



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik Agencies and General Health

FEBRUARY '20 • ISSUE NO. 177



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

DO YOU HAVE HIGH CHOLESTEROL?

A. YES; B. NO



HEALTH STAT

THE UNITED STATES OF FLU

ILLNESSES	6.4 - 9.1 MILLION
MEDICAL VISITS	3.0 - 4.4 MILLION
HOSPITALIZATIONS	55,000 - 93,000

Source: 2019-2020 U.S. Flu Season (Oct.-Dec. 2019); Preliminary Burden Estimates, CDC



HEALTH TIP

WEATHERING THE SEASON: THREE MENTAL-HEALTH WINTER TIPS

For people struggling with mental health issues, the cold winter months can be challenging. Here's how to cope: 1. Maintain self-care (exercise, therapy); 2. Set realistic goals; and 3. Don't be alone! Stay connected with accepting loved ones

Source: Wellpath

INSIDE

HEALTH

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10 With Tenn. progress, autism-treatment insurance coverage now required in all 50 U.S. states

HAMASPIK NEWS

HAMASPIK HAILS STAFF AT APPRECIATION EVENTS

ACROSS THE YEAR, ACROSS DOZENS OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS THREE COUNTIES, HAMASPIK'S HUNDREDS OF TIRELESS STAFF—PARTICULARLY ITS SOULFUL, SENSITIVE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSPS)—PUT IN NOBLE WORK DAY IN, DAY OUT. AT THREE RECENT GALAS, IT WAS THEIR TURN TO BE SHOWN SUPPORT.



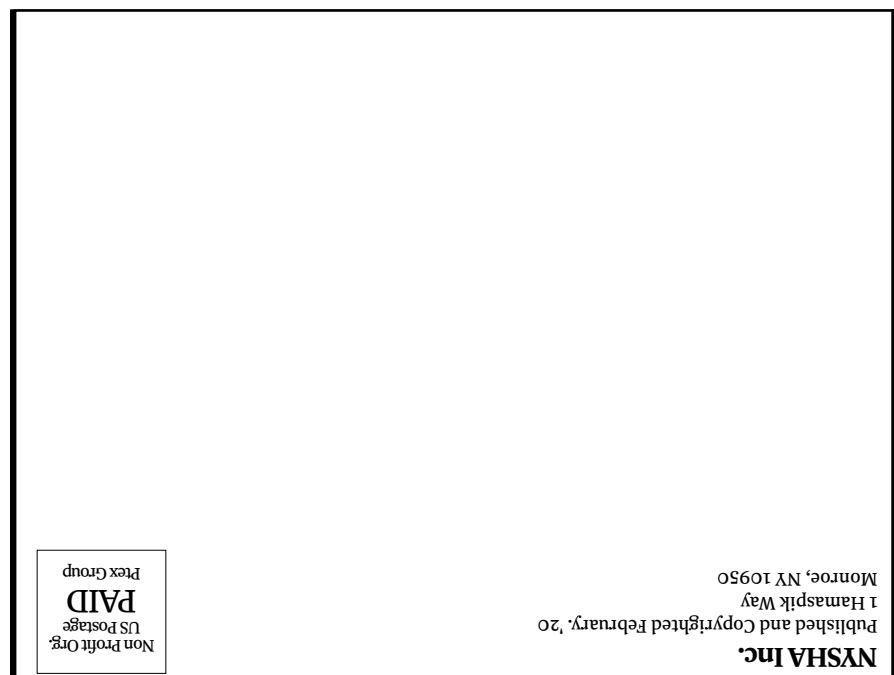
"YOU ARE RECOGNIZED—FOR YOUR WARMTH AND DEDICATION, NOBLE HARD WORK, PASSION AND ENDLESS CARE, BOTH TOWARDS THE INDIVIDUALS HAMASPIK SERVES, AND THEIR FAMILIES."

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SENIOR CARE NEWS

Study: More Social Activity, Less Risk of Dementia

SEE PAGE E19 >>



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HAMASPIK NEWS

Mainstream Schoolkids with Various Diagnoses Now Supported by Comfort Health

SEE PAGE E3 >>

HAMASPIK HOMECARE NEWS

Leading CCOs Turn to Hamaspik HomeCare for Training Own Staff on CDPAP Program

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Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

OPWDD SERVICES

INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

A supervised residence for individuals who need out-of-home placement.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES (ISS)

Paid housing expenses and support for individuals who can live independently.

HOME FAMILY CARE (HFC)

Places individuals with developmental disabilities into private homes to care and support the individual.

DAY HABILITATION (DH)

A day program for adults with disabilities designed to develop skills, greater independence, community inclusion etc.

Site Based: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility.

Without Walls: Day Habilitation Service delivered in a community-based setting.

Stars Day Program: Day Habilitation Service delivered in an OPWDD certified facility for higher-functioning individuals.

COMMUNITY HABILITATION (CH)

Working one-on-one with individuals in their home or in the community to achieve valued outcomes by helping them develop daily living skills and achieve long-term goals.

COMMUNITY PRE VOCATIONAL

Working with individual to prepare them for paid community employment- Teaching individuals job skills and other related social skills to enhance their ability to obtain employment in the future.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

Working with individual to support and provide them with necessary coaching so they can successfully engage in paid competitive employment.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

Support for the individual's family by reimbursing them for certain qualifying items or services, otherwise not available to them.

INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES (IBS)

Short-term interventional services for people with behavioral issues and their family members.

RESPIRE:

Home and Community-based respite services to provide a relief for the individual's caregiver and family.

At-Home: Respite services delivered in the home of the individual.

After School: Respite program provided every day after school hours.

Sundays: Respite program provided every Sunday.

Legal Holidays: Respite program provided on all legal holidays when school is not in session.

Summer Break/Camp Neshomah: Full day respite program during the summer break weeks.

Stars Night Program: Respite services delivered in the evening hours to high-functioning individuals by taking them out in the community and doing recreational and stimulating activities with them.

Weekend Getaway: A weekend retreat for individuals receiving respite services.

Hamasmid: After-School program for mainstreamed individuals engaging in recreational activities.

SELF-DIRECTION

The Individual or their advocate takes direct responsibility to manage their services and self-direct their budget.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI): Assists individual or their advocate in implementing their Individual Support Agreement and to manage financial accountability and employer responsibilities.

Brokerage: Assisting individuals or their advocate in creating and managing their budget.

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

DOH

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Providing a range of services to help young children (ages birth-3) who have a specific delay in their development.

Group Development Model (GDM): Providing Early Intervention services in a group-setting.

Therapy: Providing OT, PT, SLP, Vision, Nutrition, Play, Special Education, Family Training etc. to help the child develop appropriately.

Evaluations: Providing full evaluations to assess child's skills and development.

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

Waiver services to help individuals who need nursing-home level of care safely remain home and avoid nursing home placement.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization.

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology : Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Waiver services to help individuals who had a traumatic brain injury.

Service Coordination (SC): Provides coordination to the individual in gaining access to needed waiver and Medicaid State Plan services, as well as other local, state, and federally funded educational, vocational, social, and medical services.

Community Transitional Services (CTS) / Moving Assistance (MA): Provides moving assistance with packing and transporting individual's possessions and furnishings when he/she must be moved from an inadequate or unsafe housing situation to a viable environment.

Environmental Modifications (EMODS): Provides Internal and external physical adaptations to the individual's home, that are necessary to assure the health, welfare and safety of the individual and avoid institutionalization

Vehicle Modification (VMODS): Modifications to a vehicle that is used to improve the individual's independence and access to services and supports in the community.

Assistive Technology : Provides durable medical equipment and supplies for the individual to increase their level of independence, safety, and functional limitations.

SENIOR DINING/SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM (SHNOIS CHAIM)

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

HAMASPIK CHOICE

MLTCP:

Providing: A managed long-term care plan (MLTCP) approved by New York State.

HMO/INSURANCE

ABA

Behavior modification services for children with autism.

Social Group: ABA service delivered in a group setting.

One on One: ABA service delivered on a one-on-one basis in the child's home or community.

LHCSA - HAMASPIK HOMECARE

PERSONAL CARE SERVICES

Our PCA/HHA assist individuals with personal care needs, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping. They are extensively trained, and screened, and are supervised by RN.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Our HCSS Certified Aides assist those enrolled in the NHTD or TBI Medicaid Waiver Programs with oversight and supervision, in addition to personal care services.

CDPAS/CDPAP

As an alternative to traditional homecare, this program empowers the client to hire, train, and set the schedule of their personal assistants (PA). The PA's may be family members and can even live in the same home.

NURSING SERVICES

Providing: skilled observation and assessment - care planning - paraprofessional supervision - clinical monitoring and coordination - medication management - physician - ordered nursing interventions and skilled treatments.

TRAINING

Providing: free PCA training and competency testing for those interested in a home care career.

NYC HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing home modifications for people with physical disability.

NYSED SERVICES

ACCESS VR

Assist individuals to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment planning and support services that provide assistance for individuals to obtain, maintain or advance in competitive employment or self-employment.

NYSHA

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC

Providing: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · 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

ADULT HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for Adults with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

CHILDREN HEALTH HOME CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Intensive, comprehensive care management for children with chronic condition(s) and/or mental health issues at greater risk for relapse and/or lack of care.

ADULT HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible adults over the age of twenty one.

Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment: Support and treatment to achieve functional improvement and stability, while working to attain the personal goals in a community setting.

Family Support and Training: Family training and support to engage the family in the treatment planning process and provide them with emotional and informational support to enhance their skills to assist in the recovery.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation: Assists with rehabilitating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental hardships associated with the behavioral health condition.

Empowerment Services-Peer Support: Peer-delivered services designed to promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health symptoms, while utilizing recovery-oriented principles.

Habilitation: Assist to acquire and improve skills such as: communication, self-care, socialization, mobility, etc. to successfully reside in home and community-based setting.

Intensive Supported Employment: Assists to obtain and keep competitive employment.

Prevocational Services: Prepares for employment, developing strengths and soft skills that contribute to employability.

Transitional Employment: Strengthens the work record and skills toward the goal of achieving assisted or unassisted competitive employment.

Ongoing Supported Employment: Ongoing follow-along support when holding down a job.

CHILDREN HCBS SERVICES

Behavioral Health Home and Community-Based Services for eligible children from birth to twenty one.

Prevocational Services: Designed to prepare a youth (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work, volunteer work, or career exploration. Prevocational Services are not job-specific, but rather are geared toward facilitating success in any work environment.

Caregiver Family Support and Services : Teaches skills to caregiver/family's that will enhance their ability to care for the child/youth in the home and/or community.

Community Self Advocacy Training and Support: Provides family and caregivers with techniques and information not generally available so that they can better respond to the needs of the Individual related to their disabilities.

Community Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social skills, daily living and health related duties by working with the individual on goal-oriented tasks.

Supported Employment: Designed to prepare youth with disabilities (age 14 or older) to engage in paid work.

Planned Respite: Provides short-term relief for the individual's family/caregiver while supporting the individual's mental health, substance use and/or health care goals.

Day Habilitation: Provides assistance with learning social and daily living skills in a certified agency setting.

●► NYSHA NEWS

Filling the Gap for Monsey, KJ Schoolkids: Comfort Health Full Steam Ahead Upstate

New Hamaspik Program Opens New Front for Previously-Unserviced Mainstream Kids

It's been yet another community success story—and a rapidly-developing one at that—for Hamaspik. And that success has a name: Comfort Health.

Comfort Health is one of the latest and greatest new community initiatives powered by Hamaspik. It's geared for mainstream children.

Comfort Health is Hamaspik's own iteration of the New York State Dept. of Health (DOH)'s Health Home Servicing Children (HHSC) program—which is now servicing the greater Hudson Valley communities of Monsey and Kiryas Joel (KJ).

But what's an HHSC, you ask? Here's your plain-English answer. (And we all love plain English, don't we?)

The Health Home Servicing Children program is a program funded by the state DOH for kids who have Medicaid. (For those not on Medicaid, Comfort Health coordinates with New York State's niche C-YES program to facilitate your child's eligibility regardless of family status.)



Through community partners like Comfort Health, it provides support services to mainstream kids who also happen to have two medical diagnoses (like asthma and epilepsy).

It also supports mainstream kids who also happen to have one mental-health diagnosis, like ADHD or anxiety—which can also include any developmental disability, like Down syndrome.

Before the advent of Comfort Health, “There were so many kids who couldn't get services,” says Moshe Laufer, Comfort Health's upstate director.

They didn't qualify for services through the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

(OPWDD) simply because those are for children or adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).

But with Comfort Health now servicing the Hudson Valley, Monsey and Kiryas Joel kids (who are typical in every other way but for one or more debilitating diagnoses) are getting the specialized medical and mental-health attention they need and which the system until now did not organically address.

For example, for the ten-year-old yeshivah kid who has epilepsy as well as gastrointestinal (GI) issues, school and home life is fraught with tension—and the resulting scholastic struggles. Teachers and parents must focus on the middle of the classroom and family, all too often leaving such kids shunted to the wayside.

But through the front-line “filter” of Comfort Health, the HHSC program is now filling that gap.

Thanks to growing grassroots community awareness and even a full-

day educators' conference for local boys' schools, the phones at Comfort Health have been ringing frequently. A group of designated secretaries are handling those intake calls. And several new employees have been taken on to handle the rush of new cases.

Several dozen sets of parents are now getting the support of Care Managers, Comfort Health's individual advocates. (A good few dozen more are in the enrollment process, Mr. Laufer adds.) The program then provides its kids its Respite and Community Habilitation (Com Hab) services. Those programs give each child the one-on-one attention and care that he or she needs, both out in the community and at home—making all the difference in the world, parents report. ★

For more info, contact Comfort Health in Rockland at 845-503-0400, in Brooklyn at 718-408-5400 or in Orange 845-774-0300.

●► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

More older Americans soldiering on at work, retiring later: survey

St. Louis, Missouri — Contrary to the widespread American convention, retirement is bad for your health—and now, a new survey shows that more Americans are believing it.

According to the survey of 1,000 older U.S. adults across the Midwest, more older adults than ever are deferring retirement to later years.

The survey was conducted by the St. Louis, Missouri-based Provision Living, a network of senior living communities across Michigan, Mississippi and Missouri. It found that over one-third of surveyed seniors said they're not financially prepared to retire yet. Another 23 percent are continuing to work to support their family, and another 19 percent are doing it to pay off debt.

Also, on average, the survey respondents reported not expecting to leave work completely until age 72.

The gold-standard retirement age, for a number of reasons, is widely fixed at age 65.



CUTTING BACK ON RETIREMENT: A NEW SURVEY SAYS AMERICANS ARE WORKING LONGER

Americans can begin claiming full Social Security benefits between ages 66 and 67.

Additionally, 45 percent of respondents said they haven't quit work entirely because they still enjoy it. The

survey also found that the working seniors have an average of \$133,108 saved for retirement.

The survey underscores an analysis of U.S. Census data by financial-planning firm United Income, which found that about 20 percent of Americans 65-plus, or over 10.6 million people, are either currently working or looking for work.

The earliest age a person can claim Social Security benefits is 62. But the full retirement age for most of today's working-age Americans is between 66 and 67, when they can begin to claim the full amount of their benefit. But for each year a person delays taking Social Security, their benefit will increase by up to 8 percent until age 70. ★

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Happening in Health Today

PRECISION MEDICINE ENTERING NEW ERA FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER

London, England — Among the most current trends in treating cancer in children is personalized genetic testing. By profiling a child's individual genome, doctors are able to personalize the child's treatment—specifically, by knowing which drugs are likeliest to work best for him or her.

And now, a joint study led by England's Institute of Cancer Research and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust underscores the power of genetic testing for cases of pediatric cancers.

The study furthers the notion that personalized precision cancer medicine has arrived at a new era.

The study, which involved over 200 children from 20 hospitals across England and Europe, found that half of them had gene mutations treatable by cancer drugs normally used for adults.

NEW STUDY: FITNESS BOOSTS BRAINPOWER, LITERALLY

Münster, Germany — Previous studies have shown that exercise, particularly aerobic exercise, is good for the brain. Those studies over the decades have shown that exercise improves several key functions, including intelligence, attention, memory and emotion—particularly in older adults.

One study even found that individuals with Down syndrome solve problems better after brisk treadmill workouts.

But now, a new study by the University of Münster finds a strong correlation between fitter bodies and healthier minds in young adults.

The study reviewed 1,200 MRI results from volunteers (average age 29) with the U.S.-based Human Connectome Project, an ongoing brain-mapping research effort. It found that high levels of endurance were associated with higher cognitive test scores.



NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT: RESEARCHERS HOPE TO DISABLE THE RHINOVIRUS FOR GOOD

EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO STOP COMMON COLD

Stanford, California—Instead of disabling or blocking the path of the virus, how about just depriving it of gas?

That's the bold new idea U.S. scientists now have, in attempting a novel approach to stop the virus that causes the common cold.

Tackling the common cold remains a massive annual problem in medicine. Most colds are caused by *rhinoviruses*, but there are around 160 different types—and

they mutate so easily they rapidly become resistant to drugs.

But now, researchers at Stanford University and UC San Francisco are targeting a protein inside human cells that rhinoviruses need to replicate, instead of trying to attack or block them directly.

While laboratory experiments on mice, and on human lung cells, have worked so far, the method is not ready yet for human trials. ★

The takeaway? Improving fitness could improve cognitive ability.

LOW-FREQUENCY ELECTRIC PULSES COULD REVERSE BALDNESS

Madison, Wisconsin — Devices embedded or otherwise worn in headgear that are meant to help restore normal hair have been around for several years now.

One such line of devices, made by

the Capillus hair restoration product company, consists of so-called “laser caps,” or baseball caps embedded with hundreds of tiny lasers that supposedly stimulate bald scalps to regrow hair. The company's laser-cap claims have been subject to significant controversy and even lawsuits, though.

But now, experimental technology being developed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison stimulates the scalp with low-frequency, painless

electric pulses—supposedly coaxing hair follicles that have “fallen asleep” to resume hair production.

According to researchers, the technology has worked so far on hairless mice. They hope to test the device on humans in the near future.

MEDICAL STUDENT, NOW DOCTOR, FINDS CURE TO OWN UNTREATABLE DISEASE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — A high-achieving star student and aspiring physician became his own best doctor—and patient—when a life-threatening case of the rare Castleman disease drove him to find a novel cure.

In 2013, Dr. David Fajgenbaum, now an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, had been battling Castleman for years already. The condition put him in the hospital, and his life in immediate danger, several times.

But as patient and medical student, Dr. Fajgenbaum reviewed his own medical charts and discovered that a protein called VEGF was ten times its normal level—causing his immune system to attack his body, creating Castleman.

With nothing to lose, Dr. Fajgenbaum thought of using an existing immunosuppressant called Sirolimus; it's normally used with kidney transplants.

Over five years later, he's still healthy.

BREAKTHROUGH CYSTIC FIBROSIS (CF) DRUG APPROVED BY FDA

Silver Spring, Maryland — Trikafta, a breakthrough drug for cystic fibrosis (CF), has now been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The drug, which actually combines three drugs, was shown to be effective for people with the most common form of CF—or 90 percent of the CF population.










Cystic fibrosis is a serious lung condition caused by a mutation in the CFTR gene. Ninety percent of people with CF have the *F508del* mutation in their CFTR gene. Trikafta corrects that mutation, significantly improving their lung function.

Cystic fibrosis currently affects about 30,000 people in the U.S. The genetic condition causes a salt/water imbalance in the lungs, resulting in constant mucus build-up and resulting symptoms. ★

The Hamaspik family cares for yours

Wondering what's available for your special needs loved one? From in home services, community or site based programs to reimbursements that will support your loved one and empower your family. Best of all: we will walk you through the process of getting the care they deserve.



-  Community Habilitation (Com Hab)
-  Home Based Respite
-  After School Respite
-  Family Support Services (Reimbursement)
-  Prevocational Services
-  Self Direction
-  Day Habilitation
-  Achosainu Academy
-  ISS Apartments

Unsure if your loved one is eligible for services? **Call 718.387.8400**

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Hamaspik Employees Recharge at Exhilarating Annual Staff Appreciation Events

Staff of Kings, Orange, Rockland Agencies Recognized for Warmth, Care, Professionalism

You are recognized—for your warmth and dedication, noble hard work, passion and endless care, both towards the individuals that Hamaspik serves, and their families.

That was the take-home message at three separate staff appreciation events hosted by Hamaspik this past December.

At the galas, each separately honoring staff of Hamaspik of Kings, Orange and Rockland Counties, hundreds of talented and hardworking employees converged upon regional social venues for evenings of reminiscence, entertainment, laughter and inspiration.

Speeches were delivered, mementos were handed out, uplifting performances were taken in, and staff (and their spouses) came away feeling enthused, motivated, and proud. Most importantly, they came away feeling honored and appreciated for the hard work they do—and perhaps even more importantly, bound to one another by the shared mission of superlative care for individuals and families affected by disability... the mission of Hamaspik.

Here is how each event unfolded.

HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY

The Eminence social hall in Brooklyn was the site for Hamaspik of Kings' annual event this year. Popular community comedian Velvel Feldman served as Master of Ceremonies, injecting a judicious level of buoyancy with a string of side-splitting openers.

Mr. Meyer Wertheimer, Hamaspik founder and current New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) Executive Director, next spoke. Mr. Wertheimer thanked every employee for making Hamaspik what it is—building the agency from a handful of staffers to the force for good that it is today.

Rabbi Leibish Langer, a respected inspirational speaker, delivered a rousing keynote address.

Setting the theme and tone for the entire event, Rabbi Langer declared (among other things) from the podium that “there is no place right now where you can feel the presence of G-d more than this very room.”



A FEAST FIT FOR KINGS: STAFF WERE TREATED LIKE ROYALTY AT THE BROOKLYN EVENT



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: PLENTY OF FOOD FOR BODY AND MIND AT THE ORANGE EVENT



TASTEFUL TABLEAU: THE HAMASPIK ROCKLAND EVENT BEGAN WITH A FULL SIT-DOWN MEAL

Elaborating on that comment, Rabbi Langer posited that those who work with people with intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD), as Hamaspik does (especially its Direct Support Professionals), have unmatched daily access to special souls—and the spiritual aura that those souls bring.

Mr. Avi Mendelowitz, a long-time

member of the Hatzolah volunteer ambulance corps and world-renowned mental-health advocate, spoke as an invited guest about Hamaspik of Kings County's ongoing successes in addressing the community's mental-health needs.

Hamaspik of Kings County Executive Director Hershel Wertheimer was a

centerpiece of the proceedings, next delivering a powerful speech rife with personal inspiration. He likened the entire Hamaspik employee family to a jumbo jet made of thousands of critical pieces. “If one piece is missing, the plane can't fly,” he declared, “and if one Hamaspik employee succeeds, we all succeed.” He also saluted Hamaspik founder Mr. Meyer Wertheimer for being the “engineer” behind the “jet.”

Mr. Wertheimer also lauded the husbands and wives of the employees, whom all stalwartly stand by their spouses day in, day out and whom all were present, sharing equal (and equally-deserved) appreciation.

The Executive Director's speech was strategically punctuated by the live band and choir on hand, who sang what has become a sort of Hamaspik anthem—a melody composed by career composer Yossi Green—at various inspirational points.

Professional mentalist Eran Biderman next entertained the crowd, correctly and amazingly guessing words written on sealed envelopes and other feats of “clairvoyance.”

The evening closed with a raffle for exciting prizes, leaving several winners feeling even more appreciated.

HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY

At the Hamaspik of Orange County appreciation event, held at the Brightstone social hall in Passaic, New Jersey, guests arrived to find elegant tables bedecked in menorahs and giant screens around the room to facilitate the speeches and entertainment.

The dozens of new faces present—both of employees and their spouses—reflected the size, scope and sheer growth of the agency in recent years.

“I envy your dedication and your commitment!” began emcee Hilly Hill, a witty personality of widespread repute. “Each Hamaspik employee is a leader.”

Mr. Hill, usually known for his “Hill”-arious community inside jokes (which came later!), struck a dignified tone in opening the event with inspiration. He uplifted the crowd with the message of

► HAMASPIK NEWS



THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: HAMASPIK FOUNDER MEYER WERTHEIMER PAYS PERSONAL HOMAGE TO STAFF FOR BUILDING THE AGENCY FROM THE GROUND UP TO WHAT IT IS TODAY



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR: EXEC. DIR. HERSHEL WERTHEIMER OPENS UP



THE BEST MEDICINE: HUMORIST VELVEL FELDMAN SETS A JOVIAL TONE



ON A HIGH NOTE: GIFTED CHILD SOLOIST YOSSE LAX WOWS THE CROWD



SUPPORTING DIRECT SUPPORTERS: MOSES WERTHEIMER SALUTES THE FRONT LINES



WHAT A MOMENT OF APPRECIATION LOOKS LIKE: LIKE THE TWO OTHERS, THE CAPACITY CROWD AT THE HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY EVENT CAME AWAY REJUVENATED

seeing the soul's light in every body, akin to perceiving the stars on a dark night.

The agency's very own Mr. Moshe Hersh Berkowitz, Direct Support Professional (DSP), was awarded with Employee of the Year. The distinction earned him an extra week of paid vacation, plus a decorative crystal clock—which, as Emcee Hill joked, will help him return to work on time.

Superstar vocalist Shulem Lemmer, returning for a second consecutive year, took the stage for a few riveting renditions, accompanied by gifted child soloist Yossi Lax.

That was followed by a rollicking routine by Mr. Hill, an astounding live show by sand artist Yossi Glitzenstein, and several magical illusions by trickster David Syltig.

Hamaspiik of Orange County Executive Director Moses Wertheimer delivered the keynote.

In heartfelt and genuine comments, the agency leader first thanked the entire Hamaspiik family, drawing special attention to the front-line Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Family Care providers.

But the bulk of his speech was the message of true selflessness: serving the other even when the other does not, or cannot, reciprocate—a message reflected in the daily work of every Hamaspiik employee.

HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

At 7:00 p.m., Hamaspiik employees and their spouses converged on the Brightstone for several hours

of entertainment, inspiration and appreciation.

The event opened with a reception buffet, with attendees catching up with old workplace friends and making new ones (itself a testament to Hamaspiik's endless growth and success).

Humorist Velvel Feldman delivered an encore performance as emcee, mixing humor with heartfelt encouragement to staff, particularly Hamaspiik's front-line Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

Meyer Wertheimer delivered the evening's first speech. With wise and well-chosen words, Mr. Wertheimer expressed genuine thanks and appreciation to the entire Hamaspiik body, hailing their work and the agency growth that it engenders.

Mr. Wertheimer then awarded two Hamaspiik employees for an agency longevity only matched by quiet and dependable professionalism: Aaron Rubinstein, Hamaspiik of Rockland County's uber-reliable tech-support guru of 17 years, and Yechezkel "Chezky" Levy, who's been a DSP at Hamaspiik of Rockland County's Men's Day Hab program for 18 years.

Mentalist David Blatt next thrilled the crowd with his "impossible" feats.

Professional singers Moshe Eisenberg and Chananya Schnitzler, backed by vocalists and a band, delivered wholesome and uplifting live entertainment throughout the evening. Their music culminated in a heartwarming and campfire-like singalong that had all the menfolk form a circle, arms thrown over each other's

shoulders—brothers in arms united by common cause.



At all three events, Hamaspiik's guests went home feeling truly appreciated for

the nooks and crannies of the daily grind that sometimes seem to go thankless.

And, of course, they showed up the next day at work reinvigorated and recharged.



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► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



Happenings around Hamaspik

Doing Well, Thank You!



“WATERS” GOING ON HERE? RESIDENTS OF HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY’S FORSHAY BRIDERHEIM MEN’S GROUP HOME CHECK OUT SOME LOCAL ARCHITECTURE

Vehicle for Personal Growth



ROLLING RIGHT ALONG: “GRADUATES” WERE CHAUFFEURRED INTO THE EVENT ON THIS ADORABLE AND CUSTOM-DECORATED LITTLE WAGON AMID GREAT GUEST FANFARE

Making People Feel Right at Home, Where They Feel at Home Most

Access to Home (ATH) Accessibility Program Gets Boost at Hamaspik of Rockland County

Chances are you’re familiar with Hamaspik and its synonymous reputation for all things human-services related; think “medical emergency” and you think “9-1-1” or “Hatzolah”—think “disability” and you think “Hamaspik.” And for good reason.

Hamaspik is now making good on that authoritative go-to reputation once again, as it places fresh emphasis on its newly-renewed Access to Home program across Rockland County.

As its name implies, Access to Home provides those who need them with wheelchair ramps, walk-in tubs and showers, bathroom grab bars, and a number of additional approved interior modifications that aid and enhance accessibility.

All of these serve one purpose: to help the resident(s) remain living at home as independently as possible for as long as possible.

Access to Home, a New York State Medicaid program, was also conceived with a long-term cost-cutting goal in mind: By short-term funding interior renovations that allow seniors and others in need to stay in their own

homes, Medicaid saves quite the bundle by keeping those same worthy individuals out of long-term nursing homes.

In years past, residents of the greater Hudson Valley, both in Orange and Rockland Counties, could simply pick up the phone and call Hamaspik to start the process. After office staff promptly handled all intake information and paperwork, Hamaspik’s professional ATH staff would promptly come down for a site evaluation to determine what the resident precisely needed. A plan would be drawn up, a contractor would get to work, and accessibility hardware would shortly be a seamless part of the house.

And today, if you’re a person with a physical disability and low income living in Rockland County (and in the very near future, also in Orange County), you’re in luck: Hamaspik’s ATH program is at your service once again. ★

For Access to Home information in Rockland County, contact Mrs. Rivky Spitzer at 845-503-0462 or rspitzer@hamaspikrockland.org.

UpClub After-School Respite (ASR) Program Hosts Exciting Bilingual “Alef-Bais” Event

Dozens of Proud Mothers, Siblings Participate at Children’s Adorable Performance

Like everything Hamaspik does, Hamaspik of Rockland County’s After-School Respite (ASR) program goes above and beyond the basics.

After-School Respite is intended to give parents of schoolchildren with special needs a school-day afternoon break from special-needs parents. But at Hamaspik, ASR is anything but babysitting with a curriculum.

For years, Hamaspik’s ASR program was defined by educational activities disguised as games, outings and even a summer day camp. And as of this early fall, the program is now UpClub—a totally reimagined evolution of ordinary ASR that is even more fun, and far more enriching in nature.

Hamaspik has always worked to acclimate the individuals it supports into the Orthodox Jewish community from

which those individuals overwhelmingly hail. For the little boys and girls of UpClub, that acclimation involves starting the journey of reading *Loshon Kodesh*, the alphabet in which traditional communal texts are printed.

Known as “Alef-Bais” for its first two letters (the cultural equivalent of “A-B-C”), starting to learn it has always warranted an “Alef-Bais Party”—and recently, dozens of mothers and siblings converged on Hamaspik of Rockland County’s Hamaspik Terrace hall for one such event—culminating in an adorable Alef-Bais-themed musical performance by the children and staff. As the *Gazette* was later told, one parent said it was the best vacation break ever. ★

Contact Mrs. Goldenberg at 845-503-0290 for more information on UpClub.

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Remembering Spiritual Heroes Past, Looking to the Future Today

Hamaspik Men's Group Marks Historic Chasidic Rebbe's Yahrzeit

In 1765, Rabbi Avraham Dov Auerbach was born in the Ukrainian city of Khmilnyk. On the 12th day of the Jewish-calendar month of Kislev (Dec. 7, 1840) some 75 years later, Rabbi Auerbach passed away.

And on this past 12th of Kislev, in modern-day Dec. 2019, a group of young men with Hamaspik of Orange County sat down around a table to reflect upon his life and contributions.

It was your typical *yahrzeit* (passing anniversary) event—somber, inspirational, and ultimately positive. People attending a *yahrzeit* will typically share a few words on the departed and walk away with a message for today.

Rabbi Auerbach was a “grand-student” of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), founder of the Chasidic

movement. He contributed to the furtherance of the movement in its adolescence, leaving Eastern Europe in later life to make a spiritual pilgrimage to the sacred city of Safed in the Holy Land, where he ultimately settled and became the leader of that town's Chasidic population.

Back in today's day and age, the gentlemen heard all about his life story.

And coming from the Chasidic (and, needless to say, historically-connected) community of Kiryas Joel as they do, staying connected to the movement's vibrant past is a faith-based value of their present—inspiring as it does their future. ★

For more info on Day Hab, please contact Joseph Grunbaum at 845-774-0310 or jgrunbaum@hamaspikorange.org.

Forshay Briderheim Celebrates Glorious Chanukah “In-House”

Hamaspik Group Home Party Typifies Holiday Spirit Agency-Wide

It was the fourth night of Chanukah, the radiant “Festival of Lights,” at Hamaspik of Rockland County's Forshay Briderheim Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA).

The irresistible scent of freshly-fried hot latkes filled the room as music from a live keyboardist (and the sizzle of latkes still on the pan) filled the air. An LED-bulb electric menorah reiterated the central theme.

Residents and Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) milled about reception-like, mingling with one another—and with visiting parents and siblings—while also enjoying the presence of staffers' own family members. Chanukah was everywhere.

After the informal reception, guests and residents alike joined each other around the dining room table,

bedecked with a festive holiday-themed tablecloth, for rounds of dreidel and other exciting Chanukah games.

Family members then presented their beloved sons with personalized Chanukah gifts. The small crowd oohed and aahed as each resident dramatically unwrapped their presents, with each revealing some item perfectly suited for them as cheers erupted again and again.

All across Hamaspik, across eight days and nights of Chanukah, equivalent scenes repeated themselves in IRAs, Day Habs, After-School Respite (ASR) programs and even offices.

With its one day over seven, Chanukah ultimately hails the victory of the spiritual over the order of the natural—and at Hamaspik, vehicle for many a miracle, that message truly hits home. ★

Making the Past Present



REMEMBERING HISTORY: “DAY HABBERS” MARK THE PASSING OF A GREAT RABBI

Bouncing About Town



MAKING THEIR COMMUNITY ROUNDS (CLOCKWISE, TOP LEFT): YOSSI KATINA, SHULEM K., AND FRIENDS RESPECTIVELY VISIT A GROCERY STORE, A CLASSROOM, AND A GYM

Putting Chanukah on the Table



FEEDING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT: RESIDENTS AT FORSHAY ARE HUNGRY FOR MORE

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy



SMOOTH SAILING: FLORIDA-BASED FREEDOM SAILING CAMP IS ONE OF THE FIRST WATER-BASED PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH WITH AUTISM
FLORIDA CAMP PROGRAM PUTS WIND IN SAILS OF KIDS WITH AUTISM

Tampa, Florida — There are a lot of camp programs out there for children with autism.

But there is only one camp program that teaches children with autism how to sail a real sailboat.

Freedom Sailing Camp of Florida, based in seaside, sunny Tampa, Florida, was founded by Bonnie Monroe, mother of a rambunctious boy with high-functioning autism.

After discovering how much sailing benefited him, Ms. Monroe decided to expand those benefits to other children with autism—and to their grateful parents, too!

Currently, Freedom Sailing Camp is the only U.S. camp program exclusively geared for teaching sailing basics to youths with autism.

Parents report positive results once kids are back on shore. ★

AUTISM TREATMENT COVERAGE NOW REQUIRED IN ALL 50 STATES

Nashville, Tennessee — With the Bluegrass State becoming the last U.S. state to require insurers to cover autism treatments, 50 states now mandate some level of autism insurance coverage.

Thanks to a rule newly enacted by the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance, all state-based individual, small and large group insurance plans must cover treatment for autism that is “medically necessary and appropriate and is not experimental.”

Notably, this includes applied behavior analysis (ABA), a treatment regimen still growing in popularity nationwide.

Before the new rule, Tennessee-based insurance companies could define their own mental health benefits. They now must go with coverage of autism as it's defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the authoritative industry reference book.

MOLECULAR-LEVEL AUTISM RESEARCH CENTER OPENS AT HARVARD

Boston, Massachusetts — With a \$20 million gift, the prestigious Harvard Medical School has now opened the Hock E. Tan and K. Lisa Yang Center for Autism Research.

The center's mission is to research the cause of autism at the molecular level—to identify the biologic roots and molecular changes that give rise to autism and related disorders, and to translate that into better diagnostic tools and new therapies.

“Working under the premise that autism's complexity demands the crosspollination of diverse expertise across different modes of scientific inquiry, the center will encompass the efforts of basic, translational and clinical scientists from the entire Harvard ecosystem,” read a Harvard press release.

Autism and related disorders, which affect one in 59 children in the United States alone, have become one of modern medicine's most confounding mysteries.

DISNEY WORLD LAWSUIT OVER DISABILITY LINE-CUTTING GOES TO TRIAL

Orlando, Florida — For years, skipping to the front of notoriously-long lines was a compassionate and sensitive courtesy graciously extended by Disney World to guests with disabilities and their immediate families—particularly for children with autism, who are prone to meltdowns due to the stress of extended waits.

But with the Disney theme parks replacing that policy five years ago with its Disability Access Service (DAS) Card system, people with disabilities must reserve a ride in advance. They also must wait in line—just not as long.

The new DAS Card system shortly prompted a federal lawsuit brought by family members of young people with autism. Now, after a five-year preliminary court battle, that lawsuit is finally going to trial in 2020. U.S. District Judge Anne Conway set a four-day, non-jury trial in Orlando to start Feb. 18.

SONGBIRDS SPEAK VOLUMES ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING, AUTISM

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — If you think that at least some autism research is for the birds, you'd be right on target—at least if your research sheds some light on how children with autism learn language after you spent time studying songbirds.

Research at the University of Pennsylvania found that young songbirds, known for their musical and language-like chirping, learned to sing like finches when raised by finches (and not by their biological songbird mothers).

Researchers also found that when those fostered baby songbirds became adults, their brains were more sensitive to finch songs than to songbird songs.

Babies similarly are born with the ability to acquire any language. But the new study reinforces the belief that language is acquired, not innate—a process that may go awry in autism.

AUTISM SPEAKS HOSTS ADULTHOOD TRANSITION SUMMIT

Washington, D.C. — Leading autism advocacy and research non-profit Autism Speaks recently hosted its two-day Thought Leadership Summit on Transition to Adulthood in the capital city.

Presentations were made by a panel of self-advocates, as well as two researchers whose focus area is transition.

Moderated by Autism Speaks Vice President of Services and Supports Val Paradiz, the panel of three self-advocates discussed their experiences in preparing for adult life—how they overcame specific challenges, and actions and accommodations that helped them achieve their goals.

The panelists shared on personal text-to-speech technology critical for non-verbal people with autism, getting used to being around college roommates and classmates, and social and emotional wellness.

According to Vanderbilt University researcher Erik Carter, a more meaningful measure of transition success for young adults with autism is how well a program or effort bridges the gap between what the person aspires to and the outcome they end up achieving. ★

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Exciting Hamaspik Weekend Events: Respite to Parents at Home, Reinvigorating Recreation to Kids at Mountain Retreat Center

They were Hamaspik of Rockland County's ever-popular weekend getaway events for children attending its After-School Respite (ASR) programs—simultaneously giving parents a much-needed special parenting break, and children a vital boost of recreation.

Held at the upstate Raleigh retreat center, the two events brimmed with stimulation for body, mind, heart and soul alike—all with the stamp of personalized attention, love, caring and fun that is the Hamaspik hallmark.

At both events (one for boys and one for girls), youths as young as under ten and as old as their mid-20s were personally catered to one-on-one from the moment they boarded the buses, with dozens of handpicked staff members on hand to personally greet their assigned charges.

Event coordinators Mr. Velvel Zieg and Mrs. Esty Schonfeld, both energetic longtime Hamaspik stalwarts, had hosted detailed training sessions for those caregivers days earlier, including informative presentations by event medical coordinators Mr. and Mrs. Avrohom "Avrumi" Holczer. And now, their 48-hour mission of heart and soul was about to begin.

Upon arrival and disembarking a little over an hour later, excited guests each called their parents, with staff listening in for knowing tips on how to maximize the kids' experience. And then, a weekend dreamland of fantastic fun really began.

Entering the Raleigh's front lobby doors, guests were greeted by the warm smile of Hamaspik pillar Mrs. Brenda Katina, the agency's Special Events Coordinator. Mrs. Katina welcomed each with a housewarming package, and staff accompanied each to their rooms.

Upon settling in, guests raced back to the center's spacious ground-floor Walnut Room and Grand Ballroom, where a variety of thrilling activities awaited: painting (and other arts and crafts), gymnastics, a coordination-sharpening indoor obstacle course—and even the popular Macaroni the Clown, who could be found putting on quite an amusing show.

With the start of the Friday-eve Shabbos shortly after 4:00 p.m., guests could be found in their rooms a good hour before that, bathing, dressing and otherwise getting ready.

Shortly after the Shabbos start, everyone converged on the on-site synagogue for spirited services filled with



MACARONI! A POPULAR CLOWN RETURNS



ALL-AROUND NUTRITION: HEALTHY FOOD, LIKE THIS FALAFEL BAR, WAS ON THE MENU



BAND OF BROTHERS: LIVE MUSIC SETS THE TONE FOR THE WEEKEND'S FESTIVITIES



HEARTSTRINGS: A WARM SING-ALONG

impromptu singing and spontaneous dancing.

The formal Friday-night meal was held at 6:00 p.m., with guests and one-on-one staff seated around tables where they were served all the traditional Shabbos menu items: challah, gefilte fish, chicken soup and kugel. As a buoyant, carefree and magical atmosphere filled the room, more singing (and even dancing) marked the meal—and a good number of young guests even got to address the crowd!

Later in the evening, guests variously enjoyed exhilarating indoor group activities like relay races and teamwork games, as well as professional storyteller Rabbi Yitzy Erps and a late-night "kumzitz" singalong.

By 10:00 p.m., guests had virtually all retired for the night. But strategically-scheduled shifts of staff patrolled the hallways and popped into rooms all night, adding an important layer of alert full-time supervision and care.

Shabbos day for both events began with breakfast, which segued into morning synagogue services replete with Hamaspik camaraderie and spirit.

With noon came the Shabbos-day lunch, during which staff doted on guests with diligence equal to that of Friday night. From wall to wall, the dining



DRIVING FORCE: THE TIRELESS MR. ZIEG

room was filled with sounds of mirth and merriment. At the boys' weekend, Shabbos lunch was also marked by a group of guests forming a surprisingly impressive choir.

After lunch, it was time for the boys and girls to rest and relax. Guests retired to their rooms for naps, or strolled about the premises.

But with the end of Shabbos on the short winter day around 5:45 p.m. with the formal Havdalah "closing ceremony," things were only starting.

Havdalah, essentially reciting a text over candle and wine, was so much more at Hamaspik, accompanied as it was by a number of talented staff musicians on guitar, percussion, saxophone and

vocals.

Guests next returned briefly to their rooms to freshen up—only to come back downstairs to the ballroom for the undisputed weekend highlight: full live bands!

As house lights were turned down and music throbbed, spirits soared and staff was shortly seen discarding pretenses and letting their love for their charges burst forth, as one young person after another was lifted onto caregivers' shoulders—including some from wheelchairs. Mr. Zieg confesses to at least one moment of genuine tears.

Making it even more special was the presentation of appreciation certificates, signed by all Hamaspik "top brass," to two high-functioning individuals for their invaluable help at the event.

Sunday morning at each retreat was marked by breakfast, a grand finale of a show, and packing up to go home. Under two hours later, the buses had made their door-to-door rounds of Monsey—and with goodbye packages in hand and Hamaspik hats on their heads, the guests came back home with love in their hearts.

"As a head counselor, I've been running huge events for years," Velvel Zieg says. "But such a good experience?! This is *the* Shabbos! Unbelievable!" ★

► PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY NEWS

Americans spending more out-of-pocket on mental health than physical health: study

Columbus, Ohio — According to a new report, Americans with health insurance spend more out-of-pocket for mental health services than they do for physical health services.

The reason for the excessive costs was simple, researchers found: many were getting mental health care “out of network,” or with professionals who don’t take their insurance (or, as is commonly the case, any insurance).

To reach their conclusions, Researcher Wendy Xu, PhD, an assistant professor of Health Services Management and Policy at Ohio State University, and colleagues first reviewed data from the Truven Health MarketScan Commercial Claims and Encounters Database.

Focusing on data from 2012-2017, the researchers identified 3.85 million adults with one of several mental



OH, THE COST: MENTAL HEALTH CARE MAY BE PRICEY—BUT AT LEAST IT’S BEING ADDRESSED

health conditions or substance abuse disorders.

They then found that patients with

behavioral health conditions were likelier than those with physical health problems to end up seeing out-of-

network physicians.

Costs were also higher for those with behavioral health issues. On average, people with mental health conditions ended up paying \$341 more than those with diabetes. And people with substance abuse disorders ended up paying \$1,242 more than those with diabetes.

According to Dr. Albert Wu, professor of health policy and management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, out-of-pocket expenses for mental health care is because the majority of providers don’t accept many insurance plans, public or private.

In turn, that’s because those insurance plans’ reimbursement rates are too low—meaning, insurance companies don’t pay them enough for the important work they do. ★

🍴 **HEALTHY EATING**

 <h2 style="color: #8B4513; margin: 0;">BRUSSELS SPROUTS</h2>	<p>EASY YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS READY IN: 0:30</p>  <h3 style="color: #8B4513; margin: 0;">Honey Roasted Brussels Sprouts</h3> <p>INGREDIENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1lb Brussels sprouts • 2 tablespoon olive oil • 1/2 teaspoon salt • 1/2 teaspoon black pepper • 1 tablespoon honey • 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar <p>DIRECTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halve the sprouts and toss with all ingredients • Place in a lined baking pan • Roast at 450° for 20-25 minutes or until desired crispness is reached 	<p>EASY YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS READY IN: 0:45</p>  <h3 style="color: #8B4513; margin: 0;">Cheesy Brussels Sprouts</h3> <p>INGREDIENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1lb Brussels sprouts (frozen or fresh) • 2 tablespoons olive oil • 1/2 teaspoon salt • 1/2 teaspoon black pepper • 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder • 1/2 cup shredded cheese <p>DIRECTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halve sprouts, place in mixing bowl, toss all the ingredients • Place in baking pan • Bake at 400° for 40 minutes, flip halfway 	<p>MEDIUM YIELDS: 6-8 SERVINGS READY IN: 1:30</p>  <h3 style="color: #8B4513; margin: 0;">Brussels Sprouts Pea Soup</h3> <p>INGREDIENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tablespoon olive oil • 1 onion, diced • 1 clove garlic, crushed • 1lb fresh Brussels sprouts (or 1 bag frozen), halved • 1 cup green split peas • 8 cups water • Salt to taste • Black pepper to taste <p>DIRECTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sauté onion until translucent, add garlic and brussels sprouts, continue sautéing for 5 minutes • Add split peas, water and seasonings • Bring to boil; lower flame to simmer for about an hour or until peas are completely cooked (stir occasionally, adjust seasoning if needed).
	<p>CHEF’S TIP:</p> <p>The optimal way to slice Brussels sprouts is to first slice off and discard bottom ends and any wilted or discolored leaves, then cut vertically.</p>		
	<p>BENEFITS:</p> <p>Brussels sprouts are among the best green-vegetable sources of protein. Just one serving meets the USDA’s daily recommended requirements for vitamins C and K. Brussels sprouts are full of antioxidants, high in fiber, and a good source of <i>alpha-linolenic acid</i> (ALA) omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce inflammation, insulin resistance, cognitive decline and blood triglycerides.</p>		
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Public Health and Policy News

and, under federal law, it's generally quite illegal. It's even more illegal when a doctor pays a non-doctor for sending a patient.

Two federal laws help combat kickbacks: the Physician Self-Referral Law, a.k.a. the Stark Law, which went into effect in 1992, and the broader Anti-Kickback Statute, which took effect far earlier in the 1970s.

But now, proposed rules jointly released by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) within the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services would alter both landmark laws.

The proposed changes are primarily meant to allow healthcare providers to provide more *value-based care*—a relatively new model which involves far more collaboration (and hence, referrals) among doctors.

STUDY LINKS LOWER HEALTH TO STRESS CAUSED BY POLITICS

Lincoln, Nebraska — Politics sure can be bad for your health—at least if you ask the authors of a study (survey, actually) curiously titled, “Friends, relatives, sanity, and health: The costs of politics.”

“The results suggest that a large number of Americans believe their physical health has been harmed by their exposure to politics and even more report that politics has resulted in emotional costs and lost



TEARING AT THE NATION'S FABRIC OF WELL-BEING: POLITICS ARE INCREASINGLY ADVERSELY IMPACTING THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF AMERICANS, SAYS STUDY

friendships,” the study stated.

According to the survey:

- Nearly one of three Americans said they'd been “driven crazy” by media outlets promoting views contrary to their personal beliefs
- Three in ten said they'd lost their temper over politics;
- About 22 percent said they care too much about who wins and who loses;
- Twenty-five percent said that politics has led them to hate some people; and
- Over one in ten felt politics had adversely affected their physical health.

REPORT: SEVEN DRUG-PRICE INCREASES COST \$5.1 BILLION OVER TWO YEARS

Boston, Massachusetts — The Boston-based Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) released a list of the top 100 best-selling drugs in the U.S.

According to the ICER report, which covered sales data spanning January 2017 through December

2018, seven drugs had price increases so steep that they cost health insurers and patients \$5.1 billion over the course of those two years.

What's more, according to ICER researchers, those seven increases had no clinical justification. Those drugs include:

- Arthritis drug Humira, whose price rose 15.9 percent, adding \$1.86 billion in drug costs
- Lymphoma drug Rituxan, whose price rose 23.6 percent, adding \$806 million in drug costs
- Painkiller Lyrica, whose price rose 22.2 percent, adding \$688 million in drug costs
- White blood cell booster Neulasta, whose price rose 13.4 percent, adding \$489 million in drug costs

LIFESAVING DRUG SHORTAGES EXEMPT SOME AIRLINES FROM CARRYING THEM

Washington, D.C. — Under U.S. public-health law as enforced by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), commercial airliners are required to have certain life-saving medications on board every U.S.-based flight in case a passenger experiences a medical emergency.

But now, a number of airlines have secured FAA permission to violate that law (which would otherwise trigger heavy fines)—simply because there now isn't enough of some those medications for a supply to be on every flight.

The FAA normally bars any plane from taking off without the following on board: one dose each of atropine, dextrose and lidocaine, and two doses of epinephrine.

However, some airline representatives explained that planes flying without those five is usually due to cases of temporary shortages, and that aircraft usually do carry a complete supply of the drugs. ★

STUDY: 137 MILLION AMERICANS FACED MEDICAL FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Atlanta, Georgia — If you're an American facing financial hardship due to medical expenses, you're not alone. In fact, over 100 million other Americans are in the same boat as you—according to a new review of public health data conducted by the American Cancer Society.

For the study, Society researchers reviewed data from the CDC's National Health Interview Survey for 2015-2017.

Researchers found that 137.1 million adults reported medical financial hardship in 2017 alone, with *hardship* defined as medical debt, psychological distress from healthcare costs, and/or coping behaviors to deal with those costs, such as skipping medical care.

Of those, over 100 million reported financial hardship due to medical expenses alone.

FEDS PROPOSE STARK CHANGES TO LANDMARK ANTI-KICKBACK STATUTE, STARK LAW

Baltimore, Maryland — If a doctor pays another doctor for sending a patient, that's called a *kickback*—



NOT ALWAYS IS PAYING FOR REFERRALS A BAD THING: A KEY PENDING CHANGE TO FEDERAL ANTI-KICKBACK LAWS WOULD ALLOW MORE INTRA-DOCTOR TIPS WITHOUT FEAR OF VIOLATIONS

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A Hamaspiik Project

is called a *lipoprotein*.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the bad cholesterol, transports cholesterol particles throughout the body. This cholesterol builds up in the walls of the arteries, making them hard and narrow.

On the other hand, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the good cholesterol, picks up excess cholesterol and brings it back to the liver.

Thus, high cholesterol is caused by too much LDL, too little HDL, or both.

Also, having a high triglyceride level can also increase risk of heart disease.

Factors like poor diet, obesity, lack of exercise, smoking, age, and even diabetes contribute to high cholesterol.

Others factors can also include one's personal genetic profile, which might keep cells from removing LDL cholesterol from the blood efficiently, or cause the liver to produce too much cholesterol.

Poor diet

Eating *saturated fat*, found in animal products, and *trans fats*, found in some commercially baked cookies and crackers and microwave popcorn, can raise cholesterol levels.

Foods high in cholesterol, like red meat and full-fat dairy products, will also increase cholesterol.

Obesity

Having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater creates risk of high cholesterol.

Lack of exercise

Exercise boosts the body's HDL cholesterol while enlarging the particles that make up LDL cholesterol, making them less harmful—meaning that lack of exercise equals stagnant cholesterol.

Smoking

Cigarette smoking damages the walls of the blood vessels, making them more prone to accumulating fatty deposits. Smoking might also lower levels of HDL cholesterol.

Age

Because the body's chemistry changes as one ages, risk of high cholesterol climbs as one ages, too. For instance, the liver becomes less able to remove LDL cholesterol as time goes on.

Diabetes

High blood sugar contributes to higher levels of a dangerous cholesterol that is called very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL), as well as lower HDL cholesterol.

High blood sugar also damages the lining of your arteries.

TREATMENT

The good news is that high cholesterol can be lowered. This can greatly reduce

risk of heart disease and stroke.

Diet and exercise are the best initial treatment for children age two and older who have high cholesterol or who are obese. Kids age ten and older who have extremely high cholesterol levels might even be prescribed cholesterol-lowering drugs like statins.

Meanwhile, here are three basic things one can—and should!—do to “adjust” levels of high cholesterol: exercise regularly, eat a heart-healthy diet, and lose weight.

Regular exercise

With your doctor's approval, start off slowly and work up to at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, five times a week.

Heart-healthy diet

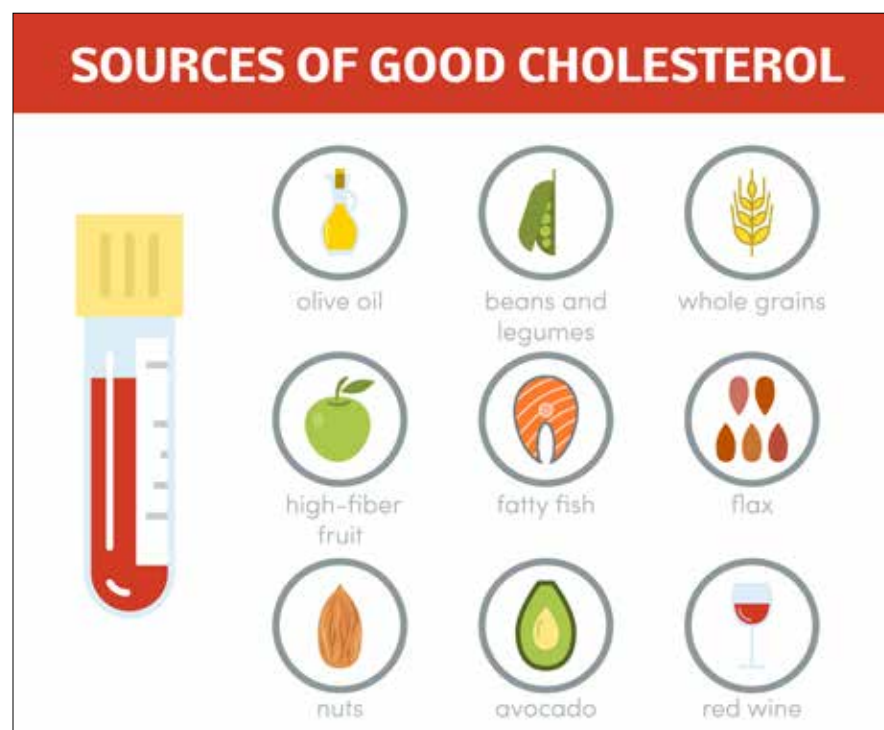
Focus on plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Limit saturated fats, found in red meat and full-fat dairy products, and trans fats, found in many processed foods. Monounsaturated fat, which is found

personal risk factors, age, health, and possible side effects. Some commonly prescribed drugs are:

Statins, which block a substance the liver needs to make cholesterol, causing the liver to remove cholesterol from the blood. Statins can also help the body reabsorb cholesterol from built-up deposits, potentially reversing coronary artery disease. These include Atoprev, Crestor, Lescol XL, Lipitor, Livalo, Pravachol, and Zocor. The common side effects of statins are muscle pains and muscle damage, reversible memory loss and confusion, and elevated blood sugar.

Bile-acid-binding resins, which bind to the *bile acids* made by the liver using cholesterol. Bile acids help with natural digestion. When these medications bind to bile acids, the liver is prompted to make more bile acids—thus indirectly reducing blood cholesterol. These medications include Colestid, Prevalite and Welchol.

A *cholesterol absorption inhibitor* like the drug Zetia reduces blood cholesterol by limiting the absorption of



in olive and canola oils, is a healthier option. Avocados, nuts and oily fish are other sources of healthy fat.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends limiting saturated fat to five to six percent of daily calories and minimizing the amount of trans fat you eat.

Weight loss

Losing even five to ten pounds can help lower cholesterol levels.

Medication

If cholesterol levels remain high despite lifestyle changes like exercise and diet, a doctor might next recommend various medication(s) that help treat high cholesterol.

Which medication(s) your doctor recommends depends on several variables, including: the patient's

dietary cholesterol by the small intestine, from where it would normally go into the bloodstream.

A newer class of drugs called *PCSK9 inhibitors* can help the liver absorb more LDL cholesterol, which lowers the amount of blood cholesterol. Such injectable drugs include Praluent and Repatha.

Other drugs include: *fibrates*, which reduce the liver's production of very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL) cholesterol; *niacin*, which limits the liver's ability to produce LDL and VLDL cholesterol; and *omega-3 fatty acid supplements*, which help lower triglycerides.

Tolerance of medications varies from person to person.

If you decide to take cholesterol medication, your doctor might recommend liver function tests to monitor the medication's effect on your liver.

Alternative medicine

Few natural products have been proven to reduce cholesterol, but some might be helpful.

If your doctor approves, consider these cholesterol-lowering supplements and products:

- Barley
- Plant sterols and stanols, found in oral supplements, some fortified orange juices and some margarines, such as Promise Activ
- Blond psyllium, found in seed husk and products such as Metamucil
- Oat bran, found in oatmeal and whole oats

Red yeast rice is another popular supplement associated with the lowering of levels of cholesterol.

There is evidence that red yeast rice can help lower LDL cholesterol—primarily because it naturally contains a substance called *monacolin K*, the natural form of the prescription medication known as *lovastatin*. However, if you buy red yeast rice supplements in the United States, there's no way to know whether you're getting enough monacolin K to lower your LDL cholesterol.

PREVENTION

To help prevent high cholesterol, you can:

- Eat a low-salt diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Limit the amount of animal fats and use good fats in moderation
- Lose extra pounds and maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
- Exercise on most days of the week for at least 30 minutes
- Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all
- Manage stress

Adults 20 and up should have their cholesterol regularly tested, and work with doctors to adjust cholesterol levels as necessary.

PROGNOSIS

The same heart-healthy lifestyle changes that can lower cholesterol can also help prevent high cholesterol in the first place.

So whether you've been diagnosed with high cholesterol, or want to prevent getting high cholesterol, there is much that you can do to solve your health problem.

It's in your hands!

Improve your diet and eating habits, go to the gym or even talk a brisk walk every day, and lose weight (and, once you get there, maintain a healthy weight), and chances are that you'll dramatically improve your health, and your life. ★

Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today



CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL RESEARCHERS USE STEM CELLS TO GROW ORGANOIDS

Cincinnati, Ohio — A team at the Center for Stem Cell & Organoid Medicine (CuSTOM), an initiative of Cincinnati Children's Hospital, say they have made a breakthrough discovery that brings them a step closer to a future in which no patient risks dying while waiting for an organ transplant.

The team of scientists, clinicians, geneticists, surgeons and bio-engineers has now grown the world's first-ever set of three functional organoids (liver, pancreas and biliary ducts) to function as one system.

Organoids are tiny 3D formations of human tissue that perform the functions of multiple cells found in full-sized organs. Their greatest potential is to help treat and cure disease.

According to CuSTOM lead scientist Takanori Takebe, M.D., organoids can be developed using a specific patient's stem cells to then test how a patient might respond to a drug or to create personalized treatments.



A DIFFERENT KIND OF GROWTH: RESEARCHERS HERE HAVE GROWN SO-CALLED ORGANOIDS THAT MAY CUT DOWN ON ORGAN-DONATION WAIT TIMES IN THE FUTURE

MAYO, OTHER BIG HOSPITALS MOVING TO THE CLOUD

Rochester, Minnesota — Thanks to reduced costs of off-site hardware and staff, big hospitals and healthcare systems are increasingly moving their data to cloud-based storage systems.

Among such facilities is the world-famous Mayo Clinic, which this summer tapped tech giant Google to serve as storage center for the hospital's medical, genetic and financial data.

The Rochester-based hospital will still control access to patient records. Mayo's full transition will unfold over a three-year period.

Amazon, Google and Microsoft are among the big tech companies angling for deals as hospitals and health systems transition to the offsite, multi-unit data storage system known as the cloud—a transition driven by current data storage methods becoming outdated.

PATIENT WALKS INTO ER WITH CASE OF TURNING BLUE

Providence, Rhode Island — To be "blue-blooded" is to say you stem from royalty or the aristocracy—a common English expression, and one not always too complimentary, either.

But now, a Rhode Island woman can safely say she is blue-blooded—or at least was.

When the 25-year-old patient walked into Miriam Hospital in Providence, she was complaining of generalized weakness, fatigue and shortness of breath—and a rare case of *methemoglobinemia*, which for those of you who don't speak medicalese, means she was literally turning blue.

Doctors later explained in a medical journal that she had a rare

reaction to benzocaine, an over-the-counter toothache medication. In methemoglobinemia, certain medicines stop blood from carrying oxygen to tissue, causing tissue (like skin) to turn blue.

Curiously enough, the treatment for methemoglobinemia is methylene blue—a common medical dye.

WITH GROWING OFF-LABEL USAGE, HOSPITALS AND PATIENTS FACE DWINDLING SUPPLIES OF NICHE DRUGS

Cincinnati, Ohio — *Off-label usage*, or the safe and proven usage of medications for diseases other than those they are primarily intended for, is common hospital practice.

But in recent years, a growing number of drugs are increasingly hard to get, thanks to increasing off-label usage. One such drug is intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG).

Used since the 1950s, IVIG primarily treats life-threatening conditions that disable the body's infection-fighting function.

Immunoglobulin is rich in *antibodies*, or proteins that help fight off infection—vital for patients whose immune systems have been dampened or even destroyed by chemotherapy or other medical treatments.

One such six-year-old tumor patient had to seek IVIG elsewhere after Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, where he regularly got IVIG, hit a shortage.

HOSPITAL HALTS NEW PATIENTS BECAUSE STAFF NURSES DON'T SHOW UP TO THEIR JOBS

Oneida, Tennessee — Sending new patients to other area hospitals, or otherwise not taking them in as patients, is nothing new at hospitals.

Sometimes emergency rooms or even inpatient facilities are at maximum capacity—especially in smaller-sized suburban or rural hospitals—rendering hospitals incapable of providing care.

But what about when your hospital has the facilities, but not the nurses?

That was the situation at Big South Fork Medical Center in Oneida, Tennessee, where a shortage of nursing staff forced the hospital to stop admitting new patients for a time.

According to local media reports, several employees essentially went on strike to protest the parent company's payroll delay problems.

"Staff aren't showing up due to non-payment and patients can't be admitted because the staff aren't there to take care of them," an anonymous employee told the local *Independent Herald*. ★



THE SKY'S (NO LONGER?) THE LIMIT: IN RESPONSE TO INDUSTRY CHANGES, THE MAYO CLINIC AND OTHER LEADING U.S. HOSPITALS ARE MOVING PATIENT DATA TO THE CLOUD



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Double-blind study: exercise better than meds in early Parkinson's

The Hague, Netherlands — There are a lot of studies out there saying that physical exercise is good for people with Parkinson's disease—and the more, and the aerobic, the better, especially the earlier in the onset of the disease.

But many of those studies are merely surveys finding that people with Parkinson's who report more exercise also report less severity—not scientifically linking more exercise with less severity.

But now, a double-blind trial—the most rigorous and scientific of study types—has scientifically proven that six months of physical exercise at home is better for early Parkinson's patients than just taking Parkinson's medications.

The study split a group of volunteers with early Parkinson's into two groups. One only did stretching exercises, and the other rode exercise bikes at home 30 to 45 minutes at a time at least thrice weekly. After six months, the cycling group had a motor disability score 4.2 points lower than the non-cycling group. ★

Hamaspik HomeCare Leads Authoritative CDPAP Webinars for Staff of CCOs

Brooklyn-based Broadcast Events Teaches Program Basics, Nuances to Major Agencies

Like so many other programs funded by the Medicaid and Medicare programs (not to mention private insurance companies), New York State's Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) undergoes not-infrequent change.

To stay abreast of all those changes—alterations to existing regulation, or introduction of new ones—CDPAP-providing agencies must constantly provide training to all staff.

But if your own human-resources (HR) or quality assurance (QA) teams don't provide you with that training because they don't have that information... why, then, you just farm that training out to someone who does!

For that reason, it was Hamaspik HomeCare's recent honor and pleasure to host the staff of two major Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs).

"We specialize in providing home-care services to the developmental

disability community," explains Mordechai Wolhendler, Hamaspik HomeCare's COO—which was why Hamaspik HomeCare was asked to educate those CCOs' staff.

Care Coordination Organizations are non-profit community partners conceived by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). They serve to provide individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) with "conflict-free" independent advocacy for the wide array of disability services and supports available from many agencies.

For a good half-day, Hamaspik HomeCare staff at the agency's Brooklyn hub on McDonald Ave. educated one agency's Care Coordinators on the full ins and outs of CDPAP—with an emphasis on how the vital service intersects with home care. An identical session for the second agency followed days later.

Authoritative presentations utilizing the live broadcast magic of modern webinars were delivered Hamaspik HomeCare's in-house gurus on all things CDPAP.

Agency presenters included Upstate Regional Director Mrs. Raizy Mermelstein, Director of Quality Assurance Mrs. Esther Henny Jaroslawicz, Business Development Director David Krasner, and Mr. Wolhendler.

The CDPAP program has long been a mainstay of the numerous home-care agencies like Hamaspik HomeCare which service New York State's most vulnerable populations.

Geared as it is for seniors and others who are healthy enough to live at home, but who just need that diligent and alert extra hand around the house, CDPAP has been a veritable lifeline for decades—and one that Hamaspik HomeCare professionally provides. ★

Study: more social activity, less risk of dementia

London, England — Researchers at University College London reviewed data from the Whitehall II study, which tracked over 10,000 participants for close to 30 years—finding that people who reported being more socially active in their 50s and 60s also showed lower rates of developing dementia in later years.

The data indicated that a person who saw friends almost daily at age 60 was 12 percent less likely to develop dementia than a person who only saw one or two friends every few months.

Social contact in middle age and late life appears to lower the risk of dementia, according to lead author, Dr. Andrew Sommerlad—who also said that one in three cases is also preventable.

Researcher Prof. Gill Livingston explained that social engagement exercises cognitive skills like as memory and language, which may help develop *cognitive reserve*—which could help people cope better with the effects of age and delay any symptoms of dementia. ★

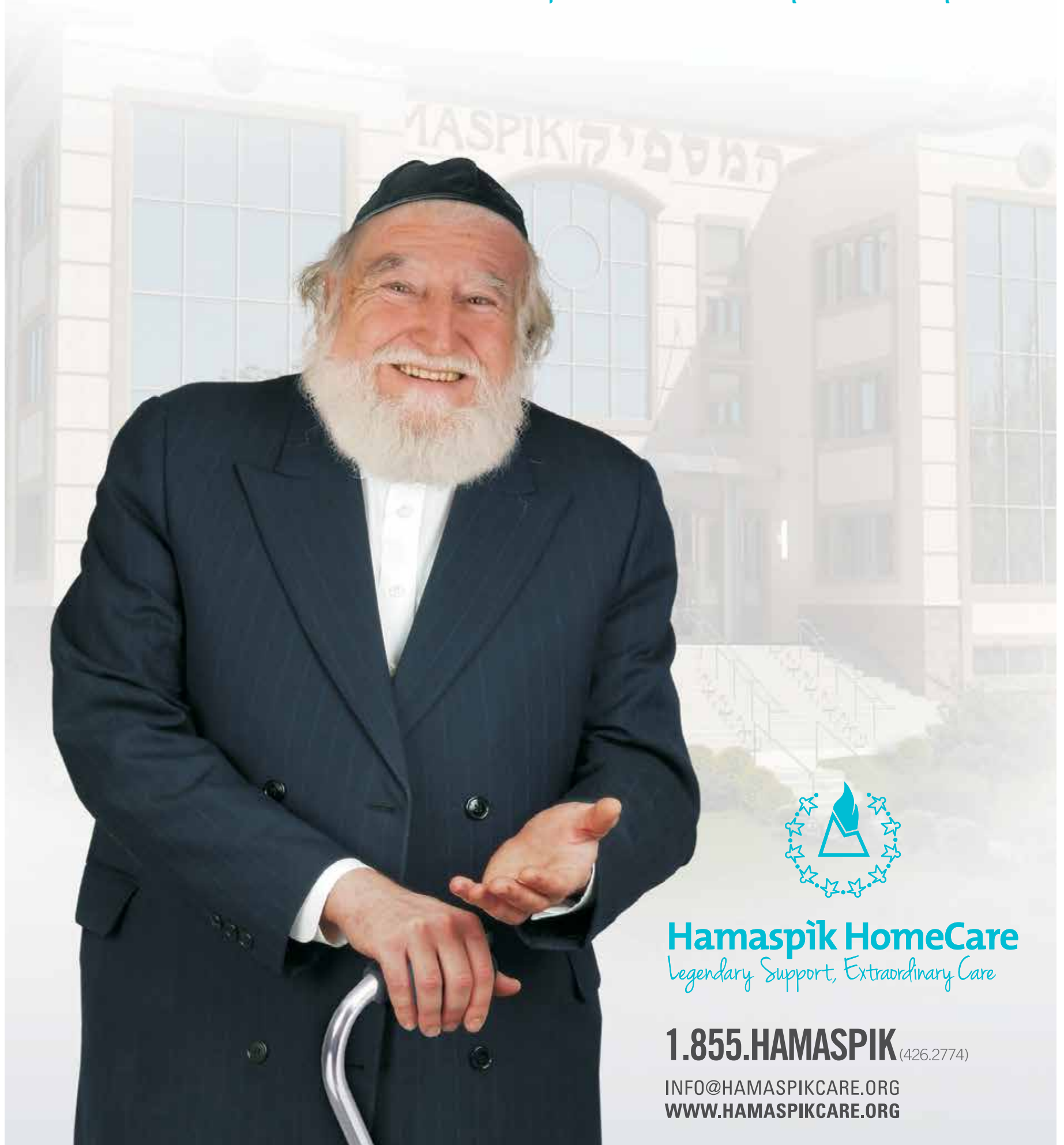


MORE INVOLVEMENT, LESS MENTAL ILLNESS: RESEARCH BY THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (SHOWN HERE) ASSOCIATES SOCIAL LIFE WITH LOWER RATES OF DEMENTIA

“Thank You, Hamaspik HomeCare”

- The Home Care Agency that keeps me safe -

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