



# The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik  
Agencies and  
General Health

SEPTEMBER '20 • ISSUE NO. 183



## GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

**ARE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY ALLERGIC TO PEANUTS?**

**A. YES ; B. NO**

Respond to: [survey@nyshainc.org](mailto:survey@nyshainc.org) • 845-655-0667



## HEALTH STAT

**UP IN YEARS, UP ABOUT LIFE  
POSITIVE VIEWS ON AGING IN ADULTS 50-80**

FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE BEING THEMSELVES	88%
FEEL MORE POSITIVE ABOUT AGING	67%
THINK THEIR LIFE IS BETTER THAN THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE	65%

Source: National Poll on Healthy Aging, University of Michigan, 2020



## HEALTH TIP

**GO NATURAL—ONE CONSUMER PRODUCT A MONTH!**

Most cosmetics, deodorants, hair products and home cleaning products are loaded with chemicals that aren't good for us long-term. But instead of going cold turkey on all those items and then getting overwhelmed, just switch one for its natural counterpart each month.

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**KOCHAVIM ("STARS") IS AMONG THE NEWEST NON-PROFITS ON THE COMMUNITY'S FRONT LINES. ITS RECENT LEMONADE STAND CONTEST—WHICH HAMASPIK GLADLY JOINED—GENERATED MUCH-NEEDED JUICY PR AND LEFT A SWEET TASTE IN EVERYONE'S MOUTH**

## HAMASPIK NEWS

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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.

### RESPITE:

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

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**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 Hamaspiik services

### THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

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

## OMH

### 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

# For Integrated Health, Going the Distance Means Going the Extra Mile

*Hamaspik's Bold New Program Fuses Standard Case Management with Comprehensive and Holistic Support*

“Case management” arguably de-serves the drab, monotonous and listless reputation that it all too often has—conjuring up images of humorless, paper-pushing bureaucrats endlessly droning on.

But not at Integrated Health!

If anything, the Care Managers, as they are called here, are quite the polar opposite.

When people in your caseload are in need, posits Mordechai Neuman, LCSW, you call whomever you have to call and do whatever you have to do to get them the help they need.

The affable, authoritative social worker is the Rockland County Director of Integrated Health. Working alongside counterpart Abraham “Mutt” Solomon of the Brooklyn-based Hamaspik of Kings County, Mr. Neuman helms the explosively-growing new mental-health initiative upstate.

Integrated Health is a care-management and advocacy program for mainstream adults who have been diagnosed with at least two



**BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:** MORDECHAI NEUMAN, LCSW WORKS THE PHONE, SURROUNDED BY PAPER AND ELECTRONIC FILES ON ACTIVE CASES. THE ROCKLAND COUNTY DIRECTOR OF INTEGRATED HEALTH WILL TYPICALLY MAKE DOZENS OF SUCH CALLS A DAY

medical and/or mental health-related conditions. (In fact, in some cases, one major-category diagnosis is enough.)

On paper, signing up with the program gives the qualifying

participant a concierge-like Care Manager. The Care Manager will stand by the individual through the ups and downs of daily challenges like medication management and

appointment adherence.

But at Integrated, signing up is where the program only begins.

Integrated fields a team of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >>

► HEALTH NEWS

# Evidence From Musicians Pinpoints Precise Locations of Creativity in the Brain

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — If you're the creative type, you may have heard that you're a “right-brain thinker.” That's because science has long believed that creativity is a product of the brain's right hemisphere. Conversely, if you're the analytical, logical type, you may have been told that you're a “left-brain thinker.”

Skeptical neuroscientists argue that there isn't enough evidence to support that model—that human creativity must draw on vast swaths of both hemispheres.

But now, a brain-imaging study out of Drexel University's Creativity Research Lab sheds light on the controversy by studying the brain activity of guitarists during improvisation, or the art of creating new music on the fly.

Drexel researchers recorded high-density electroencephalograms (EEGs) from 32 jazz guitar players, some of whom were highly experienced and others less experienced. Each musician improvised to six songs, producing a

total of 192 recordings. Expert musicians then graded each recording's creativity level.

Researchers found that EEGs of the high-grade recordings showed more activity in the brain's left area, while

EEGs of lower-grade recordings showed more activity in the brain's right area.

According to researchers, the findings now suggest that creativity is a “right-brain ability” when a person deals with an unfamiliar situation—but when a person is experienced at the task, creativity draws on well-learned routines from the brain's left hemisphere.

The study concluded that creativity is, in fact, driven primarily by the right hemisphere—but only in musicians who are comparatively inexperienced at improvisation. The study found that musicians highly experienced at improvisation rely primarily on their left hemisphere.



**CREATIVITY RIGHT AND LEFT:** MUSICAL IMPROVISATION CAN COME FROM EITHER SIDE OF THE BRAIN—DEPENDING ON HOW EXPERIENCED YOU ARE, RESEARCH HAS FOUND

## Hamaspik Gazette

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# Happening in Health Today



## FOR ENERGY, BREAKFAST BETTER THAN DINNER—REGARDLESS OF MEAL SIZE

**Lübeck, Germany** — If you want to improve your diet-induced thermogenesis (DIT) numbers, you may want to significantly increase your morning-time caloric intake.

That's just a fancy way of saying that if you want your body to produce good levels of energy and otherwise react healthily to the food you eat, then eat a big breakfast.

According to a study of 16 young healthy men by Germany's University of Lübeck, diet-induced thermogenesis—which refers to energy expenditure and metabolic responses to meals—was 2.5 times higher in the morning after breakfast than it was in the evening after dinner. The study had sought to determine if DIT varies depending on time of day.

In other words, in terms of DIT, breakfast has a more efficient energetic value the body than

dinner, according to the researchers. Researchers found the same result regardless of how much participants ate. ★



IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EAT, IT'S WHEN YOU EAT IT: SCIENTISTS FOUND THAT MORNING MEALS ARE MORE ENERGIZING THAN DINNERS, REGARDLESS OF INTAKE

per 1,000 person-years, translating to a 24-percent reduction.

The research was conducted by the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, Holland.

At 18.4 percent of all cancer deaths, lung cancer is the leading cause of death worldwide due to the disease.

## OF 2020'S 25 HIGHEST-PAYING JOBS, 14 ARE HEALTHCARE-RELATED

**Washington, D.C.** — Seems that the stereotype of doctors being well-heeled is rather well-rooted in fact.

Drawing from federal U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) statistics, *U.S. News and World Report* found that 14 of the 25 highest-paying jobs in 2020 are in healthcare.

What's more, of those 25, the top 11 are in healthcare.

Curiously, according to the list, surgeons—widely seen as the most-trained specialists—are paid only second-most (at an annual average of \$255,110); the top spot is snagged by anesthesiologists at \$267,020.

The remainder of those 25 careers includes orthodontists (#5 at \$225,760), dentists (#10 at \$175,840), podiatrists (#12 at \$148,220), pharmacists (#13 at \$123,670) and optometrists (#14 at \$119,980).

The top 25 jobs also include such non-medical careers like petroleum engineer (#12), financial manager (#16), and political scientist (#25).

## NEW CANCER-DETECTION METHOD: MICROBIAL DNA

**San Diego, California** — A team of researchers at UC San Diego's Center for Microbiome Innovation are developing a novel method to identify who has cancer, and often which type, by simply analyzing patterns of microbial DNA present in the blood.

*Microbes* are the billions of tiny organisms, almost all harmless, that live in the human body, mostly in the digestive system.

Microbial genes in the body actually vastly outnumber human genes. As such, the cancer researchers believe that microbial DNA should lend important clues to the body's health.

By analyzing existing microbial data on thousands of cancer patients, researchers identified previously unknown microbial signatures that strongly indicated certain cancers. For example, the presence of *Faecalibacterium* distinguished colon cancer from others.

The technique may one day lead to fast, non-invasive tests to detect

cancer in its earliest stages.

## WORLD'S FIRST DIABETES DRONE FLIGHT DESCRIBED IN MEDICAL JOURNAL

**Galway, Ireland** — If you were diabetic and lived in a remote location, and a natural disaster—say, a major storm of some sort—suddenly cuts off access to your medication, you'd be in serious trouble. But now, new drone technology may one day come to the rescue by making urgent deliveries of insulin.

A special issue of the *Journal of the Endocrine Society* describes the world's first documented delivery of medication via drone to a diabetes patient in a difficult-to-reach community.

The 16-minute test flight, using a large remote-controlled drone, took place from Galway, Ireland, to the Aran Islands about 12 miles off Ireland's west coast.

According to principal investigator Derek O'Keeffe, a consultant endocrinologist at National University of Ireland, Galway, modern medicine now has the

drone technology and protocols in place to deliver diabetes medications and supplies in an actual disaster if needed.

## TEN-YEAR STUDY PROVES THAT LUNG-CANCER SCREENINGS SAVE LIVES

**Rotterdam, Holland** — There are several regular recommended screenings against the dreaded "C-word"—but unlike screenings for colorectal, cervical and other cancers, lung screenings aren't one of them.

Now, a decade-long study has shown that regular CT scans of large numbers of patients reduced deaths due to lung cancer by 25 percent.

The study involved nearly 16,000 adults ages 50 to 74—dividing them into screened and non-screened groups. Over the course of ten years, the screened group got four CT scans—one at the start, then at Year 1, Year 3, and Year 5.5.

Patients assigned to the non-scanned group had 3.3 cases of lung cancer mortality per 1,000 person-years—while the CT-scans group had 2.5 cases

## PEOPLE WITH BROWN FAT BURN MORE CALORIES WHEN COLD: STUDY

**Vienna, Austria** — People with brown fat burn off more calories when exposed to cold temperatures than people without brown fat, says a study by the Medical University of Vienna.

But what's brown fat, you ask?

Body fat as we know it is mostly *white fat*. White fat cells store calories. But it was discovered in 2009 that everyone has a little bit of brown fat, too.

Brown fat exists in the body only in tiny amounts, and commonly mixed with white fat. It was previously believed that only babies had brown fat. Brown fat burns energy and creates heat.

The study of 16 volunteers—who all wore cold-water cooling vests for 90 minutes—found that the eight with brown fat burned off 15 percent more calories than the other eight without brown fat.

The research suggests that lowering body temperature or otherwise inducing shivering to activate brown fat may become a new way of reducing weight. ★

בס"ד

☎ ... Caller @ 4:45 PM

“My brother Chaim was hospitalized after his last relapse and is finally being discharged, but I’m concerned. I don’t think he’s set up with the right help.

**WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

**INTEGRATED  
HEALTH  
IS THE ANSWER.**

A dedicated Care-Manager will help you navigate the murky waters and connect you with the right resources.

FREE FOR ELIGIBLE MEDICAID MEMBERS.

A Hamaspik initiative. Available to the general public. Must be 18+, have Medicaid, and face chronic medical or behavioral conditions to qualify.

MEDICAL BEHAVIORAL PSYCHIATRIC ADDICTIONS

INTRODUCING  
  
**INTEGRATED**  
HEALTH

**UPSTATE** 845-503-0444  
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www.IntegratedHealthRC.org

**BROOKLYN** 718-387-8400 ext 13  
intake@hamaspikings.org

## ● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# In the Test that is Life, Hamaspik OC Day Hab Boys Gear up for the Big One

*Anticipation and Accomplishment in the Air after Months of Mishnah Mastery*

The idea had first occurred to Moshe Hersh Berkowitz last fall.

It's not surprising that the dedicated Direct Support Professional (DSP), long a stalwart—and an award-winning one—at Hamaspik of Orange County's Men's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program, was thinking of his charges. At Day Hab, employees typically think about their charges—constantly seeking ways to probe forward with positive improvements and never accepting the status quo.

Mr. Berkowitz's idea was simply monumental: Daily Mishnah study.

The Mishnah is to the Torah (Jewish Bible) what Justice Joseph Story's *Commentaries* is to the U.S. Constitution. Its 62 volumes, divided by six categories, span the spectrum of Jewish law—interpreting the Torah's text for practicable application.

But the Mishnah's texts themselves run from impossibly inscrutable to instantly digestible—so Mr. Berkowitz elected to have the young men he supports daily conquer one of the

easiest volumes, *Brachos* (Blessings).

Nearly a year later, they did it.

## The Beginning of an Ending

Moshe Hersh Berkowitz approached Joseph Grunbaum with his idea shortly after he thought of it. The Hamaspik or Orange County Director of Day Services was instantly on board—and he authorized Mr. Berkowitz's purchase of some 20 copies of *Brachos* at a local Jewish bookstore.

Starting shortly after the High Holidays, with the resumption of a normal daily schedule, Mr. Berkowitz and a good dozen young men regularly attending the Day Hab found themselves seated around tables.

It was the first day back at Day Hab after the busy Tishrei holiday month, and the gentlemen were being introduced to something new: studying their own religious texts like their community's mainstream.

On the tables before each of them were the brand-new books. Moshe

Hersh joyfully instructed them to open the volumes to the first page of Mishnah text. It read: *From what time may one recite the Shema in the evening?*

For the next 30 minutes, Mr. Berkowitz patiently, animatedly, and lovingly explained the passage, which explicates the legal need to recite that age-old faith declaration twice daily. Following along word for word, fingers on the place as the DSP read out loud, it was the classic, classroom-like yeshivah experience—and now it was theirs, too.

The next morning, the support staffer was at it again, beloved students at his side.

## To Meet a Master

Mastering *Brachos* went on, day after day, week after week—until Covid-19, when everything shut down—until New York slowly unfurled phase after phase. (While the virus was peaking and then waning, classes were by phone.)

With Day Hab back in business in June, Mr. Berkowitz and the boys were back at it.

By then, they had thoroughly turned the soil of *Brachos*' nine chapters, now embarking on an equally thorough review. By late July, the material was theirs: acquired, internalized, imbibed—"one hundred percent!" Moshe Hersh smilingly insisted.

They were now ready to submit to the ultimate test: Could they answer questions on the text and formulate responses in their own words?

To grill them over their newfound wisdom would be no less a Torah giant than Rabbi Getzel Berkowitz, for decades the venerated chief justice of Kiryas Joel's religious court and Moshe Hersh's own grandfather. They were excited. They were proud. They were ready.

It's no accident that the final chapter of *Brachos* begins thusly: *If one sees a place where miracles have been done...* ★

# For Integrated Health, Going the Distance Means Going the Extra Mile

*Hamaspik's Bold New Program Fuses Standard Case Management with Comprehensive and Holistic Support*

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

professional Care Managers, all of whom spend their days on the phone or out in the field, personally supporting a range of adults of all ages. (Individuals 21 and below can qualify for similar services from sister agency Comfort Health.)

Mr. Neuman shares a sampling of actions taken by the program in Rockland alone since its inception. These include: Arranging volunteer live musicians to cheer up a homebound patient with a debilitating medical

condition; seeking housing options for a young man being discharged from a psych ward; helping an overwhelmed young mother cope; assisting an older woman reconcile with her estranged adult children; introducing a family to various community food-security programs; and working with cancer-support non-profits to help a patient get financial and other assistance.

Other distances that staff of Integrated Health have gone include: visiting a woman with emotional instability at her home to simply

hear her poetry; enjoying the personal growth-conducive setting of the natural outdoors with a young adult while sharing practical day-structuring tools; negotiating with a client's irate landlord; arranging medical transportation; and setting up social groups for a lonely homebound person.

"This is what I call going above and beyond the call of duty," says Mr. Neuman. "You will not find these solutions in the OMH manual," referring to the New York State Office

of Mental Health (OMH).

According to Mr. Neuman, Integrated Health is not just for people with serious emotional disorders but for mainstream individuals with ordinary emotional and physical challenges—making the program very helpful not just to them but to their families and loved ones, too. ★

For more information, call Integrated Health in Brooklyn at 718-387-8400, ext. 13, or 845-503-0444 for the upstate Hudson Valley region.

Friday Afternoons / Ages 8-9

# ● Social Friday.



Join us to improve your child's self-confidence and social skills in a group setting.



A project run  
by Hamaspik

Contact Reiny Steif / 845.503.0239 [Rsteif@hamaspikrockland.org](mailto:Rsteif@hamaspikrockland.org)

FOR CHILDREN WITH ASD ELIGIBLE FOR ABA SERVICES.

Grow  
today.

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



## Down to Earth



**GROWTH:** THEY MAY NOT BE VISIBLE ABOVE GROUND JUST YET, BUT THE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS PLANTED HERE WILL SOON BE RIGHT AT HOME ON GRANDVIEW'S GROUNDS

## The Art of Décor



**FLAT-OUT COLORFUL:** WANNAMAKER IRA RESIDENT NAFTALI PROUDLY DISPLAYS ONE OF THE INTRICATE WALL DECORATIONS THAT HE AND HIS FELLOW RESIDENTS MADE BY HAND

# Do-It-Yourself Home Gardening Project Takes Off at Grandview IRA

## *Hamaspik of Rockland County Group Home Breaks New Ground*

It was a groundbreaking story in every way, including literally.

Hamaspik of Rockland County Women's Day Hab Director Mrs. Esty Schonfeld had put together and distributed a "do-it-yourself" home activity package to all agency group homes in Rockland County—including Hamaspik's Grandview Briderheim IRA.

That residence, managed by experienced longtime Hamaspik employee Nachman Ciment, immediately got to work. (Given current events, plenty of Purell was on hand, too.)

The package didn't just include a bag of moist potting soil, and flower seeds to put in it, but even a do-it-yourself flower bed construction kit, including wooden slats and a hammer.

Home Manager Ciment and his "boys" lost no time.

Breaking out the kit's components, the residents attached the slats together to form a rustic rectangular outdoor

container otherwise known as a raised garden bed.

With Direct Support Professionals safely standing by, the garden bed was shortly and securely fixed in place in the backyard, where a level spot had been cleared to make room for the yard-enhancing addition.

The gentlemen got right to work decking flower seeds under a good few inches of the fresh dark earth contained in the garden bed.

With flower seeds typically taking at least 60 days to shoot forth fresh blooms (at least according to authoritative online sources), Grandview's new horticultural adventure has yet to bear fruit—or, rather, leaves.

But regardless of the project's final outcome, the young men enjoyed an expansion of their world.

By sinking their fingers into the good earth, they broke new ground in more ways than one. ★

# Hamaspik Rockland's ABA Program Rides Wave of Telehealth into Future

## *Kids with Autism Covered with Therapeutic Services Throughout Pandemic*

Telehealth, or the still-exploding usage of technology for virtual medicine, is all the rage nowadays.

According to a May 2019 report by the American Medical Association (AMA), telehealth skyrocketed a whopping 53 percent from 2016 to 2017 alone—and that was before any pandemic.

But when that national crisis struck, Hamaspik of Rockland County's flourishing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program met it head-on by riding the leading edge of the telehealth wave: No group program, no in-home visits, no problem!

Deploying a raft of electronic tablet devices (expertly tweaked throughout by agency IT guru Aaron Rubinstein), ABA Services Director Mrs. Reiny Steif saw to it that her program kept her clients afloat.

Normally, the program would be dispatching board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), as well as trained paraprofessionals, or "paras," to the

homes of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These one-on-one sessions grant them the manifold benefits of the behavior training and reinforcement sessions that defines ABA.

All that continued online via the devices' live audio/video streaming connections.

Mrs. Steif and team also ensured coverage of telehealth ABA for patients—communicating robustly with several insurance companies to secure that vital benefit. In fact, despite delayed insurance-company responsiveness, the Hamaspik ABA program was among the first to get approved for telehealth services from several companies. The program even had to hire new therapists—a "ray of sunshine" for parents with kids still at home, as Mrs. Steif puts it.

"Things are getting back to normal," she adds.

But at Hamaspik, ensuring coverage no matter what is normal. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

## In Making Community Lemonade from Isolation Lemons, Don't Take a Stand: Make One!

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

When life gives you lemonade, make a lemonade stand.

And when life gives you a lemonade stand, raise money!

Taking a stand of the most proactive sort, for which its base community is globally famed, is a relatively new organization dubbed Kochavim. Translating to "Stars," the grassroots non-profit's mission is to support families in which a child is fighting serious illness, by helping them hold down the fort at home.

Kochavim recently spearheaded an original fundraising/awareness campaign of the most thirst-quenching sort: a community-wide lemonade-stand contest and one whose tagline is this article's third sentence (minus the "And"). The most photogenic lemonade stand will be crowned winner.

So the Women's Division of Hamaspiik of Orange County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program just had to enter, of course.

Under the leadership of longtime Day Hab Manager Mrs. Niederman, one group of "Day Habbers" first spent an entire week shopping for crafting supplies with which to create lemonade stand-themed hats. At the same time, another Day Hab group enjoyed juicing an entire crate of fresh lemons by hand, baking lemon cupcakes, and decorating large letters spelling "KOCHAVIM."

Both groups then joined in physically constructing and decorating an exquisitely picturesque and perfectly-themed lemonade stand straight out of Norman Rockwell.

The lemonade stand, replete with baked goods and, yes, plenty of thirst-quencher, stood on a grassy tree-framed patch of property just outside Hamaspiik or Orange's headquarters building in Kiryas Joel for five hours on July 16.

Passersby stopping by to buy a cup of ice-cold lemonade not only supported Kochavim, and the community integration efforts of Hamaspiik, but were also entered into a raffle for tickets to the Legoland amusement park. ★

## At Shnois Chaim, Abundance of Caution Matched by Abundance of Virtual Care

*For Local Seniors, Landmark Hamaspiik of Orange County Program Brings it all Home*

The dozens of seniors attending Hamaspiik's Shnois Chaim program continue to do so—only at home. Program Director Mrs. Chaya Miriam Landau has most emphatically seen to that. What's a meddlesome pandemic when it comes to honoring community elders?

The Shnois Chaim ("Living Years") program is Hamaspiik's take on the congregate dining/social day program offered to seniors by the Office for Aging (OFA), a division of the Orange County Dept. of Health.

Based out of Hamaspiik of Orange County's headquarters-building ballroom in upstate Kiryas Joel, New York, Shnois Chaim has been partnering with the OFA for years now—providing community seniors with daily meals, exercises and classes, and, most importantly, a chance to get out of the house and to socialize with peers.

All that is now being delivered to

their doors, and almost quite literally. Shnois Chaim nowadays gives its regulars a teleconference each day right in the comfort of their own homes.

Each conference begins with seniors "checking in" by introducing themselves and greeting others.

What follows next is a stimulating class—followed, depending on which weekday, by everyone joining in a song (lyrics are sent to each senior's home each prior day), a group game played over the phone (capped by a raffle drawing for a small prize), baking, or an arts and crafts project (with labeled supplies sent home the day before).

Significantly, each Shnois Chaim weekday is anchored by hot lunches—delivered fresh from Hamaspiik's kitchen, where OFA still provides nutritional counseling, straight to seniors' doors.

"We're fully operational," declares Director Landau. "Just virtual!" ★

## Going the Extra Squeeze



MAKING PALETTES PALATABLE: THE STAND'S RAW MATERIALS STAND READY



THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS: THE HAND-CRAFTED STAND BEFORE DEPLOYMENT



ATTENTION TO DETAIL, DOWN TO EVERY LAST DROP: THE LEMONADE-STAND THEME IS CONVEYED HERE WITH ITS PERFECTLY BALANCED BLEND OF DÉCOR AND PROPS

## Up Front, From a Distance



PUTTING CARE ON THE TABLE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, THE PASSOVER HOLIDAY READING MATERIALS, ART WORKBOOKS, AND CRAFT SUPPLIES PROVIDED TO SENIORS

# The Autism Update

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

## AUTISM-RELATED HOUSEHOLD STRESS LOWER WITH EXPOSURE TO LIVE ANIMALS

**Columbia, Missouri** — It's long been known that live animals and creatures, can have a calming or otherwise therapeutic effect on children with autism or other disabilities. But now, a scientific survey has found documentable evidence.

Over 750 families responded to a survey conducted by the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. It found that having regular interaction with a live animal is associated with lower stress for both kids with autism and their parents.

Live animals are long associated with increased social interaction and decreased anxiety among children with ASD; the research also found a marked increase in comfort and support for autism parents, too.

## NEWLY-DIAGNOSED PRE-SCHOOLERS WITH ASD NOT GETTING ENOUGH TREATMENT

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — Re-search into the quality of interventions received by tiny tots newly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) reveals that all too often, those interventions are sorely lacking—or even heavily and unnecessarily weighted towards medication.

The study, conducted by the landmark Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), followed pre-schoolers newly diagnosed with ASD over a long-term period.

They found that, six months after diagnosis, the preschoolers were getting an average of under 25 percent of the therapy hours recommended by current guidelines.

What's more, the study of over 800 preschoolers with ASD found, only one-third had started behavior-based therapy—the type for which the most evidence of efficacy exists.

The study also found that 16.3 percent of the kids were taking at least one psychotropic medication, most of which are not approved for that age group or for children with ASD.

## VAST SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT TELLS HISTORY, STORY OF DISABILITY IN AMERICA

**Washington, D.C.** — An ex-

tensive collection at the legendary Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and research complex, brings to life the history of life with disabilities in the United States.

The online exhibit, which features 17 distinct collections, is entitled EveryBody.

It displays photographs, objects, newspaper clippings, letters, posters, film/video footage and more—and accompanying commentary—that guide the reader through the background and history of each.

Viewers come away educated on how people with disabilities were seen, and saw themselves, in years, generations and even centuries past.

Primarily, visitors come away with an appreciation for the progress made in the field of disability on so many fronts over the past century across the United States.

About 61 million people in the United States—one in four American adults—have some form of disability, according to the CDC.

As the exhibition shows, disability has always been part of American life.



**DOUBLING DOWN ON DATA:** A GIANT STUDY OF TWINS IN SWEDEN FINDS THAT AUTISM HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH ENVIRONMENT

## QUARTER-CENTURY OF DATA ON TWINS SUGGESTS AUTISM LARGELY DUE TO GENETICS

**Stockholm, Sweden** — A review of data on over 22,000 sets of twins born between 1982 and 2008 suggests that genetics account for about 93 percent of the chance that a person has autism.

The figures, compiled by researchers at Stockholm's Karolinska Institutet, bolster unrelated earlier autism research that shows genetics exert an outsized influence on autism odds.

To arrive at their conclusions, researchers analyzed data on 22,678 sets of twins in the Swedish Twin Registry

(plus another 15,280 twin sets from another survey). To estimate how much genetics or the environment had contributed to autism in both groups, they compared differences between identical and fraternal twin pairs.

According to the research, the findings also indicate that environmental factors are unlikely to explain the still-growing rise in global autism prevalence. Otherwise, autism among the Swedish twins would have also risen over the time period analyzed by the study. ★

## KIDS WITH AUNTS, UNCLES WITH ASD THrice LIKELIER TO HAVE ASD: STUDY

**St. Louis, Missouri** — A child in the general population today stands a 1.5-percent risk of being born with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). But that risk more than doubles to three to five percent if the child in question has an aunt or uncle with ASD.

That's according to a recent analysis conducted by Washington University in St. Louis. Researchers there reviewed Swedish national data on almost 850,000 children and their families.

Researchers first found that about 13,000 children, or about 1.5 percent of that 850,000 total, were diagnosed between 2003 and 2012 with ASD. But they then found that children of mothers who had one or more siblings with ASD were about three times likelier than children in the general population to have ASD.

According to the study authors, the results provide the first population-wide estimate of ASD risk to children of parents who have a sibling with ASD.

## FIRST NATIONAL AUTISM ESTIMATE GIVES U.S. OVER FIVE MILLION AFFECTED ADULTS

**Atlanta, Georgia** — According to trailblazing research conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 5.4 million U.S. adults over age 18 have autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The researchers arrived at their conclusions by first reviewing autism prevalence rates in the National Survey of Children's Health from 2016 through 2018. They then estimated adult prevalence by adjusting the children's numbers to account for mortality as people age. Finally, they cross-referenced the figures with U.S. Census data on the population of each state.

The study found that 2.21 percent of adults across the country overall have autism.

According to the findings, states with the largest populations of adults with ASD include California with more than 700,000, Texas at nearly 450,000, New York with over 340,000 and nearly 330,000 in Florida. ★

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# In the Know

Imagine if a person became intoxicated—not on alcohol but on potato chips. Or orange juice. Or tacos.

Now imagine if that person ate potato chips or tacos, or drank orange juice, and then got pulled over by a police officer for whatever reason while driving—and then, a police breathalyzer test registered sky-high blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels even though that person had not consumed any alcohol and was totally not drunk.

Well, you can stop imagining—if that driver has the rare *auto-brewery syndrome* (ABS), that is.

In one such rare case in 2015 (as reported in *Gazette* #137), an attorney had to bring in doctors and medical experts to legally prove that his client, a New York driver, was not drunk but only an auto-brewery syndrome patient.

In that case, a police officer's breathalyzer device registered a high blood alcohol content (BAC) number that was shockingly higher than the 0.08 legal definition of drunk driving in New York State—resulting in drunk-driving charges that were later cleared.

In a person with ABS, the stomach is essentially a beer brewery—turning the natural sugars in ordinary food carbohydrates into highly intoxicating *ethanol*. That ethanol then turns ordinary people into highly intoxicated and yet fully sober and functioning people.

In fact, ABS patients are known to register BAC readings that normally would be poisonous—but the estimated 50 to 100 people with the rare syndrome usually show no signs of serious

intoxication. Apparently, their bodies tolerate the internal fermentation without producing any symptoms. In plain English, they're legally extremely intoxicated, but medically not.

What's more, part of the mystery of the syndrome is exactly how such patients can have extremely high levels and still be walking around and talking, to no ill effect.

Read on about this medical anomaly that has baffled police officers, judges and doctors alike for decades.

## DEFINITION

Auto-brewery syndrome is also known as *gut fermentation syndrome*. It is an extremely rare condition in which *ethanol*, a type of alcohol, is produced when the digestive system “brews,” or ferments, carbohydrates that enter the digestive system in the form of food and/or drink.

This rare phenomenon of human biology, this “in-house” fermentation process, renders the patient medically drunk—but virtually without the adverse behaviors typically associated with being drunk.

While auto-brewery syndrome has been identified in both adults and children, fewer than 100 people worldwide are believed to have it. What's more, it is so rare that many of those cases often go undiagnosed.

Auto-brewery syndrome is also usually a resulting complication or symptom of another pre-existing disease, imbalance, or infection in

the body, such as Crohn's disease or diabetes.

People who have ABS are not born with the rare syndrome—but they may be born with, or develop, another condition that triggers ABS. For example, for adults with Crohn's disease, too much yeast in the gut may in turn cause auto-brewery syndrome.

In yet fewer other patients (a minority within this already rare minority), auto-brewery syndrome may be caused by preexisting liver problems. In those cases, the liver isn't able to clear out ethanol fast enough—meaning that even a small amount of ethanol produced by yeast in the digestive system leads to symptoms of ABS.

Toddlers and children who have a condition called *short bowel syndrome* have a higher chance of getting auto-brewery syndrome. One medical report described a three-year-old girl with short bowel syndrome who would get “drunk” after drinking fruit juice, which is naturally high in natural carbohydrates (in this case the natural sugar known as fructose)—which in turn would produce too much ethanol in her system.

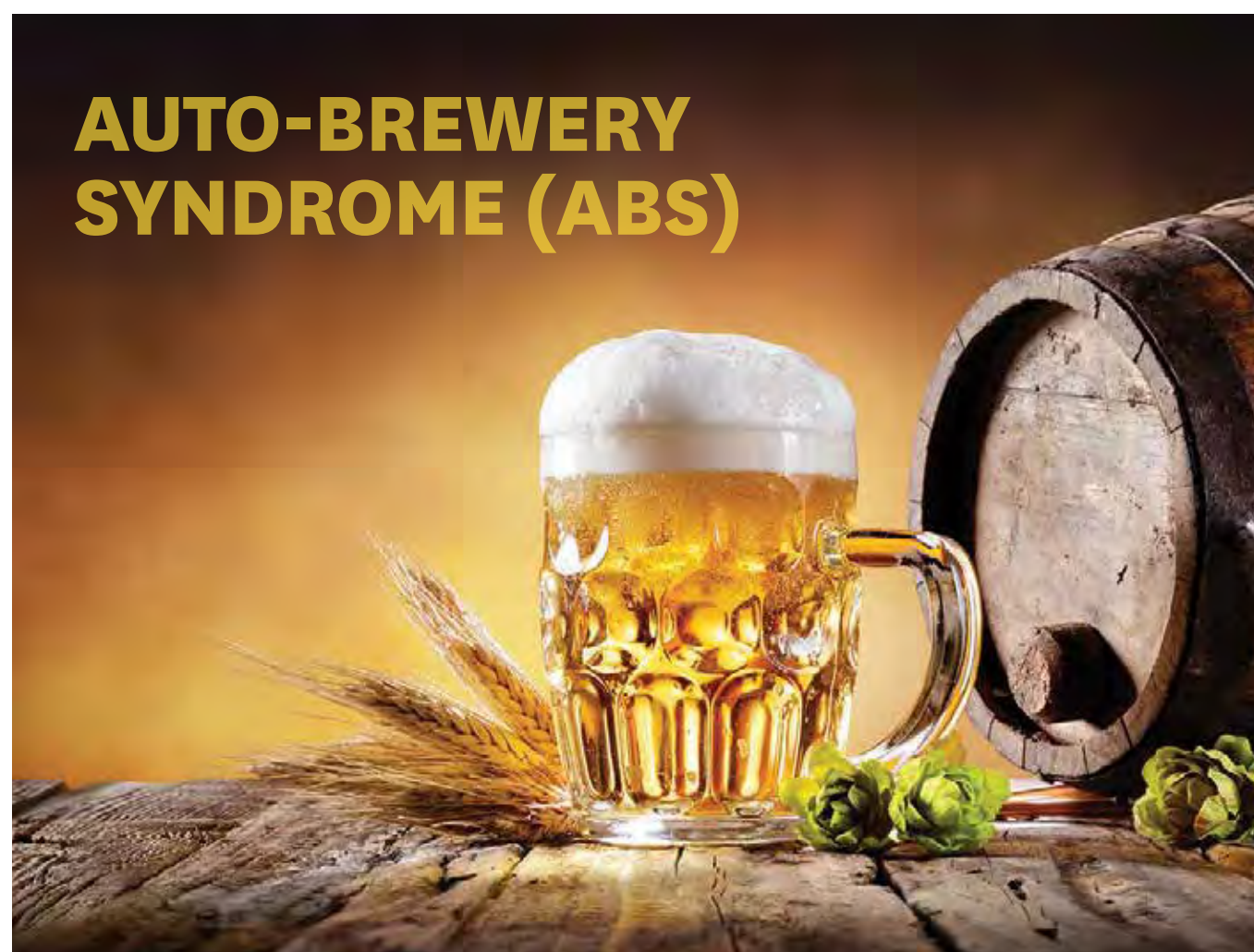
## SYMPTOMS

Auto-brewery syndrome can make a person “drunk” without drinking any alcohol, or “very drunk” after only drinking a small amount of alcohol (such as two beers).

Because ABS is essentially a reaction to specific foods or drinks, symptoms

## ALL ABOUT... AUTO-BREWERY SYNDROME (ABS)

Sources: The National Center for Biotechnology Information at the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. News and World Report



typically appear after eating or drinking those foods or drinks.

For some ABS patients, there may be no symptoms and side effects in the first place. But when symptoms do appear, they are typically similar to those that appear when one is slightly drunk, or in a hangover from drinking too much. These include:

- Very or extremely high blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) “breathalyzer” test results
- Red or flushed skin
- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Headache pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dehydration
- Dry mouth
- Burping or belching
- Fatigue
- Memory and concentration problems
- Mood changes

Auto-brewery syndrome can also lead to or worsen other health conditions such as:

- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Depression and anxiety

#### Complications

Auto-brewery syndrome is known to have a profound effect on patients and families. In many cases, it is mistaken for alcohol consumption. This can be problematic when a victim of the disease correctly denies alcohol intake but has the signs, symptoms, and possible breath of someone that has been drinking alcohol.

#### CAUSE

What happens in in auto-brewery syndrome is that the body makes (“brews”) alcohol (ethanol) out of the carbohydrates (natural sugars) that you eat. This highly rare but natural process takes place inside the digestive system.

As a general rule, auto-brewery syndrome happens when there is too much yeast in the digestive system in the first place. Yeast is a type of fungus. Some kinds of yeast that might cause or otherwise lead to ABS are *candida albicans*, *candida glabrata*, *candida kefyr*, *candida krusei*, *torulopsis glabrata* and *saccharomyces cerevisiae* (a.k.a. brewer’s yeast).

Reasons for too much preexisting yeast in the body can include antibiotics, Crohn’s disease, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, low immune system, or poor nutrition.

#### DIAGNOSIS

There are no specific tests to diagnose auto-brewery syndrome. The

condition was only discovered and medically defined relatively recently; as a result, a lot more research is still needed. Symptoms alone are typically not enough for a diagnosis.

Regardless, to definitely diagnose auto-brewery syndrome, a doctor will likely first test a patient’s digestive system to see if it contains too much yeast. This test involves sending a tiny content sample from the intestines to a lab to be tested.

Another test that might be used by some doctors is the *glucose challenge*. In the glucose challenge test, the patient will be given a glucose (sugar) capsule. The patient will not be allowed to eat or drink anything else for a few hours

syndrome can be treated—and not only treated, but effectively eliminated.

Essentially, ABS is treated with a two-pronged offensive—both of which simultaneously go hand in hand. One is to reduce and from the diet any and all of the offending carbohydrates (sugars) that existing yeast converts to ethanol inside the digestive system. The second method is to reduce the yeast in the digestive system—so that there is nothing there to convert those carbohydrates (sugars) into ethanol in the first place.

So for starters, a doctor may recommend reducing carbohydrates in the diet.

Secondly, a doctor may prescribe

those troublesome carbohydrates and sugars.

Now eliminating sugar and carbohydrates from the diet is no small feat! It will take considerable diet planning, modifications, courage and discipline (as with any good diet, for that matter).

So while you’re on an anti-ABS diet, especially if you’ve also been prescribed anti-fungal medications to help clear out that yeast from your digestive system, you’ll have to get creative so as to satisfy your sweet tooth, curb your healthy hunger cravings, and still get the healthy nutritional intake that your body needs for daily energy and functionality—sorry, no more chocolate cake! (At least for now.)

For starters, your anti-ABS diet will have you altogether avoiding:

- Corn syrup
- Crackers
- Fruit juices
- High fructose corn syrup
- Potato chips
- Sugary drinks
- White bread and pasta
- White flour
- White rice

Table sugar, and sugar added to food (especially table sugar!), are both out. That mean you’ll have to minimize (or even eliminate), anything with dextrose, fructose, glucose, levulose and maltose.

Also, alcohol is out—no more (or very few).

With all of these, a professional nutritionist will be happy to help you craft a personal diet plan that gives you plenty of healthy (and good-tasting) food options and meals that give your body (and your taste buds) everything it needs, minus everything it does not.

Such a diet plan will typically revolve around eating plenty of complex carbohydrates that are higher in fiber. These include:

- Barley
- Bran
- Brown rice
- Couscous
- Fresh and/or cooked vegetables
- Fresh and/or dried herbs
- Fresh, frozen, and/or dried fruit
- Oats
- Lentils
- Quinoa
- Whole grain bread and pastas

With antibiotics and diet modification, most symptoms resolve.

#### PROGNOSIS

Only a handful of patients across the United States and world are known of—and an even smaller handful of gastroenterologists, nurse practitioners and other credentialed medical professional boast any authoritative familiarity with this very rare condition,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >>

“IMAGINE IF A PERSON BECAME MEDICALLY LITERALLY INTOXICATED—NOT ON ALCOHOL BUT ON POTATO CHIPS. OR ORANGE JUICE. OR TACOS. NOW IMAGINE IF THAT PERSON ATE POTATO CHIPS OR TACOS, OR DRANK ORANGE JUICE, AND THEN GOT PULLED OVER BY A POLICE OFFICER...”

before and after the test. But about an hour after ingesting the glucose capsule, the doctor will check the patient’s BAC level. If the patient’s BAC level is zero, the patient does not have auto-brewery syndrome. But if the BAC level is anywhere from 1.0 to 7.0, the patient can safely be diagnosed with auto-brewery syndrome.

If you suspect you have auto-brewery syndrome, you might try a similar test at home, though you shouldn’t use it to self-diagnose. Eat something sugary, like a cookie, on an empty stomach. After an hour, use an at-home breathalyzer device (if you have a reliable one, or can get one) to see if your BAC level has risen. Write down any symptoms.

However, that home test may not work because you may not have noticeable symptoms. Also, at-home breathalyzers may also not be as accurate as the ones used by doctors and law enforcement. Regardless of what you observe, see a doctor for a diagnosis.

#### TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

First, the good news: Auto-brewery

antifungal medications, which are drugs that work to get rid of any yeast infections or buildups that may be causing the problem in the digestive system.

A patient may have to take the medications for three weeks or longer. Antifungal drugs and other medications that are known to help treat auto-brewery syndrome include:

- Fluconazole
- Nystatin
- Oral antifungal chemotherapy
- Acidophilus tablets

Treating any related underlying condition, like Crohn’s disease, may also help reduce and otherwise balance yeast in your gut.

Another medical tactic to recalibrate the digestive system and eventually eliminate ABS is to regularly take *probiotics*, or good bacteria, which increase levels of healthy and beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract.

Also an important and critical part of treating auto-brewery syndrome is to add a substantial amount of daily protein intake to the diet. This compensates for the elimination of any protein that comes along with eliminating foods containing

# Public Health and Policy News

## IN APPARENT SHIFT, MAJORITY OF CAREGIVERS OKAY WITH PATIENTS READING NOTES: SURVEY

**Boston, Massachusetts** — A generation ago, doctors and other caregivers would likely never have agreed to patients reading the professional visit notes they write about them. But a survey led by Harvard Medical School researchers now indicates that the times have changed.

In a questionnaire of over 1,600 physicians, therapists, physician assistants and nurse practitioners,

some 74 percent of said professionals responded that doing so was a good idea.

According to the survey's compilers, sharing notes with patients (in an electronic format) was a "fringe idea" only a decade ago.

Today, however, thanks possibly to the advent of electronic health records (EHRs)—an industry change largely ushered in by the 2010 Affordable Care Act and furthered by 2016's 21st Century Cares Act—modern caregivers may be more used to patient access to medical records.

## STRESS-CAUSED FEVER BACK IN PUBLIC DISCUSSION

**Fukuoka, Japan** — If you go by the stories we've all heard from friends and family, it makes sense that stress could actually give a person a fever. But as it turns out, it's a real thing.

The little-known condition is known medically as *psychogenic fever*.

It is defined as a stress-related, psychosomatic condition due to emotional events or chronic stress that causes high body temperature—especially like mass societal events that affect public health and the economy.

With recent goings-on, the ongoing career and research of Dr. Takakazu Oka, of the Kyushu University Graduate School of Medical Sciences in Fukuoka, Japan, has been getting renewed attention. Dr. Oka is one of the world's only doctors studying and treating psychogenic fever.

According to Dr. Oka, many doctors don't understand how stress affects body temperature—thus leading to frequent misdiagnosis.



**"CHICKEN" IT OUT: BACKYARD BIRDS FUN—BUT BAD FOR BABIES, SAYS THE CDC**

## BACKYARD POULTRY PETS STILL SPREADING SALMONELLA, CDC SAYS

**Atlanta, Georgia** — An outbreak of *Salmonella* bacterial infections across nearly 30 states attracted the CDC's attention; the federal public-health watchdog traced the infections back to pet poultry.

While having a pet chicken may be rustic fun, the bacteria the birds can transmit is anything but. According to the CDC, around 100 people—one third of them kids five and under—have gotten sick as a result.

To stay healthy, the CDC says you should always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching pet poultry, or anything in their environment—and don't let kids under five years touch them at all!

## NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH EXPANDING

**New York, New York** — In another sign of the times, as New York's major hospitals continue to snap up smaller facilities and turn into multi-campus behemoths, New York University's new School of Global Public Health building is well under construction.

Based out of the new facility, the school will "educate tomorrow's leaders in global health planning and support collaborative research on public health issues around the world," according to NYU.

The new facility is located at 708 Broadway in New York City in two adjoining historic buildings on the

NYU Greenwich Village campus. Spanning some 147,000 square feet, it will accommodate multiple public health research groups and faculty and administrative offices.

The school, which opened in 2017, offers studies in biostatistics, epidemiology, global and environmental public health, and public health policy and management.

## DISGUISED VAPING DEVICES NOW BANNED BY FDA

**Silver Spring, Maryland** — If you're concerned about companies directly marketing e-cigarettes to teenagers using cleverly-disguised devices, you've now got some federal firepower behind you.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has sent warning letters to ten manufacturers to stop making the youth-targeting products, with more planned as needed.

The federal action is in response to a veritable flood of products designed to allow teens to "vape," or use e-cigarettes, without getting caught by parents or teachers.

Products targeted by the FDA include items designed to look like smartwatches, toys, or even fidget spinners, and sweatshirts with device-concealing pockets.

Also targeted are vaping liquids that imitate packaging for popular and youth-oriented food products like certain candy brands.

According to Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, over 15,000 vaping flavors, refillable devices and menthol-flavored pod products are currently on the market.

## WALGREENS LOWERS PRICES ON THOUSANDS OF MEDICATIONS

**Deerfield, Illinois** — Through its Prescription Savings Club program, national retail pharmacy chain Walgreens lowered prices on hundreds of medications available—offering savings of up to 80 percent off cash retail prices.

The program is now available to most customers, including those on Medicare or Medicaid.

Reduced prices are available on over 8,000 medicines, from asthma and diabetes drugs to pills for high blood pressure, hypertension, mental health and more. Most are available in generic form at \$5, \$10 and \$15 prices. Anyone can join the Prescription Savings Club for an annual fee of \$20 per individual or \$35 per family, according to Walgreens. ★



**DOCTORED NOTES: MORE PHYSICIANS ARE OKAY NOW WITH PATIENTS READING THEIR NOTES**

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● ► **HMASPIK NEWS**

# A Whole Different Animal: Hamaspik of Orange County Enjoys Live Wildlife Shows

*Self-Taught Expert Mendy Baum Brings the World of Wildlife to Excited Individuals*

Self-taught wildlife expert Mendy Baum, 45, has been all across the United States and all around the world doing live animal shows. He's been at it for 25 years. But for a fascinating, funny man whose career has brought to thousands many firsts, his three back-to-back-to-back presentations at Hamaspik were a personal first.

Tapped by ever-creative Hamaspik of Orange County Director of Day Services Joseph Grunbaum, Mr. Baum trotted out a menagerie of over one dozen exotic living creatures.

First displaying the animals to an excited bunch of young women from Hamaspik's Day Hab program, Mr. Baum brought them up-close-and-personal to: a hedgehog, a scorpion, a snake, a tarantula, a tortoise and several other representatives of the untamed wilds of the world.

That hour-long presentation was followed by a repeat for the gentlemen of the Men's Division of Day Hab. The third and last show was presented to the precious children of the Hamaspik of Orange County After-School Respite (ASR) program led by Manager Mrs. Shevy Schnitzer.

"Myself!" Mr. Baum wisecracks when asked which animal in his show is the most exotic. But he immediately waxes serious. "It's true!" he says—explaining that the most interesting thing about his show is how he presents it. "It's all about personality."

With most of his shows, he goes on, it's mostly him talking and the audience doing a minimum of animal-

touching. With crowds of people with disabilities, however, it's mostly touching and little talking. Because many individuals with special needs are non-verbal or otherwise differently-abled, Mr. Baum and his animal friends connect with them at a simpler, more elemental level.

That was the case at his three shows at Hamaspik, which each began with the showman draping the length of a non-venomous live snake about the head and shoulders of a cringing but smiling volunteer individual.

In his experience doing shows for special-needs crowds (and he's done quite a few), Mendy Baum says that individuals with disabilities bond quickly and deeply to their new animal friends.

He recalls one show where audience members were all low-function—including a young man who, he was told, typically cried all day. Exposed to Mr. Baum's live animals, though, he was witnessed laughing for the first time his support staff could remember.

In that vein, the highlight of the event was seeing the smiles on everyone's faces, says Men's Day Hab Director Yidel Kleinman—not to mention the therapeutic benefit of sensory stimulation.

Related testimony is provided by Hamaspik of Orange County At-Home Respite Coordinator Mrs. Tzippy Loeb, who points to her program's past positive experiences with animals. "The kids do connect with horses," she notes, which helps

them overcome fears. "Every season, we try to have animal interaction." She also mentions the mental-health benefits of visiting and playing with live puppies. In fact, she remembers, the animal residents of a visiting petting farm initially intimidated the kids, but at the end, the children were courageous enough to physically touch the animals. She even remembers how one boy was proud of himself for it, and rightfully so!

In turn, watching the live show at Hamaspik had the ASR children "intrigued," Mrs. Loeb reports. One boy wanted to be part of the show—even bringing along his own stuffed "animal" and showing it to all his peers while an amusedly interrupted Mr. Baum patiently looked on.

Other creatures that the boys and girls were able to later separately

touch included the decidedly creepy but harmless tarantula, whose large furry legs found temporary rest on the shirts of several young men (while pretty much everyone shrieked in controlled horror).

A live giant tortoise and equally-oversized bullfrog also were shortly seen respectively ambling and springing about the ballroom floor while everyone sat at a safe socially-distanced distance away.

When the grand day of three shows was over, the Hamaspik individuals went back to their residences. Mr. Baum's stateside animal crew repaired to the upstate New York animal sanctuary that serves as their forever home.

They (the individuals, that is) were talking about it for the next two weeks, Mrs. Loeb says. ★

● ► **IN THE KNOW**

## Auto-Brewery Syndrome

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

never mind effectively diagnosing and treating it.

Patients typically report spending considerable time and financial resources bouncing from one specialist to another until finally finding one who correctly identifies their peculiar symptoms for what they are.

Still, once patients undergo correct identification and treatment of their auto-brewery syndrome—a process that typically takes several weeks, from diagnosis and laboratory tests through diet modifications and eventual fading out of symptoms—the prognosis is a clean bill of health, built on the foundation of a digestive system purged of any adverse contents or processes. ★

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HEALTH NEWS

# Cancer-Based “Microparticles” Show Promise in Preventing Rejection of Transplants

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** — Inspired by a tactic that cancer cells use to evade the immune system, University of Pittsburgh researchers have engineered tiny particles that can trick the body into accepting transplanted tissue as its own.

Rats that were treated with these cell-sized microparticles developed permanent immune tolerance to grafts—including a whole limb—from a donor rat, while keeping the rest of their immune system intact.

“It’s like hacking into the immune system borrowing a strategy used by one of humanity’s worst enemies to trick the body into accepting a transplant,” said senior author Steven Little, Ph.D., William Kepler Whiteford Endowed Professor and Chair of chemical and petroleum engineering in the Swanson School of Engineering at Pitt.

The advantage of a synthetic approach, not cell-based therapy, is that its logistics are much simpler.

The microparticles work by releasing a native protein secreted by tumors, CCL22, which draws regulatory T cells (Treg cells) to the site of the graft, where they tag the foreign tissue as “self” so that it evades immune attack.

Animals treated with the microparticles maintained healthy grafts for as long as they were monitored—a little under a year, equivalent to about 30 human years. All it took was two shots to effect seemingly permanent change.


Researchers also showed that the microparticles can train the immune system of one strain of rat to accept a donor limb from a different strain.

The research holds promise for



**TOWERING RESULTS:** THE UNIV. OF PITTSBURGH MAY HAVE DEVELOPED A NEW TECHNIQUE FOR PREVENTING THE BODY’S IMMUNE SYSTEM FROM REJECTING TRANSPLANTED ORGANS

contemporary transplant patients, who must take daily doses of immunosuppressant drugs to avoid rejection. This leaves them vulnerable to cancer, diabetes, infectious diseases and a host of other ailments that come along with a weakened immune system.




## ZUCCHINI

EASY

YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

READY IN: 1:20



### Easy Squash Soup

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 10 unpeeled green squash (cubed)
- 4 onions (chopped)
- 8 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Sauté onion until translucent; add squash and garlic
- Fill pot with water – just about to cover the squash
- Add spices to taste
- Bring to boil, simmer for 1 hour and blend with an immersion blender

**CHEF’S TIP:**

Raw zucchini freezes great, prepare in advance, store in a Ziploc bag, freeze and use when needed.


**BENEFITS:**

Zucchini is rich in B-complex vitamins, folate, B6, B1, B2, B3, and choline, as well as minerals like zinc and magnesium, which are all valuable in ensuring healthy blood sugar regulation—a definite advantage for diabetics. It also contains essential minerals such as iron, manganese, and phosphorus.

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 10 SERVINGS

READY IN: 1:30



### Squash Kugel

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2lbs squash, peeled and cubed
- 2 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 cups water
- 1 onion, diced and sautéed
- 3/4 cup oil
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs
- 6 eggs, beaten
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Boil squash and potatoes for 20-30 minutes or until soft
- Drain water; mash squash and potatoes
- Mix all ingredients
- Pour into 9x13 pan and bake at 350° for one hour or until done

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS

READY IN: 1:00



### Zucchini Lasagna

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3 large zucchini
- 3 large tomatoes, sliced
- 1 can marinara sauce
- 3 cups shredded cheese
- 1 container cottage cheese (16oz)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon basil

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Line baking pan with parchment paper, spray lightly with cooking oil
- Slice zucchini lengthwise; lay flat on lined baking pan
- Bake for 5 minutes at 400° (to dry out excess water), remove promptly
- In a mixing bowl, mix cottage cheese, 1 cup shredded cheese, egg, and basil
- In a 9x13 baking pan, lay down first layer: marinara sauce, then zucchini slices, half the cheese mixture, then tomato slices
- Lay down second layer: zucchini slices, marinara sauce, and shredded cheese
- Lay down third layer: zucchini slices, remainder of cheese mixture, and tomato slices
- Lay down fourth layer: zucchini slices, marinara sauce, and shredded cheese
- Bake covered for 20 minutes at 400°, uncover and bake for another 25 minutes

## Status Report

# Happening In Hospitals Today



## NEVADA TOPS STATES FOR AVERAGE DOCTOR SALARY: REPORT

**San Mateo, California** — Doctors, head west!

That's if you're a recently-graduated physician looking not just for your first job, but the highest-paying one, too. According to employment resource Zippia, the average annual salary for doctors in Nevada is \$157,658—in fact, the highest in the nation.

What's more, the highest-paid Nevada doctors are earning \$255,000 a year, while the lowest are collecting \$97,000.

After Nevada, Minnesota takes the No. 2 spot with an average annual salary of \$158,812—followed by Idaho (\$151,803), Washington (\$169,321) and New Mexico (\$149,874).

Also, the research found that Malden, Massachusetts is the best city in America for doctors with the highest pay.

But while doctors may be the highest paid profession on average, Zippia notes that not all states offer the same level of opportunity or quality of life for doctors.

## CAPITAL OF (MEDICAL) BUREAUCRACY: ER PATIENTS WAIT LONGEST FOR ROOMS IN D.C.

**Washington, D.C.** — Politics aren't the only thing that crawls in the nation's capital, it seems—apparently, the wait for a hospital room after seeing an ER doctor takes long in D.C., too.

An analysis of ten years' worth of hospital ER data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kaiser Family Foundation, found that Washington, D.C., has the longest median wait time in the nation for admitted patients waiting for an inpatient room after seeing a doctor in the emergency department—a median of 286 minutes, to be exact.

According to the report by



**HOME OF HIGHEST DOC PAY:** FOR PHYSICIANS SEEKING FINANCIALLY GREENER PASTURES, THE SILVER STATE IS SALARY GOLD

AutoInsurance.org, nationwide admitted patients spend a median of 103 minutes waiting for a hospital room. South Dakota had the shortest wait time at 46 minutes.

The good news is that over 40 percent of patients were seen by a medical professional within 15 minutes of arriving at the ER.

## APERVITA ROLLS OUT ADVANCED ENCRYPTION FOR MEDICAL DATA

**Chicago, Illinois** — Ransomware, or malicious software that holds medical data hostage until a ransom is paid, is a long-running thorn in the side of hospitals and insurance companies alike. Healthcare providers have lost millions in hijacked data in recent years.

But now, in what may be an industry first, Chicago-based company Apervita is providing health-related companies with software that comes with a built-in layer of extra security.

Apervita's software contains an advanced encryption feature for health plan and provider data that could slow down hackers and prevent data breaches.

The new security feature is called *deep encryption*. It works by encrypting healthcare data at the field level for the company's health plan and provider customers. According to Apervita, the technology scrambles data as they move across the Internet.

## HOSPITALS TO PUBLISH 70 TREATMENT PRICES IN 2021

**Bethesda, Maryland** — Under a newly-finalized rule from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), U.S. hospitals will have to publicize the cost of 70 different services come January 2021.

The actual number of prices to be publicized is 300, but only 70 are required by CMS; the remaining 230 are for each individual hospital to choose.

The rule required that hospitals publicize payer-specific negotiated rates of 300 "shoppable services"—a phrase defined as those that can be scheduled directly and in advance by a consumer.

The 70 CMS-required services are split across four categories: Evaluation and Management Services (13); Laboratory and Pathology Services (14); Radiology Services (13); and Medicine and Surgery Services (30). They range from major cardiac surgical procedures to pediatric tonsil removals, and include psychotherapy, blood tests and CT scans (without contrast).



**THE PRICE OF CARE:** COSTS TO BE LISTED IN 2021 FOR 70 DIFFERENT SERVICES

## FIVE PREDICTIONS FOR THE HOSPITAL ROOM OF THE FUTURE

**Boston, Massachusetts** — Ask Alistair Erskine, M.D. chief digital health officer at Boston's Mass General Brigham hospital, what your average inpatient hospital room will look like in the future, and he'll be happy to tell you—as he did at his recent World Medical Innovation Forum speech.

According to Dr. Erskine, tomorrow's hospital patient rooms will boast the following five features:

1. Wall-mounted giant flat video screens for two-way live audio/video communication between patients and caregivers, and between patients and their family members, too.
2. Rooms equipped with many microphones to record doctors' notes, patient voices, and even ordering medications or blood tests.
3. Remote patient monitoring within the hospital using video/audio equipment to help lower fall risk without constant human one-on-one supervision.
4. In-hospital location-based services will for doctors to maximize time and efficiency, and also to track patient locations inside hospitals.
5. Wearable devices for patients, like disposable patches, to monitor their signs at discharge instead of a stack of papers and prescriptions.

## STUDY: MENTAL HEALTH ER VISITS FOR YOUTHS RISES OVER DECADE

**Columbus, Ohio** — From 2007 through 2016, 60-percent more U.S. children and teens have gone to emergency rooms (ERs) for mental health issues, many self-harmful.

Researchers from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and the federal Health Resources and Services Administration measured mental health-related ER visits among children five to 17 years old between 2007 and 2016.

They found that while the number of pediatric visits for any cause remained relatively level over the decade, visit rates surged dramatically in the categories of impulse-control disorders, anxiety and self-harm.

The findings add to a growing body of research suggesting children's mental health is a major challenge in the U.S. About 4.5 million children have a diagnosed behavior problem, and previous research shows that up to 1 in 6 U.S. children have mental health issues including depression, anxiety or ADHD.





# The Senior Care Gazette

News from  
the World of  
Hamaspik  
HomeCare and  
Senior Health

## Patient Care and Professional Development, Perfectly Coordinated

### A Snapshot of Hamaspik HomeCare's Patient Coordination Leadership

There isn't a single thing she doesn't like, begins the longtime Hamaspik HomeCare employee. "You get to help people," she elaborates, asked what she likes the most about her job, "and you can't pay for the satisfaction of really changing people's lives."

The *Gazette* is speaking to Chanie Cziment, who's been with Hamaspik HomeCare since it had just two Scheduling Coordinators (one being herself). Given Hamaspik's household reputation as the go-to social-services resource, HomeCare has nearly two dozen Coordinators today—with Ms. Cziment leading the bulk of them as

Director of Coordination, by dint of climbing the ladder of hard work and experience.

But behind all the precision paperwork and clockwork professionalism driving Hamaspik HomeCare's army of visiting professionals is one vital ingredient: sympathy.

Pointing to a family member who'd needed home care for ten years, Ms. Cziment knows first-hand what it's like to be on the other side of an incoming call. "I know what it means for the family when they say, 'The aide didn't show up,'" she offers. "I've been there." And in working the phone (five hours a day on average,

she says), the Director has gotten "to understand how people work"—responding not just to what's being said but to what's being said "between the lines."

That notion of evolving into a professional yet caring active listener on the job is seconded by Team Leader Noelie Chelfer, who joined the agency under two years ago and now heads its Spanish- and Russian-speaking efforts. "I've built a lot of relationships, friendships and appreciation from clients," she shares—human connections forged on workdays typically filled with patient follow-up calls that often

extend into late hours, too.

Whether fielding new cases, signing up and assigning aides and other caregivers, securing care authorizations, or otherwise bettering lives, "customer service is a big thing here," adds a third Team Leader who prefers anonymity. "Everyone gets better at it." ★

## Study says Vitamin D Might Aid Seniors' Recovery from Hip Fracture



**FEELING IT IN THE BONES:** VITAMIN D IS CONSTANTLY FOUND TO BE BENEFICIAL FOR AN EVER-GROWING LIST OF AILMENTS AND CONDITIONS. NOW, A NEW STUDY ASSOCIATES INCREASED LEVELS OF VITAMIN D WITH BETTER OUTCOMES FOR SENIORS AFTER BREAKING THEIR HIPs

**New Brunswick, New Jersey** — According to a new study by Rutgers University, seniors with sufficient levels of vitamin D have better odds of walking after suffering broken hips.

The Rutgers study assessed nearly 300 patients undergoing hip fracture repair, testing their mobility and

vitamin D levels after surgery. Those with higher vitamin D levels had higher rates of walking 30 days after surgery, the study found.

The study suggests that low levels of vitamin D could limit walking. However, the study only found associations between vitamin D and mobility, and

could not prove cause and effect.

Older adults are recommended to take 800 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily to prevent deficiency.

Vitamin D, important for bone health, is found naturally in dairy products, fortified cereals and juices, dark, leafy greens and fatty fish. ★

## Eyeing Eventual Human Stroke Repair, Lab Fixes Stroke-Damaged Rat Brains With Human Cells

**Lund, Sweden** — Undoing the brain damage caused by strokes is one of modern medicine's most vexing and chronic challenges. While stroke is typically treated short-term with clot-busters and long-term with extensive physical therapy, the loss of mobility is too-often permanent.

Researchers at Sweden's Lund University, however, may have made a breakthrough in the lab.

By first turning human skin cells into nerve cells, and then implanting those cells into the brains of lab rats who'd had strokes, they found that they were able to restore mobility and sensation of touch in those rats.

According to the research, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), the implanted new cells had repaired the damage caused by stroke in the rats' brain some six months later. Scientists were able to demonstrate that the new cells had really connected correctly in the damaged nerve circuits—and had even spread to the other side of the brain, where no stroke damage had occurred. ★