Hamaspik news

OMH

HEALTH AND RECOVERY PLAN (HARP)

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

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

America’s Health, 2018 Edition: Bad News—and Good News

Minneapolis, Minnesota — According to the latest edition of America’s Health Rankings, a respected annual survey by the United Health Foundation (UHF) America’s physical health as a nation got worse in 2018—but a healthy future could be on the horizon.

The new report says that roughly one in three American adults, or 31.3 percent, now qualify as obese—a five-percent rise over 2017. And the mortality rate due to drug-related causes also increased, rising from 13.5 to 16.9 per 100,000 individuals since 2015. At the same time, modern healthcare remains in flux as policy, regulation, technology and trends shape the market.

Health insurance companies have been attempting to address these issues. United Health itself recently began offering its group members Apple Watches and incentivizing them to “walk off” their extra weight. And many insurers, from Cigna to Independence Blue Cross, have taken it upon themselves to reduce opioid prescribing.

Despite these setbacks, the country has progressed, too.

The number of kids in poverty is down 19 percent, falling from 22.6 percent in 2013 to 18.4 percent in 2018. And, encouragingly, the number of primary care physicians is up, having risen eight percent since 2016.





NYSHA Article 16 THERAPY CLINIC

SERVING INDIVIDUALS
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Certified by


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.

 We accept Medicaid

For evaluations, appointments and to schedule a visit to the clinic call
718.26.NYSHA
6 9 7 4 2

NYSHA Clinic locations: 293 Division Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11211
1Hamaspik Way. Monroe, NY 10950



Psychiatry



Counseling



Speech Therapy



Nutrition Services



Psychological Evaluations



Occupational Therapy



Physical Therapy



●► NYSHA NEWS

Coordinating Communication: Keeping Supervisors on the Same Page

Tri-County Care Hosts 2nd Care Coordinator Supervisor Summit

As the machine that is Tri-County Care (TCC) continues to reach more people with disabilities on the outside, it's increasing its own efficiency on the inside.

And among the several mechanisms keeping that internal efficiency alive and thriving is an ongoing emphasis on "open lines of communication throughout our workforce," CEO Yoel Bernath tells the *Gazette*.

Like the handful of system-improving Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs) launched statewide by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Tri-County Care launched in 2018—but with an eye



towards constant self-improvement.

"After six months, let's get together," Bernath

recalls saying. And on Dec. 12, indeed they did.

Tri-County's second-ever Care Coordinator Supervisor Summit was held on the premises of TCC's Headquarters that day. In attendance were TCC's 16 Care Coordinator Supervisors, the administrative staff presiding over the agency's crack team of close to 400 Care Coordinators.

The day-long event focused on practical solutions and tips for the most common problems faced on the front lines by Care Coordinators—and also served as a "get-to-know-you" event for the Supervisors presiding over TCC workforces from Albany to the Bronx and from Long Island City to Brooklyn. ★

●► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

FDA Letter: Ban on Special-needs Shock Devices to be Finalized in 2019

Washington, D.C. — In 2019, the FDA will finalize a 2016 proposal to bar so-called *electrical stimulation devices*, according to Commissioner Scott Gottlieb.

"We believe these products present an unreasonable and substantial risk to public health that cannot be corrected or eliminated through changes to the labeling," Gottlieb recently wrote in a letter.

The planned finalization comes two years after the FDA proposed a ban on devices used to administer electric shocks on people with developmental disabilities.

The ban centers on the controversial Judge Rotenberg Center in Canton, Mass., which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities as well as those with behavioral and emotional problems. It's the only U.S. facility where the devices are known to be used.

The devices use electrodes attached to the skin to deliver electric shocks in order to condition individuals not to engage in self-injurious or aggressive behaviors.

Supporters say that the devices are an effective last-ditch option for

severe issues that failed to respond to any other corrective treatments.

In a statement, the Center said that it will fight any efforts to ban the

electric shock devices, noting a recent favorable court decision. ★



UNSHOCKING DEVELOPMENT: A RECENT LETTER BY FDA COMMISSIONER SCOTT GOTTLIEB INDICATES A FINAL SHOCK-DEVICE BAN

Hamaspik Gazette

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Happening in Health Today

REPORT: GIRL'S INOPERABLE BRAIN TUMOR DISAPPEARS, "UNDETECTABLE" ON MRI

Buda, Texas — Local media outlet KVUE reported in mid-December that a girl's brain tumor disappeared.

Roxli Doss, 11, had been diagnosed in June of 2018 with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), according to the report. The diagnosis is inoperable.

"It is very rare, but when we see it, it is a devastating disease," Dell Children's Medical Center's Dr. Virginia Harrod told KVUE. "You have decreased ability to swallow, sometimes vision loss, decreased ability to talk, eventually difficulty with breathing."

The Austin, Texas, doctor said that although there is no cure, Roxli underwent weeks of radiation on the aggressive tumor. The report also noted that her parents and community prayed—which seems to have quite literally worked a miracle.

"When I first saw Roxli's MRI scan, it was actually unbelievable," Harrod said. "The tumor is undetectable on the MRI scan, which is really unusual."

Doctors are still monitoring Roxli, who is continuing treatments as a

precaution despite feeling fine. Her parents say it's thanks to God.

"EXERCISE HORMONE" TIED TO BONE-STRENGTHENING BENEFITS

Boston, Massachusetts — It's no news that exercise is good for you in so many ways: heart health, weight loss and maintenance, overall morale and wellbeing and more.

But now, according to a new study, regular exercise may be good for the strength of your bones, too.

The research behind the study centers on a hormone called irisin that is secreted by muscles during exercise. Lab mouse experiments found that irisin works directly on a common type of bone cell, stimulating the cells to produce a protein that encourages bones to thin. However, this chain of molecular events ultimately takes a turn for the better and reverses bone loss.

According to the new study, irisin helps prolong the lives of *osteocytes*, the most common cell type found in mature bone tissue. The study also found that irisin leads bone cells to begin secreting a protein called sclerostin, known for its role in

preparing bones for remodeling and rebuilding by first breaking them down.

MAGNETIC BRAIN STIMULATION MAKING PROGRESS

Los Angeles, California — Research on usage of experimental new technology called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to treat depression, and perhaps other conditions, is proceeding at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and other venues.

A trial at the Veteran's Administration (VA) this past year on TMS for treatment-resistant depression found no advantage for the treatment over a sham version.

However, since TMS was approved in 2008 by the FDA, researchers have been investigating how effective TMS is in treating such disorders as anxiety, migraines, tinnitus, or other forms of chronic pain.

This past August, the FDA approved the use of TMS for obsessive compulsive disorder based primarily on the results of a multi-center randomized trial in which 38 percent of patients responded positively to a TMS device compared with 11 percent of patients

using a sham device.

At the same time, the FDA also approved a faster theta burst stimulation (TBS) technology, "ExpressTMS," which involves sending magnetic stimulation at a higher frequency through the brain, and cuts treatment time from 37 minutes per session to just three minutes.

NEW TREATMENT MAY HELP PEOPLE "ALLERGIC" TO LIGHT

Melbourne, Australia — Melbourne-based global biomedical firm Clinuvel is waiting for priority approval for its new treatment for people with porphyria, a rare skin condition that triggers severe pain upon exposure to light, primarily sunlight.

For the estimated 600 U.S. residents with the most severe form of the disease, known as erythropoietic porphyria (EPP), there is no known preventative other than dressing completely covered or remaining indoors (and largely in the dark).

However, a Clinuvel-developed drug called afamelanotide can prevent the EPP's symptoms. Administered via a rice-grain-sized implant, the \$16,000 treatment—which has been available for a decade in Europe—works by stimulating the skin's production of melanin, which naturally tans the skin and protects it from light.

Clinuvel is currently awaiting validation of its new drug application and hopefully-following Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) target date for FDA review. If priority review is then received, afamelanotide could be approved in as little as six months. ★



OVERACTIVE IMMUNE SYSTEM MAY CAUSE CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME: STUDY

London, England — A study by King's College London has found that an overactive immune system could trigger chronic fatigue syndrome, a condition that causes extreme tiredness.

Researchers found a link between an exaggerated immune response and long-lasting fatigue, also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis, or ME.

The recently-published study is the first to shed some light into the immune system's role in the development of the condition, a multisystem disorder about which very little is known, according to professor of biological psychiatry Carmine Pariante.

According to the researchers, a treatment for chronic hepatitis C infections called interferon alpha may be involved, because it's known to induce persistent fatigue in some people. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Modern-day Trip Brings to Life Satmar Rebbe's Miraculous WWII Train Ride

Hamaspiik of Orange County Men's Day Hab Commemorates Climactic Journey

Trains have an aura, a reputation, all their own.

Whether a handy metaphor for life's lessons big and little, or a lumbering yet effective means of daily transportation, trains loom large in the public consciousness.

Especially for the Chasidic community of Satmar.

It was a train, after all, that saved the life of the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1887-1979), the spearhead and spiritual leader of the Satmar community in America after WWII.

That fateful journey of escape, from a near-certain death in the Holocaust that killed six million European Jews, to the decades of thriving life that followed, is traditionally celebrated each year by Satmar communities everywhere.

On the Jewish calendar, it was the 21st of Kislev, 5705 (Dec. 7, 1944) when Rabbi Teitelbaum's train crossed the border from Germany into Switzerland. Ever since, Satmar Chasidim have marked it as a day of thanksgiving all their own.

Even the gentlemen attending Hamaspiik of Orange County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program.

Hailing as they do from the Satmar community of upstate Kiryas Joel, New York, and surrounded by a celebrating mainstream, it was only natural that Day Hab Director Solomon Rabi organized an activity that made them rightly feel a part of that mainstream, too.

It was thus on a recent winter day that the young men of the Day Hab program found themselves on the perfect platform for a lesson in experiential education—a train-station platform, that is.

Standing on the outdoor platform at the New Jersey Transit station at Harriman, New York, the gentlemen could practically relive soaring feelings of relief and redemption as the benevolent steel beast known as a passenger train clanged its way to a stop before their very feet. Before the train arrived, they even briefly sang and danced the same song that Rabbi Teitelbaum himself sang while on that fateful train.

Those overwhelming feelings of wonder and gratitude continued as the commuter vehicle hissed and rumbled forward.



THE WHEELS OF LIFE TURN ON: DANCING IN A CIRCLE, "DAY HABBERS" AND STAFF CELEBRATE THEIR REBBE'S WARTIME RESCUE

With Direct Support Professional (DSP) Mr. Chaim Klein narrating the Rebbe's story in real time, the gentlemen felt surrounded and penetrated by the miracle of their spiritual hero's escape from the Nazis—almost as if they were experiencing it themselves.

As the scenery whizzed by, with woods, houses, streets and towns sliding past like a living memory, the Hamaspiik riders could imagine the picturesque countryside of rural Germany, followed by the serene, snow-covered and postcard-perfect landscapes of Switzerland.

For the Satmar contingent, it was a 25-minute journey by train from Harriman, New York to Ramsey, New Jersey—not a five-month ride to life and freedom from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to Caux, Switzerland and eventually, New York City.

Likewise, the group of Kiryas Joel residents numbered over a dozen—far more than the tiny nucleus of three souls (Rabbi Teitelbaum, his wife, and personal aide Joseph Ashkenazi) that ultimately replanted the pageantry of the Satmar court in the United States.

But for the Hamaspiik riders, the 21st of Kislev this year wasn't just something they learned or read about. It was something they veritably touched, felt, saw and otherwise experienced—thanks to an otherwise ordinary New Jersey Transit commuter-train run.



STATIONS IN LIFE: THE GENTLEMEN EXPERIENCE MODERN-DAY TRAVEL FIRST-HAND...



...WHILE ALSO GETTING A REAL-LIFE FEEL FOR A CRITICAL TRAIN TRIP OF HISTORY

And by the time they disembarked in Ramsey, with two Hamaspiik of Orange County transportation vans waiting at the ready for them, the young men felt they were stepping off a real-life

journey back in time through history—and stepping back into today's day and age with an up-close-and-personal appreciation for the history that makes them who they are today. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



All in the Family



MIDDLEMAN: UNCLE MOISHY IS MORE THAN HAPPY TO PASS ON THE GOOD CHEER



FOCUSED GROUP: THE HAMASPIK CROWD RESPONDS MOST POSITIVELY TO THE STILL-POPULAR PERFORMER'S UNIVERSAL MUSICAL MESSAGES OF FAITH AND GOOD DEEDS

Reflecting Strong Parental/Communal Need, Alef Bais Center Quadruples in One Year

It was in fall of 2017 that Hamaspik of Kings County finally opened its long-awaited and long-demanded After-School Respite (ASR) program in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg.

Under the initial inspiration of community parent activist Mrs. Freund and the capable day-to-day management of Director Ms. Weiss, the program began with one class comprised of a handful of kids.

Today, the program, dubbed the Alef Bais Center and described as a “revolution” by one grateful parent, boasts several dozen students and staff—reflecting Hamaspik’s ever-present finger on the community’s pulse, and a robust word-of-mouth response to the program’s opening.

Recently, Hamaspik celebrated the program’s first anniversary,

and rapid expansion, with the formal mounting of mezuzahs on its classrooms’ doorposts. Hamaspik of Kings County staff and leadership were on hand to place several of the sacred scrolls on the several entryways of the Alef Bais Center—with the program’s children excitedly looking on.

More recently, the Center hosted starring legendary children’s entertainer Uncle Moishy—and was also the recipient of a heartfelt thank-you letter from a grateful mother.

Built on a standard After-School Respite model and strategically tailored to meet its constituent community’s needs, the ASR program gives Williamsburg schoolchildren with special needs a regular post-school-day curriculum of therapeutic stimulation, learning and fun. ★

Legendary Children’s Performer Uncle Moishy Visits Hamaspik Again

When one of your favorite uncles comes to visit, you can’t help but be excited.

And when you’re an individual supported by Hamaspik of Kings County and you’re visited by no less than legendary children’s performer Uncle Moishy, you’re certainly excited!

That excitement was visibly present recently in the fourth-floor conference room of Hamaspik Kings’ headquarters building on Borough Park’s 14th Avenue—as several dozen individuals gathered for an hour-long private concert by no less than Uncle Moishy himself!

In attendance were the gentlemen who regularly attend the Day Habilitation (Day Hab) programs operated by Hamaspik in both the Borough Park and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn.

Likewise were the attendees of the parallel women’s divisions of those programs in both locations.

For around 60 minutes, Uncle

Moishy—the established stage name of multi-generational family entertainer Rabbi Moshe Tanenbaum—re-galed his rapt audience with a selection of classic tunes.

A special highlight of the concert was Uncle Moishy’s extra emphasis on personally interacting with as many individual audience members as possible in the course of his performance.

With his theme of underscoring the basic and universal values of a community, Uncle Moishy has been a mainstay for decades—using children’s lyrics and simply-constructed melodies to reinforce and encourage the articles of values subscribed to by the community’s adults.

Uncle Moishy subject matter includes Jewish holidays, cultural items like the yarmulke male head covering, or ethical imperatives like kindness or sharing—and, like his typical audiences, the Hamaspik crowd taking in his folksy rhymes came away excited. ★

●► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Experience Takes the Helm at Hamaspiik's Bakertown Shvesterheim Residence

With the New Year comes new things. And at Hamaspiik, where there's always something new, 2019 doubly brings new things—especially at Hamaspiik of Orange County's Bakertown Shvesterheim Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA), where Mr. and Mrs. Moshe Yidel Hershkowitz are now its newest Managers.

The "Step-Down" IRA, so dubbed by the OPWDD for the "step down" in supervision required for its high-functioning residents, is one of Hamaspiik's dozen-plus group homes across three counties.

In keeping with its community integration mandate, Bakertown is located in a multi-unit building in the village of Kiryas Joel—where among the neighbors were the Hershkowitzes.

Besides Mrs. Hershkowitz knowing each individual Shvesterheim neighbor well, Mr. Hershkowitz is also a former long-time Direct Support Professional (DSP) and bus driver with Hamaspiik's men's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) and Shnois Chaim senior day programs right across the street—where he earned a reputation for gentleness and sensitivity towards passengers and fellow employees alike.

As such, both occasionally subbed for Bakertown staff—eventually earning them the joint position of Manager.

With their extensive shared first-hand exposure to the world of disability, the Hershkowitzes are proud graduates of the school of real life. "I think that's enough," quips Program Director Solomon Gelb. "Experience has no substitute!" ★

Taking a Trip Through Eons of Jewish History, Tradition and Lore

Day Hab Visits Landmark Jewish Children's Museum in Brooklyn

The legendary tent of the Patriarch Abraham—open to all four sides, to welcome sojourners from every perspective.

The larger-than-life Noah's Ark—a shelter for a world that was, and a kernel from which would sprout and burst forth a world of good to come.

The Jewish holidays. Jewish history. A hands-on kosher supermarket. And even a crawl-through giant Shabbos challah.

It's all there for the taking, exploring and experiencing at the Jewish Children's Museum (JCM)—six stories of interactive exhibits that bring the totality of the Jewish experience to life.

For several hours, the gentlemen of Hamaspiik of Kings County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program joined hundreds of others on a typical visiting day at the JCM.

Riding one of two huge elevators

to the upper floors, the young men enjoyed an immersive audio-visual demonstration of the Creation of the Universe. They took in interactive exhibits on the Giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, experienced the Biblical Ten Plagues (or at least one of them, and harmlessly so), checked out a mock-up of Noah's Flood-surviving giant boat, and even tried their hands at an electronic archery game paying homage to the holiday of Lag B'Omer.

The huge and vastly fun museum spans the earliest Biblical days of Jewish history right through the modern-day Holocaust—but not just in a positive way, but in a way accessible to all visitors regardless of disability.

That fact allowed the Hamaspiik contingent to join fellow visitors in enjoying and learning, as the respected part of the community mainstream that they are. ★

Know-How Is In the House



BRINGING IT HOME: THE INTEGRATED COMPLEX THAT'S HOME TO THE BAKERTOWN IRA

Touching the Timeless



PRESENTING THE PAST (CLOCKWISE, TOP LEFT): A MODERN TAKE ON THE MENORAH; A REPLICA TORAH SCROLL; THE HOLY TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM; THE BIBLICAL MISHKAN

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT FACILITATED BY TILT OF HEAD

Santa Cruz, California—Scientists have known for decades that when we look at a face, we tend to focus on the left side of the face we're viewing, from the viewer's perspective. Called the "left-gaze bias," this phenomenon is thought to be rooted in the brain, the right hemisphere of which dominates the face-processing task.

Researchers also know that we have a terrible time "reading" a face that's upside down.

Much less is known about the middle ground, how we take in faces that are rotated or slightly tilted.

"No one had studied where we look on rotated faces," said Nicolas Davidenko, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of

California, Santa Cruz.

Now, a new study of facial "fixation" led by Davidenko boosts our insights considerably.

Davidenko used eye-tracking technology to get the answers, and what he found surprised him: The left-gaze bias completely vanished and an "upper eye bias" emerged, even with a tilt as minor as 11 degrees off center.

"People tend to look first at whichever eye is higher," he said. "A slight tilt kills the left-gaze bias that has been known for so long. That's what's so interesting. I was surprised how strong it was."

Perhaps more importantly for people with autism, Davidenko found that the tilt leads people to look more at the eyes, perhaps because it makes them more approachable and less threatening.

INFECTIONS DURING CHILDHOOD INCREASE RISK OF MENTAL DISORDERS

Aarhus, Sweden — A new study from iPSYCH shows that the infections children contract during their childhood are linked to an increase in the risk of mental disorders during childhood and adolescence. This knowledge expands our understanding of the role of the immune system in the development of mental disorders.

High temperatures, sore throats and infections during childhood can increase the risk of also suffering from a mental disorder as a child or adolescent. This is shown by the first study of its kind to follow all children born in Denmark between 1 January 1995 and 30 June 2012.

The researchers have looked at all infections that have been treated from birth and also at the subsequent risk of childhood and adolescent psychiatric disorders.

"Hospital admissions with infections are particularly associated with an increased risk of mental disorders, but so too are less severe infections that are treated with medicine from the patient's own general practitioner," says Ole Köhler-Forsberg from Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital's Psychoses Research Unit. He is one of the researchers behind the study.

The study showed that children who had been hospitalized with an infection had an 84 per cent increased risk of suffering a mental disorder and a 42 per cent increased risk of being prescribed medicine to treat mental disorders.

DIGITAL GAME-BASED 'DIGITAL MEDICINE' MAY HELP KIDS WITH AUTISM AND CO-OCCURRING ADHD

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — Researchers at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) evaluated a digital medicine tool designed as an investigational treatment for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and co-occurring attention/deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The results of the study, published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, confirmed the acceptability, feasibility, and safety of Project: EVO, which delivers sensory and motor stimuli through a digital game experience, designed by Akili Interactive, a prescription digital medicine company.

As many as 50 percent of children with ASD have some ADHD symptoms, with roughly 30 percent receiving a secondary diagnosis of ADHD. However, since ADHD medications are less effective in children with both disorders than in those with only ADHD, researchers are exploring alternative treatments.

"Our study showed that children engaged with the Project: EVO treatment for the recommended amount of time, and that parents and children reported high rates of satisfaction with the treatment," said Benjamin Yerys, Ph.D., a child psychologist at CHOP's Center for Autism Research (CAR) and first and corresponding author on the study. ★



NONINVASIVE HEARING TEST MAY HELP DETECT ASD EARLIER

Erie, Pennsylvania — According to research recently published in the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, a noninvasive hearing test may assist with early detection and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The authors note a strong connection between auditory dysfunction and autism, suggesting that hearing issues identified at birth can be a clue to monitor the child for autism.

"We know the vast majority of people with autism have some type of hearing problem connected to abnormalities in the brain," says Randy Kulesza, Jr., PhD, Professor of

Anatomy at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. "That means these issues will be present and detectable at birth."

Kulesza acknowledges that while the vast majority of people with autism have hearing issues, not everyone with hearing issues has autism. Still, he says early detection would benefit both groups.

"Especially early in life, the brain is very plastic, meaning the right early interventions can literally train out those deficits," he says. "The person might not be perfectly neuro-typical but such interventions can improve function." ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

‘One Long Highlight!’ Hamaspik of Kings County Getaway Shabbos Excites, Inspires

Several Hamaspik of Kings County day programs converged on the Lake House Hotel in upstate Woodridge, New York.

On hand were some five dozen professionally-trained staff members to support each individual, many one-on-one, along with a registered nurse (RN) and licensed paramedic for that extra measure of safety. (Fortunately, neither saw any action.)

And for well over 48 hours, close to 60 children and young adults with disabilities enjoyed a well-planned program brimming with fun, games, laughing and learning.

Unprecedented Magnitude

It was not the first time Hamaspik of Kings County had hosted a Shabbos weekend retreat. But for this one's size and scope, it was unprecedented.

Last year, the agency took the After-School Respite (ASR) program to the weekend level—giving special-needs parents a much-needed break not just on school-day afternoons but on a weekend, too.

On school-day afternoons (and Sundays and school-district vacation days), thus, Hamaspik's ASR programs have participating children building a variety of activities of daily living (ADL) skills, as well as rudimentary math, science and social-skills proficiency—all cleverly disguised as fun and games.

Ditto for the weekend program—over which participants worked on such diverse skills as making beds, setting tables, and personal hygiene.

Either way, the core concept remains the same: parents of children with special needs get that invaluable breather while their beautiful kids attend therapeutic, educational play programs under ASR provider non-profits like Hamaspik.

And this year, Hamaspik of Kings County took its weekend ASR program to a whole new level—expanding not just the quantity of participants but the quality of the programming, too.

Says Hamaspik of Kings County Director of Day Services Yehudah Spangelet: “It was the first time of this magnitude.”

Non-Stop Shabbos

With the grand weekend a joint effort of three Hamaspik of Kings County programs, planning likewise brought together three sets of agency leaders.

From mid-October on, Ms. Greenwald and Ms. Weinstock regularly joined forces with Ms. Weiss and staff to



PUTTING IT ON THE TABLE: SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST AT THE EXCITING WEEKEND

dot every “i” and cross every “t”.

The result was the following:

Buses loaded with bouncing, excited and otherwise happy youths departed Brooklyn's Borough Park and Williamsburg neighborhoods at 11:00 a.m. the morning of Dec. 14. They may have cut short the already-abbreviated wintertime Friday schedules at all three programs—but a day long on excitement lay ahead.

By 2:00 p.m., the caravan of buses pulled up to the lot of the Lake House in Woodridge—and the fun began.

Mr. Spangelet and crew were on hand to welcome the oversized gang, who headed in—lovingly accompanied by staff—to unpack in their rooms and otherwise settle in.

Waiting for them in the dining room was a pre-Shabbos buffet of sorts. Despite the looming onset of Shabbos at roughly 4:15 p.m., that taste of Shabbos still left enough time for pre-Shabbos fun in the form of an on-site salon for the girls—where they quite literally had a blast getting their hair blown and curled. Furthering the pre-Shabbos excitement was a grand group photo shoot.

After lighting the traditional Shabbos candles and reciting the customary prayers, guests broke up into various groups for a colorful range of targeted play activities—from one-on-one board games to a giant Moon bounce and from a group “Parachute” activity to several “sensory stations,” themselves including yoga mats and giant “Orbie” balls.

A delicious Shabbos meal was next enjoyed by the guests; each was individually catered to so attentively that the on-site caterer later told Mr. Spangelet that his eyes had been opened to how nicely children with special needs could be treated.

Following a tale shared by a

professional storyteller, guests retired for the night—but staff were treated to a special motivational speech on giving, arranged just for them.

Shabbos day featured exhilarating group games in the morning, a grand lunch, an impromptu choir and other performances in the afternoon—you know, all the standard stuff.

After an afternoon nap, a cake-decorating activity, another storytelling session and even a “carnival,” Shabbos ended at 5:41 p.m.—but more fun only began.

Macaroni the Clown put on an hour-long show at 6:15 p.m., followed by swimming and the grand finale—live music and dancing!

Guests went to bed around 9:30 p.m.—thoroughly tired, but completely satisfied.

A Shabbos Dream Come True

So, what was the highlight? “Really, every second of the day was a highlight,” says Mr. Spangelet, who attended to supervise throughout.

But he wasn't the only one moved by the success they personally witnessed. The event paramedic, exposed directly to the world of special needs for his first time, reported being deeply touched. Likewise was Hamaspik of Kings County's Men's Day Hab Director Shia Teichman, who served as staff as reported his “most inspiring Shabbos ever!”

But for hardworking Director Spangelet and his equally hardworking staff, the success of the event—which went off with nary a single mishap—was a dream that unfolded before their very eyes. Says he: “We're already planning the next one.” ★

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Public Health and Policy News

OVER 80,000 PATIENT DEATHS CAUSED SINCE 2008 BY MEDICAL DEVICES: REPORT

New York, NY — According to a lengthy recent investigative report by the Associated Press, over 80,000 patients since 2008 have died directly or indirectly due to usage of medical devices.

The AP's report focused on spinal-cord stimulators, implanted devices that use electrical currents to block pain signals before they reach the brain.



LESS THAN STIMULATING RESULTS: A REPORT PANS SPINAL-CORD STIMULATORS

With some 60,000 spinal-cord stimulators implanted annually, many doctors see them as a panacea for millions of patients suffering from a wide range of pain disorders, according to the AP—which also makes them one of the fastest-growing products in the \$400 billion medical device industry.

But the stimulators are more dangerous than many patients know, the AP found. They account for the third-highest number of medical device injury reports to the FDA.

Those figures are part of far-wider findings by the report, which also found that across all types of medical devices, over 1.7 million injuries and nearly 83,000 deaths were reported to the FDA over the last decade.

But, “There are over 190,000 different devices on the U.S. market.

We approve or clear about a dozen new or modified devices every single business day,” said

Dr. Jeffrey Shuren, the FDA's medical device director, at a May 2018 industry conference.

“The few devices that get attention at any time in the press is fewer than the devices we may put on the market in a single business day. That to me doesn't say that the system is failing,” Dr. Shuren said. “It's remarkable that the system is working as it does.”

CMS ADMINISTRATOR VERMA DISCUSSES HEALTH INSURANCE MARKET-STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS

Washington, D.C. — In a keynote address recently at the States and

Nation Policy Summit of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in the nation's capital, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma shared her vision for innovations and reforms that will empower states and provide the flexibility states need to improve the Affordable Care Act (ACA)'s health insurance options.

To encourage states to reclaim a more active role, Verma announced the release of four State Relief and Empowerment Waivers. Under the new guidance, states are empowered to innovate new health care programs aimed at reaching important goals, including strengthening state health insurance markets, expanding choices of coverage, and targeting public resources to those most in need.

2019: THE EXPERTS LOOK AHEAD

Washington, D.C. — Industry news outlet *STAT News* asked a colorful range of experts what 2019 will look like science-and-medicine-wise. Here's some of what they said:

According to National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Director Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, 2019 will bring us closer to a universal flu vaccine.

The opioid crisis will not slow down, says UCSF professor of family and community medicine Dr. Dan Ciccarone—use of and overdose from stimulants, including methamphetamine and cocaine, will continue to rise in 2019, and compassion fatigue and polarization will confront America at the community level.

Changes in federal laws regarding medical cannabinoids will substantially expand scientific research in 2019 in that arena, says Yasmin Hurd, neuroscientist and the director of the Addiction Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Cancer research will increasingly focus on organoids, with more and more data supporting their capability to mimic a patient's tumor characteristics, according to Alice Soragni, assistant adjunct professor of hematology-oncology at UCLA.

And, finally, says 23andMe CEO Anne Wojcicki, “I believe in 2019 we will see a dramatic increase in people acquiring their health data.”

METEOROLOGIST KELVIN DROEGEMEIER TAPPED AS WHITE HOUSE DRUG CZAR/SCIENCE ADVISER

Washington, D.C. — Kelvin Droegemeier, a meteorologist and



THE FACE OF SCIENCE: DROEGEMEIER

former University of Oklahoma professor, became the White House's science adviser and “drug czar” in the closing hours of 2018, following nearly two years in which those posts sat vacant.

The confirmation means the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy will have a director for the first time since the president's inauguration in January 2017.

At the same time, the Senate also confirmed James Carroll to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, giving the White House a top drug policy adviser amid a national epidemic in which 70,000 Americans die each year from drug overdoses. Carroll has filled the role in an acting position since February.

RATINGS AGENCIES: NO IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH FROM ANTI-ACA RULING

New York, New York — A December ruling by a Texas judge striking down the Affordable Care Act (ACA) won't have any immediate credit implications for states, hospitals or health insurers as it heads through the expected appeals process, according to credit rating agency experts.

However, the same experts told industry outlet *FierceHealthcare* that the ruling—should it survive any appeals—raises serious concerns over possible future financial impacts for health systems.

Kevin Holloran, Head of U.S. Non-Profit Hospitals & Health Systems at Fitch Rating, said he expects the law will prevail. But he noted that the potential loss of ACA policies, either through repeal or legal challenges to its constitutionality, could be hurtful to the nonprofit healthcare sector.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor of the Northern District of Texas ruled that the entire law is unconstitutional due to a recent change in federal tax law. A lengthy legal battle that could ultimately bring the law to the Supreme Court once more is expected. ★

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

With Century-old Samples, Researcher Hopes for New Clues in 1918 Spanish Flu Mystery

Phoenix, Arizona — It's been one of the biggest mysteries of modern medicine: why did the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic kill so many people? University of Arizona biology professor Michael Worobey has been researching it for years.

Prof. Worobey recently came into the possession of ten glass containers holding human tissue samples taken from British soldiers who died in France in 1917 of an unknown respiratory illness. He believes that the deadly flu-like bug that killed the soldiers is a critical part of the Spanish Flu bug that erupted around the world a year later, killing an



OLD SAMPLES, NEW LIGHT: WHY WERE THESE SOLDIERS SO SICK?

estimated 50 million.

He also believes that the samples hold enough genetic material to provide new clues on the origin and evolution of the Spanish Flu.

Spanish Flu was unusual in that it primarily affected healthy late-20s adults, not the usual children and seniors. Researchers still don't know where it first appeared—and more importantly, its origin.

The prevailing theory is that it began with a human “Patient Zero.”

Prof. Worobey believes it was a modified bird-flu virus—and that it may have begun in France as early as 1916.

HEALTHY EATING

Peppers

EASY

YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

READY IN: 1:10

Roasted Peppers

DELICIOUS HEALTHY SIDE DISH

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 red peppers
- 2 green peppers
- 2 orange peppers
- 1 zucchini
- 1 onion
- 1 tomato
- 1/4 cup oil
- Salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1/2 cup vinegar

DIRECTIONS:

- Cube tomatoes
- Slice all vegetables
- Spread on a baking sheet
- Drizzle oil on top
- Season with salt
- Roast in the oven at 450° for 30 or till done, stirring every few minutes to prevent burning
- Remove from oven; pour everything into a 9 x 13 baking pan
- Pour vinegar and sprinkle basil
- Mix together
- Cover well
- Bake for additional 30 minutes at 225°

BENEFITS:

Peppers have a lot going for them. They're low in calories and are loaded with good nutrition. All varieties are excellent sources of vitamins A and C, potassium, folic acid, and fiber. Plus, the spicy ones liven up bland food, making it more satisfying.

EASY

YIELDS: 2-4 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

READY IN: 0:15

Pepper Salad

SALAD WITH A TWIST

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cloves garlic - crushed
- 4 colored peppers - sliced
- Juice of 1/2 lemon or 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Dash of salt
- Dash of black pepper
- Parsley flakes for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

- Sauté garlic cloves in a skillet with olive oil over medium-high heat, for about 30 seconds
- Add sliced peppers and cook until just warmed through, about 5 minutes
- Toss with the juice of 1/2 lemon
- Season with salt and pepper
- Garnish with parsley flakes

CHEF'S TIP:

If you have lots of extra peppers going bad, cube and store them in a Ziploc bag. Raw peppers can freeze for over a year. You can use frozen peppers for any cooked dishes.

EASY

YIELDS: 6-8 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

Marinated Pepper Salad

COLORFUL SALAD

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 red peppers
- 2 green peppers
- 2 orange peppers
- 2 yellow peppers
- 1 purple onion
- 2 cloves garlic

DRESSING:

- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt

DIRECTIONS:

- Thinly slice the peppers and onion
- In a container, mix with dressing
- Marinate overnight for best results

In the Know

ALL ABOUT... BACK PAIN

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



INTRODUCTION

The bad news, according to the Mayo Clinic, is that most people have back pain at least once—making it one of the most common reasons people go to the doctor or miss work, and a leading cause of disability worldwide.

The good news, however, is that with a few basic measures, you can relieve most back pain episodes—or prevent them from striking in the first place.

And the best news of all is that simple home treatment and proper body mechanics often will heal an aching back within a few weeks and keep it functional—with surgery rarely needed.

SYMPTOMS

“Back pain” isn’t as simple as it sounds—it’s not just “my back hurts!” Back pain can come in a variety of symptoms:

- Muscle ache or soreness
- Shooting or stabbing pain
- Pain that radiates down one or both legs
- Pain that worsens with bending, lifting, standing or walking
- Pain that improves with reclining

When to see your doctor

Most back pain gradually improves with home treatment and self-care, usually within a few weeks. If it doesn’t improve in that time, see your doctor.

In rare cases, back pain can signal a serious medical problem. Seek immediate care if back pain:

- Follows a fall, blow to the back or other injury

- Causes new bowel or bladder problems
- Is accompanied by fever

Contact your doctor if back pain:

- Is severe and doesn’t improve with rest
- Spreads down one or both legs, especially if the pain extends below the knee
- Causes weakness, numbness or tingling in one or both legs
- Is accompanied by unexplained weight loss
- Also, see your doctor if you start having back pain for the first time after age 50, or if you have a history of cancer, osteoporosis, steroid use, or excessive drug or alcohol use.

CAUSES

Back pain that comes on suddenly and lasts no more than six weeks is known as *acute* back pain. This can be caused by a fall or heavy lifting. Back pain that lasts more than three months is called *chronic* back pain.

Back pain often develops without a cause that your doctor can readily identify with a test or an imaging study. Conditions commonly linked to back pain include:

- Muscle or ligament strain. Repeated heavy lifting or a sudden awkward movement can strain back muscles and spinal ligaments, especially if you’re out of shape.
- Bulging or ruptured disks. Disks act as cushions between the bones (vertebrae) in the spine. The soft material inside a disk can bulge or rupture and press on a nerve. Still,

people are known to have bulging or ruptured disks without back pain (often found incidentally on X-rays for other reasons).

- Arthritis. In some cases, arthritis in the spine (osteoarthritis) can lead to spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the space around the spinal cord, and the resulting back pain.
- Scoliosis, or the condition in which the spine curves to one side, also can lead to back pain, but generally not until middle age.
- Osteoporosis, which causes bones to become porous and brittle, can lead to fractures in the spine’s vertebrae, leading to back pain.

Risk factors

While anyone *can* develop back pain, even children and teens, the following factors can create greater risk:

- Age. Back pain is more common as one gets older, starting around age 30 or 40.
- Lack of exercise. Weak, unused muscles in the back and abdomen might lead to back pain.
- Excess weight. Excess body weight puts extra stress on the back.
- Diseases. Some types of arthritis and cancer can contribute to back pain.
- Improper lifting. Using the back instead of the legs to lift large/heavy objects can lead to back pain.
- Psychological conditions. Stress, depression and anxiety are all well known to be associated with back pain.
- Smoking. This reduces blood flow to the lower spine, which can keep

the body from delivering enough nutrients to the disks in your back. Smoking also slows healing.

PREVENTION

Back pain may be prevented by improving one's physical condition, as well as learning and practicing proper body mechanics. Even after back pain goes away, the same can be applied to keep it from coming back.

To keep that back healthy and strong:

- **Exercise, exercise, exercise!** Regular low-impact aerobic activities—those that do not strain or jolt the back—can increase strength and endurance in the back and allow its muscles to function better. Walking and swimming are good choices. Talk with your doctor about which activities you might try.
- **Build core muscle strength and flexibility.** The key here is the *core*—those muscles that surround the spine, front and back, to keep it stable at all times. These are primarily the abdominal (stomach) and lower/middle spinal muscles. By strengthening the core, you help condition those muscles so that they work together like a natural brace for your back. Flexibility in the hips and upper legs aligns the pelvic bones to improve how your back feels. *See a physical therapist for a customized exercise plan tailored for you.*
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight strains back muscles. If you're overweight, trimming down can prevent back pain.
- **Quit smoking.** Talk to your doctor about ways to quit.

Use your body properly:

- **Stand smart.** Don't slouch. If you must stand for long periods, place one foot on a low footstool to take some of the load off your lower back. Alternate feet. Good posture can reduce the stress on back muscles.
- **Sit smart.** Choose a seat with good lower back support, armrests and a swivel base. Placing a pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back can help maintain its normal curve. Keep the knees and hips level. Change position at least every half-hour.
- **Lift smart.** Avoid heavy lifting if possible. But if you must lift something heavy, let your legs do the work. Keep your back straight. Don't twist or turn. *Bend only at the knees!*

BUYER BEWARE!

Because back pain is so common, numerous products promise

prevention or relief. But according to the Mayo Clinic, there's no definitive evidence that special shoes, shoe inserts, back supports, specially designed furniture or stress management programs can help. In addition, there doesn't appear to be one type of mattress that's best for people with back pain. It's probably a matter of what feels most comfortable to you.

DIAGNOSIS

The doctor or orthopedist will examine the back and assess your ability to sit, stand, walk and lift your legs—as well as ask you to rate your pain on a scale of zero to ten. These

TREATMENT

Most acute back pain gets better with a few weeks of home treatment. But everyone is different, and back pain is complex. For many, the pain doesn't go away for a long period.

For acute back pain, over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers and the use of heat might be all you need. Bed rest isn't recommended, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Continue your activities as much as you can tolerate. Try light activity, such as walking and activities of daily living. Stop activity that increases pain, but don't avoid activity out of fear of pain. If home treatments don't work after several weeks, ask your doctor about stronger medications

relieve back pain, and especially if pain radiates down one or both legs, your doctor may inject an anti-inflammatory medication called *cortisone* into the space around your spinal cord (epidural space). This helps decrease inflammation around the nerve roots, but the pain relief usually lasts less than a few months.

Physical therapy and exercise

A physical therapist can apply a variety of treatments, such as heat, ultrasound, electrical stimulation and muscle-release techniques, to your back muscles and soft tissues to reduce pain.

As pain improves, the therapist can give you exercises to increase your flexibility, strengthen your back and abdominal muscles, and improve your posture. Regular use of these techniques can help keep pain from returning.

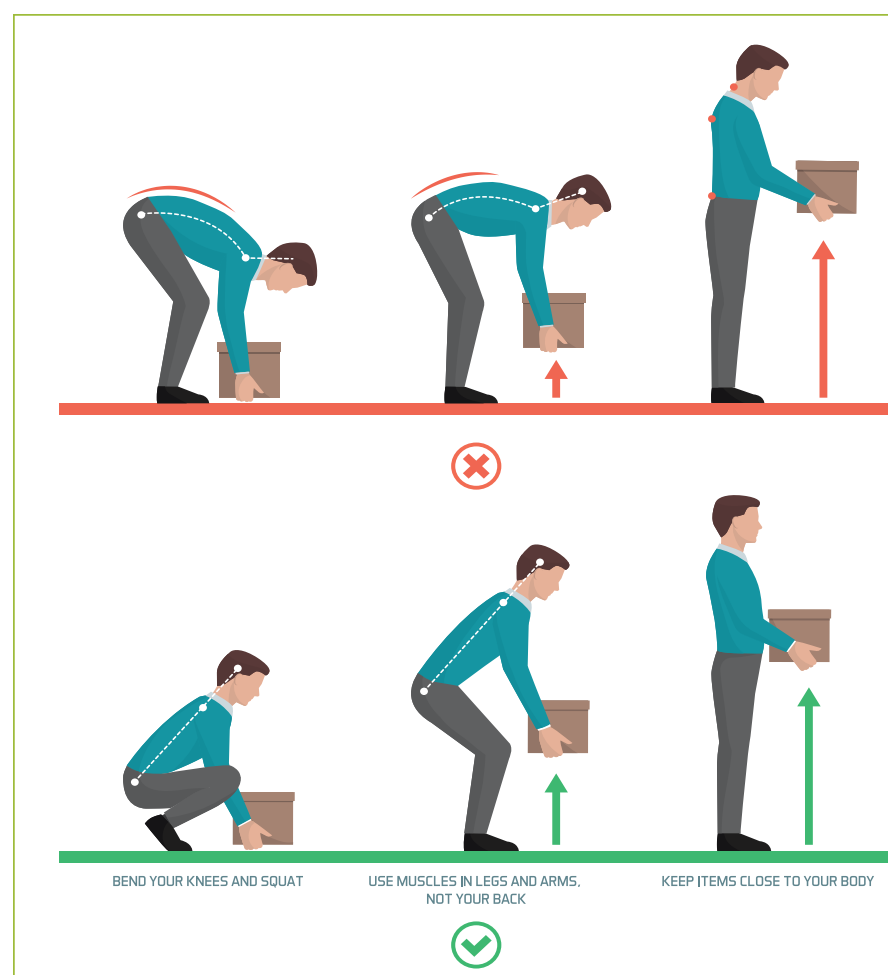
Surgery

Few people need surgery for back pain. But in cases of unremitting pain along with radiating leg pain or progressive muscle weakness caused by nerve compression, one actually might benefit from surgery. Otherwise, surgery usually is reserved for pain related to structural problems, like spinal stenosis or a herniated disk that hasn't responded to other therapy.

Alternative medicine

A number of alternative treatments might ease symptoms of back pain. Always discuss the benefits and risks with your doctor before starting a new alternative therapy. These include:

- **Chiropractic**, in which a chiropractor hand-manipulates your spine to ease your pain.
- **Acupuncture**, in which sterilized stainless steel needles are inserted into the skin at specific points on the body. Some people report that acupuncture helps relieve back pain symptoms.
- **Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS)**. A battery-powered device placed on the skin delivers electrical impulses to the painful area. Studies have shown mixed results.
- **Massage**. If back pain is caused by tense or overworked muscles, massage might help.
- **Yoga**. There are several types of yoga, a broad discipline that involves practicing specific postures or poses, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques. Yoga can stretch and strengthen muscles and improve posture. ★



assessments help figure where the pain comes from, how much you can move before pain forces you to stop and whether you have muscle spasms. They can also help rule out more-serious causes of back pain.

Tests may then follow. These typically can include X-rays, MRI or CT scans, blood tests (to see if an infection or other condition might be causing the pain, or even bone scans, which in rare case is used to look for bone tumors or compression fractures caused by osteoporosis).

Doctors may also order electromyography (EMG) tests, which measure the electrical impulses produced by the nerves and the responses of the muscles. These tests can confirm nerve compression caused by herniated disks or spinal stenosis.

or other therapies.

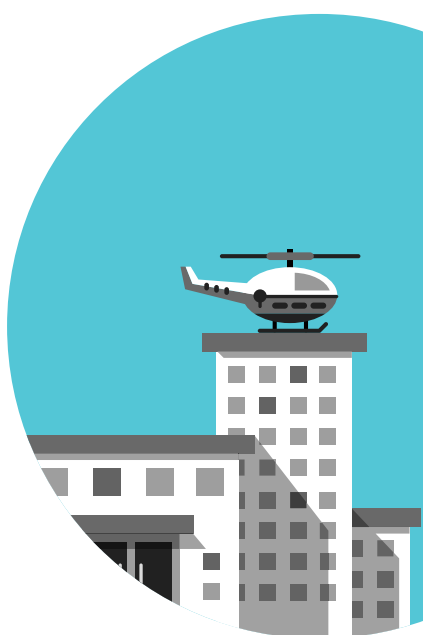
Medications

Depending on the type of back pain you have, your doctor might recommend the following:

- **Over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) or naproxen sodium (Aleve), can relieve back pain.
- **Muscle relaxants.** If mild to moderate back pain doesn't improve with OTC pain relievers, your doctor might also prescribe a muscle relaxant. But these can make you dizzy and sleepy.
- **Topical pain relievers** are creams, salves or ointments rubbed into the skin at the site of pain.
- **Injections.** If other measures don't

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



TAKING AN INDEPENDENT STAND: FREESTANDING EMERGENCY ROOMS ARE A GROWING U.S. ALTERNATIVE TO THIS TYPICAL SCENE

NEW INDUSTRY TREND: FREESTANDING EMERGENCY ROOMS

Tampa Bay, FL — As hospitals traditionally served as community anchors, emergency rooms served as hospital anchors.

However, according to a recent report in the *Tampa Bay Times*, a new trend popping up across Florida—and the nation—is: freestanding emergency rooms.

The freestanding facilities, like their urgent-care counterparts, allow patients to more quickly and locally access emergency services. The rise in their popularity is driven largely by millennials, according to the newspaper, who are more cost-conscious—in turn prompting hospitals and health systems to search for more affordable alternatives to traditional care.

CLEVELAND CLINIC FIRES DOCTOR AFTER 'GIVE JEWS THE WRONG MEDS' COMMENTS SURFACE

Cleveland, Ohio — The prestigious Cleveland Clinic hospital fired supervised resident Lara Kollab, DO after it was discovered she had been sharing anti-Semitic comments on social media for years.

The Cleveland Clinic confirmed that Ms. Kollab is no longer working with the organization after having only worked as a supervised resident with the clinic from July to September last year.

“She is no longer working at Cleveland Clinic. In no way do these beliefs reflect those of our organization. We fully embrace diversity, inclusion and a culture of safety and respect across our entire health system,” the organization also said in a recent statement.

According to other media outlets, Kollab had a history of making anti-Semitic comments on social media for years, dating back to 2011. She had reportedly called for violence against Jews in several, in which she also referred to Jews as “dogs” and could also be seen saying she would “purposely give all the yahood the wrong meds,” using the Arabic word for Jews.

Perhaps most ironic is that Ms. Kollab attended medical school at New York’s Touro College, a proudly Orthodox Jewish institution.

AMBULANCE OXYGEN TANKS PRONE TO MRSA CONTAMINATION: STUDY

Birmingham, Alabama — Ambu-

lance oxygen tanks are likely to carry methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), suggesting a need to regularly disinfect medical equipment, a study published in *Emergency Medicine Journal* found.

“Oxygen cylinders are exchanged pretty rapidly between facilities; they [need] to be refilled. They’re not like normal pieces of medical equipment or supplies, which are disposable,” study author Cody Gibson, told Reuters.

The researchers tested nine oxygen tanks in three ambulances based at an emergency medical services station in Alabama and found MRSA on every tank.

They also swabbed oxygen tanks in a storage area and found MRSA on 96 percent of the stored cylinders. The floor of all three ambulances and a door handle in one ambulance also tested positive.

Other ambulance equipment, such as heart monitors and blood pressure cuffs, did not test positive for MRSA contamination.

The researchers interviewed EMS personnel and found staff did not know when the oxygen cylinders were last disinfected, while other surfaces that patients contacted were regularly decontaminated with disinfectants.

DETROIT HOSPITAL CITED AFTER INSECTS FOUND IN ICU

Detroit, Michigan — The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently cited Detroit-based DMC Harper University Hospital for several infection control issues, including bugs that were flying around an intensive care unit (ICU) during a recent inspection, according to *The Detroit News*.

The federal agency authorized an investigation of Detroit Medical Center after four cardiologists who were pushed out of their leadership roles at the institution voiced concerns about patient safety at the hospital.

In a letter to Harper University Hospital, CMS said a facility survey the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs completed about three weeks earlier found several infection control deficiencies, including dirt and debris on the hospital’s kitchen floor, an operating suite table with a surgical tray draped in blue towels before a delivery and small black bugs flying around an ICU. Nurses said the insects had been present for months. ★



CARDIOLOGISTS BUGGED: SPECIALISTS HERE COMPLAINED ABOUT INSECTS, HYGIENE



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Eye towards Successful Future, Hamaspik HomeCare Inaugurates Expansive New Headquarters

Local Leaders Turn Out in Support of Agency's Overarching Community Mission

Normally, furniture is procured only after a house is built—but here, the internal “furniture” of Hamaspik HomeCare that is its human resources of caring and talent were in place well before the home-care agency’s new home was built.

That message was conveyed this past January 7 by Hamaspik founder and New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) President Meyer Wertheimer, at the formal inaugural luncheon of the new headquarters complex of Hamaspik HomeCare.

When Hamaspik was launched decades ago, it set out not just to provide necessary community supports and services—but to provide said with unflinching excellence. Some three decades and dozens of divisions, departments and programs across 27 counties later, Hamaspik is still going that extra mile.

That was the gist of the message next shared by Hamaspik Choice and Tri-County Care CEO Yoel Bernath, a Hamaspik pillar with the agency for 14 years in a variety of leadership positions.

Besides the leadership body of



RALLYING CALL: MR. WERTHEIMER LAUDS HAMASPIK HOMECARE'S HARD WORK

the still-growing home-care services agency, also lending their presence at the inaugural luncheon were no less than Ramapo Town Supervisor Michael Specht, Deputy Town Supervisor Brendel Logan-Charles, and Spring Valley Mayor Alan M. Simon.

Mr. Bernath's enthusiastic comments were preceded by brief remarks by

Hamaspik HomeCare's very own Asher Katz, in which the Executive Director thanked his staff and expressed confidence that the agency would continue growing.

Serving as emcee, Rockland County Legislator and Hamaspik Director of Public Relations Aron Wieder then introduced Town Supervisor Specht.

“Working together is how we do things in Ramapo,” he said, ascribing that spirit of cooperation and effectiveness to the Supervisor's one-year tenure thus far.

Supervisor Specht next shared a few words of support for Hamaspik.

“I've seen the good work that Hamaspik does,” he said, noting the agency's positive and pervasive presence in the community. “We stand with our community here in Ramapo, and it would be wrong to not be here.”

“Whatever we can do to support Hamaspik,” said Ms. Charles in following brief remarks, “just let us know.”

Rounding out the contingent of public servants present was Alan Simon. Mayor Simon joined his colleagues in expressing support for Hamaspik's mission, as well as an eye towards future collaboration for the community's greater betterment.

Hamaspik employees and public-servant guests alike left on a high note, inspired not just by the enthusiastic message of Hamaspik HomeCare but by the mission of caring and excellence across the agency as a whole. ★



TOWN HALL: VILLAGE OF SPRING VALLEY MAYOR ALAN M. SIMON EXPRESSES SUPPORT



SUPERVISORY POSITION: RAMAPO TOWN SUPERVISOR SPECHT CHEERS HAMASPIK ON

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