



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

JULY '21 • ISSUE NO. 192



GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

HAVE YOU OR ANY FAMILY MEMBER EVER HAD POISON IVY RASH?

A: YES; B: NO

Respond to: survey@nyshainc.org • 845-655-0667



HEALTH STAT

U.S. POPULATION-POISONING PLANTS

Pop. allergic to poison ivy/sumac/oak	About 85%
Pop. extremely allergic to poison ivy/sumac/oak	About 10-15%
No. Americans affected each year	Up to 50 million

Source: American Skin Association (ASA)



HEALTH TIP

IF THE LEAVES BE THREE, LEAVE IT BE!

The most common and universally-known anti-poison-ivy tip involves the distinct appearance of poison ivy: Each poison ivy leaf has three glossy leaflets. That fact birthed the abovementioned saying. So to avoid the painful rash of poison ivy, just don't touch any plant, vine or shrub whose leaves are in groups of three!

INSIDE

HEALTH

03 Drug for Alzheimer's may prevent worsening of some symptoms

04 Pump up fitness, not volume! Gym-class music too loud, says study

13 Taking a shot at reducing obesity: Experimental injection cuts weight

TRI-COUNTY CARE

03 Marking third anniversary, Tri-County Care continues 'breaking enrollment gridlock' across state

HAMASPIK

08 Writing a new chapter on reading: Aleph Bais Center celebrates

09 Remembrance, honor and good cheer: First yahrzeit of Moishe Sternberg marked with siyum

PUBLIC HEALTH

14 Trees are good for your brain: Study links more city greenery to better mental health

14 Verizon jumping into still-exploding telehealth industry

HAMASPIK NEWS

ONE WEEKEND, AND ONE YEAR'S WORTH OF INSPIRATION

WITH STILL-DROPPING CASES, A SELECTION OF EFFECTIVE VACCINES AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ALL BUT GONE, HAMASPIK'S CENTRAL PILLAR OF ANNUAL INSPIRATION, ITS YEARLY PARENTS' RETREAT, WAS BACK IN FULL FORCE. NO MATTER THE SUITCASES BROUGHT, GUESTS LEFT WITHOUT ANY BAGGAGE—AND VACCINATED AGAINST ANY HARDSHIP.



A FULL ARRAY OF WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, SPEECHES, AND EVEN PROGRAMS OF ENTERTAINMENT WERE PROVIDED FOR HUNDREDS OF COUPLES ACROSS 24-PLUS HOURS OF A WEEKEND RETREAT TO REMEMBER. DESIGNED FROM THE GROUND UP TO RELAX AND RECHARGE, THE SHABBATON IS KNOWN MOST FOR ITS TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE.

SEE PAGE E6 >>

HEALTH NEWS

Full-Throated Breakthrough: World's 1st Trachea Transplant at Mt. Sinai Hospital

SEE PAGE E4 >>

HAMASPIK NEWS

Tri-County Care Celebrates Three Years of Making a Conflict-Free Difference for New Yorkers With Disabilities

SEE PAGE E3 >>

HEALTH NEWS

In Trial, Experimental Obesity Drug Reduces Participants' Weight by Average of 15 Percent

SEE PAGE E18 >>

Non Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Flex Group

NYSHA Inc.
Published and Copyrighted June, '21
1 Hamaspik Way
Monroe, NY 10950

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

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). Meals funded by NYSOFA, Orange County OFA and the Administration of Aging.

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.

HAMASPIK HOMECARE

LHCSA

Licensed HomeCare Services Agency .

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.

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.

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.

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.

● ► TRI-COUNTY CARE NEWS

Three Years of Making a Conflict-Free Difference for New Yorkers With Disabilities

Tri-County Care Celebrates Trailblazing Third Anniversary

The model of conflict-free care management (CMCM) had been around for years. But it was only after that model was finalized that the New York State OPWDD adopted it.

What's all that in plain English? Do read on.

Once upon a time, a New Yorker with disability—say, a 28-year-old man with autism—could get services from New York's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). His parents would apply for OPWDD services from a non-profit agency. The agency would get him in the system. They'd assign him a Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC). The MSC would then help his parents get him the services he needed—staples such as group-home placement, day habilitation, community habilitation or even placement with a qualifying private family. The MSC would also regularly assist with ongoing paperwork, care and logistics.

Thing is, MSCs working for agencies tended to “recommend” special-needs services offered by those same agencies—creating a conflict of interest. And it was that subjective perspective that the conflict-free model finally did away with—by essentially eliminating the existence of the agency MSC.

In its place now stands the Care Coordination Organization (CCO)—a model of services provision built around the objective, independent Care Manager: an OPWDD services advocate who gets individuals the services and supports needed from the non-profit agency that is best for them, not for the agency providing them.

New York boasts seven sizable CCOs covering the entire state today. And Tri-County Care, one of the first, is now marking its third anniversary of operations.

Humble beginnings, grand visions

It was in August of 2016 that Yoel Bernath, a longtime Hamaspiik stalwart with experiencing helming the agency's Hamaspiik HomeCare and Hamaspiik Choice divisions, first met with the OPWDD's leadership about plans to launch a new CCO.

Under the aegis of the New York State Hamaspiik Association (NYSHA), the umbrella support group for Hamaspiik's several branches, Mr. Bernath and team strategized with their public-service counterparts in Albany.

“We knew that we had a committed



team focused on delivering high-quality care management services to individuals with I/DD for more than two decades,” Bernath recalls. “So the thinking was, ‘Imagine if we could replicate that model for thousands of new Yorkers, making a true impact in their lives?’”

With a green light shortly granted by the OPWDD, plans for NYSHA's CCO—shortly dubbed Tri-County Care, for the original three counties of Kings, Orange and Rockland first served by Hamaspiik—got rapidly underway. A “back room” team, including quality control, human resources and more, was hired, and several months of preparation kicked off.

With non-profit agencies now requiring transfer of their MSC teams to the CCO of their choice, the up-and-coming Tri-County Care agency deployed a concerted and professional outreach effort to recruit the partnership of as many non-profits as possible. Hamaspiik pillars Mrs. Nechama Nissenbaum and Mrs. Perry Zelik, with the agency for years in various capacities, served as Transition Liaisons, helped facilitate numerous agency MSCs joining Tri-County. Veteran industry pros like Bob Manley, Pat Shuckle and Jackie Spring all also shortly got on board.

In anticipation of Launch Day, offices were opened in several locations around New York.

At the same time, as captain of the new ship, Yoel Bernath found himself crisscrossing the state for months, building relationships with agencies and public servants alike.

Prior to a final readiness review by the OPWDD—an inspection that would last an entire day—“everything” had to be in place, Mr. Bernath remembers. “We took that responsibility very seriously and brought to bear all resources available so that we'd be ready on Day One.” Which they were.

On today's front lines

So, what would you say has so far been the most significant milestone Tri-County has achieved?

“We helped so many people in need sign up for services, and quickly,” says Tri-County VP of Operations Nechama Nissenbaum, posed that question by the *Gazette*. “We broke the gridlock

for enrollment.”

Those enrolled beneficiaries today are in fact spread out across 25 counties statewide from Long Island to Albany and all points between.

And supporting them is a veritable army of high-quality employees from New York's unrivaled diversity—men and women of every race, color, ethnicity and background, speaking several dozen languages to optimally serve every community in need. Those hundreds of proud members of the Tri-County family are fronted, of course, by the central Care Managers who are the face of the agency across the state.

“Every Care Manager really cares about their families—we never take no for an answer,” Mrs. Zelik says. “They will do whatever they can to get that service for their family.”

As for Tri-County's founding mission of eliminating conflict, Mrs. Nissenbaum insists that its Care Managers are only working with the “most responsive and ready-to-go” agencies in terms of securing the most appropriate services for caseload individuals. “If the agency doesn't return calls or if they don't have place or space,” she says, “we don't call them.” ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

New Alzheimer's Drug Approved by FDA

Nod Makes Aduhelm First New Treatment Since 2003

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Aduhelm (aducanumab) for the treatment of Alzheimer's, a debilitating disease affecting 6.2 million Americans.

Alzheimer's is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually, the ability to carry out simple tasks. While specific causes of Alzheimer's are not fully known, it is

characterized by changes in the brain—including amyloid plaques and tau tangles—that result in loss of neurons and their connections. These changes affect a person's ability to remember and think.

The FDA's approval of Aduhelm, made by the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based drugmaker Biogen, was based on data from two clinical trials. Those

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 >>

Hamaspiik Gazette

Published and Copyrighted July '21 by:
NYSHA, Inc., 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1, Monsey, NY 10952
Distributed free. USPS Presorted Non-profit Mail
Postmaster: Return service requested
© All Rights Reserved



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Meyer Wertheimer
WRITER: Mendy Hecht
TEL: 845-655-0613
FAX: 845-655-5613
MAIL: Hamaspiik Gazette, 58 Rt. 59, Suite 1,
Monsey, NY 10952

Happening in Health Today

STUDY FINDS EARLIEST CANCER SIGNS CAN APPEAR BEFORE DIAGNOSIS

London, England — In at least 38 different types of cancer, early signs can appear years or even decades before diagnosis. That's the conclusion of research conducted at the London-based Francis Crick Institute.

Researchers there analyzed over 2,500 tumor samples as part of the Pan-Cancer Analysis of Whole Genomes project, one of the world's most comprehensive study of cancer genetics to date.

The study shows that roughly half of the earliest mutations occurred in just nine genes, meaning there is a relatively small pool of common genes that serve as triggers for cells to diverge from healthy development to a path towards cancer. It might be possible, in future, to pick up such mutations using so-called liquid biopsies—genetic tests that detect mutations in free-floating DNA carried in the blood that can indicate the presence of tumors elsewhere in the body.

STEADY BLOOD PRESSURE MOST IMPORTANT IN EMERGENCY STROKE TREATMENT: STUDY

Aarhus, Denmark — Stroke patients with the best long-term results are those whose average blood pressure was kept at 70 to 90 during emergency treatment procedures.

According to research by Aarhus University, patients who suffered ischemic (blood-flow-blocking) strokes and then underwent endovascular thrombectomy (clearing of blood clots from inside brain arteries) did best when hospital staff kept their blood pressure constant.

The “window” inside which a patient's blood pressure should fall is what most determines whether removal of blood clots from inside the brain will be most successful.

Significant rises and falls of blood pressure during clot-removal hospital

procedures are normal; the study, published in *JAMA Neurology*, looked at long-term data on 380 stroke patients.

DURING LEISURE TIME, OVER 15 PERCENT OF AMERICAN ADULTS GET NO EXERCISE

If you feel you don't get any exercise at home, you're in good company.

A joint survey by the federal U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state

health departments found that over 15 percent of the American adult population is physically inactive.

People classified as “inactive” said they had not participated in any leisure-time physical activity in the past month, including running, walking or even backyard gardening.

According to the survey, Mississippi is the most inactive state, with 33 percent of adult labeled inactive. Perhaps appropriately, the mountainous state of Colorado scores the highest activity level, with only

17.3 percent of its adults “inactive.”

Research continues to show that physical lethargy puts one at higher risk for poor health.

NEURALINK CLAIM MONKEY-COMPUTER INTERFACE ESTABLISHED

San Francisco, California — In a follow-up to a story widely reported last year, biotechnology company Neuralink now says it has succeeded into putting a computer-controlling implant in a live monkey's head.

In plain English, that means that a monkey can now control a computer with its mind.

Neuralink is one of several companies founded and owned by eccentric billionaire Elon Musk, the man behind the popular Tesla electric car, among other things.

According to Musk, Neuralink successfully fitted a monkey's skull with a wireless implant. The implant allegedly can literally read thoughts, allowing the primate to play a computer game with its thoughts.

The notion, while perhaps frightening, also holds tremendous health promise—particularly, for example, for completely-paralyzed people with ALS who now may ultimately be able to control devices, and their lives, using their minds.

MT. SINAI HOSPITAL PERFORMS WORLD'S FIRST-EVER SUCCESSFUL TRACHEA TRANSPLANT

New York, New York — New York's very own Mt. Sinai Hospital made history recently, as 30 years of research came to a head with Mt. Sinai surgeon-scientist Prof. Eric Genden, M.D. and team performing the world's first-ever trachea transplant.

Surgically moving organs between people was first successfully achieved in 1954. Since then, transplants of hearts, lungs, kidneys and other organs have become commonplace.

Transplanting a trachea (windpipe), the tube that leads from the larynx (voice box) to the lung's bronchi (large tubes), proved to be too complex, however—until now.

The 18-hour procedure, involving four dozen specialists, overcame the primary challenge of securing blood flow to the trachea. The patient, a 56-year-old social worker, can now breathe through her mouth for the first time in years.

Mount Sinai has now also launched a Tracheal Transplant Program for treating patients worldwide. ★

MUSIC TOO LOUD AT GROUP FITNESS CLASSES: STUDY



NOW HEAR THIS: A STUDY FOUND THAT FITNESS-CLASS MUSIC IS OFTEN WAY TOO LOUD

Baltimore, Maryland — “Having a blast” getting a group workout shouldn't mean the music is blasting—at least not at loud volumes.

Recent research by the University of Maryland School of Medicine found that things at fitness classes are a bit too “upbeat”. According to the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), ears shouldn't be exposed to anything over 94 decibels for one hour. Yet according to research, decibels in group fitness classes average over

90 decibels, the average volume of an approaching subway train) and sometimes exceed 100 decibels (as loud as a power lawn mower).

In classes with the loudest music, almost one-third of participants reported excessive volume. What's more, one in four study participants told researchers they suffered ringing in their ears or muffled hearing after the classes.

But in classes with music a few decibels lower, the study found no differences in participants' exercise intensity or motivation. ★

We've got you. Covered.

The days of making dozens of calls are over. Tri-County Care will help you apply for Medicaid during the enrollment process.

We double down to get you enrolled, no matter what.



Tri-County Care

**Coordinating care for
individuals with special needs.**

Boro Park
3611 14th Ave

Williamsburg
295 Division Ave

Five Towns
700 Rockaway Tpke

Monsey
58 Route 59

Kiryas Joel
1 Hamaspik Way

Staten Island
260 Christopher Ln

Tri-County Care is a New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) product.

TriCountyCare.org • 844.504.8400 Ext. 2

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

For Special-Needs Parents, a Grand Shabbos of Support Through Commonality and Unity

With Two Back-to-Back Post-COVID Weekends, Hamaspiik's Much-Anticipated Morale-Boosters Return Better Than Ever

If Hamaspiik's annual parental-support weekends had to make up for ground lost to Covid, it sure succeeded.

That's because this June, over two consecutive weekends due to pandemic-driven demand, the agency hosted not one but two weekend retreats. Hundreds of reinvigorated parents attended.

Last year, the yearly event—a lifeline of support, commonality and unity for parents of children with special needs supported by Hamaspiik—was suspended due to the coronavirus lockdown.

But this year, boy was it back—not just in increased quality but in double the quantity.

Opening doors

A blend of formality and excitement could be felt the moment guests entered the front door of the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut. A veritable electricity was in the air.

Guests attending for their first time were easily recognizable, with feelings of apprehension and hesitation clearly written on their faces.

That would change.

Old hands at the event, on the other hand, waltzed in feeling right at home, as they rightfully should have.

All were greeted at the lobby's welcome table by Hamaspiik's very own Mrs. Brenda Katina, longtime Special Events Coordinator, and her usual knowing smile and trademark warmth.

Once past that sign-in table, welcome packets in hand, guests were exposed to a soothing, dignified atmosphere, as a live string quartet played classic and familiar Yiddish melodies. Pre-Shabbos buffet tables were set out in the ballroom.

Off to another side, a professional shoe-shine station saw plenty of action, with the menfolk sitting down for a footgear upgrade that restored shoes and refreshed spirits alike.

Another popular attraction was a professional glassblowing artisan plying his trade at a side table. A long line of husbands could be seen waiting their turn to collect custom-made glass jewelry, each to be soon gratefully presented to wives for all they do.



ROYAL WELCOME: A PRE-SHABBOS SMORGASBORD GREETED GUESTS (TOP), ALONG WITH WELCOME PACKETS AND LOTS OF READING (INSETS)



TUGGING AT THE HEARTSTRINGS: AN ETHEREAL ENSEMBLE LENDS A TENDER ATMOSPHERE

Two empowering afternoon workshops were held for women. One, led by Mrs. Malkie Weingarten, compared applied behavior analysis (ABA) with the Son-Rise autism treatment. The other, self-explanatorily titled "Your Awesome Self!", was led by Rebbetzin Ginsberg.

At the pre-Shabbos buffet tables, one guest—a Shabbaton regular for several years now—opened up to the *Gazette* about his collective weekend experiences.

Years earlier, he related, the man felt that he did not need help, although he was a bona fide parent of a child with special needs. He didn't want to be seen as an object of pity. *I'm just checking it out*, he coolly rationalized the first time he agreed to attend.

But after spending that critical first Shabbos at Hamaspiik's annual support

event, he came away feeling vastly supported—and realizing how all along he had needed to be supported.

Today, the gentleman continued, he shares a common vocabulary with fellow parents. He has enthusiastically attended the Shabbaton ever since. And he's still not an object of pity, he added—instead, as he put it, he's actually facing life.

Setting the stage

With the long afternoon giving them plenty of time to relax before the Shabbos onset, guests enjoyed separate swimming times for men and women at the hotel's pool.

But as the sacred Shabbos came in, an almost-palpable atmosphere of sanctity descended. A large table bedecked with candles was set up, and dozens of women stood by to light the spiritual lights—



TABLES SET: THE SHUL; FRIDAY DINNER

traditionally a moment of intense personal bonding with God. That ethereal experience was dramatically enhanced by the Lev Choir just across the room, serenading the scene with songs themed for Shabbos and a mother's prayerful heart. With rivers of tears resulting from the moving vocal music, it set quite the Shabbos stage.

The afternoon *Minchah* prayer services were then held in a ballroom designated as the event's onsite synagogue.

After *Minchah*, the combined crowd was formally welcomed by the other half of the Katina team, Hamaspiik's very own Rabbi Chaim Mendel Katina. After a few words, Rabbi Katina invited Rabbi Yisroel Stein, the first of several invited guest speakers, to share a few

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 >>

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS



GASTRONOMICAL PROPORTIONS: A FOOD STATION SETS THE WEEKEND'S CULINARY TONE

inspiring words.

The *Kabolas Shabbos* Friday-night services then ensued, led by noted cantor Yaakov “Yankel” Ungar and backed by the Lev Choir ensemble.

With *Kabolas Shabbos* over some 30 minutes later, the crowd repaired to the dining room for the Friday night Shabbos meal. It was time for food for body and soul alike.

The main message

Over a sumptuous and lavish dinner, with dozens of round tables most elegantly set, popular community personality Yonason Schwartz served as Master of Ceremonies. With his trademark warmth and wit, Mr. Schwartz welcomed everybody.

He then proceeded to introduce the night's first featured speaker: Noted inspirational storyteller Rabbi Yechiel Spero of Baltimore, Maryland.

Rabbi Spero, as is his wont, delivered his primary point not just with a story but one that had occurred to him earlier that very day—and while he had been en route to the Shabbaton to boot.

“Are you a rabbi?” the man had asked him, as Rabbi Spero recounted the episode.

Having pulled into a rest stop to grab a drink, a complete stranger approached him to ask that question. The stranger then told Rabbi Spero the following story.

He had been driving in suburban Connecticut when he got lost. Pulling into a random home's driveway to regain bearings, he was surprised by a man rapping on his window asking what he was looking for. In the brief ensuing conversation, the lost driver shared that was a professional carpenter attempting to locate a client; the homeowner revealed that he was a rabbi whose wife inside the house had, not five minutes ago, finished praying to God for a carpenter to complete some interior work.

Besides that encounter's serendipity, the man—now speaking to Rabbi Spero at a random rest stop—marveled that he keeps “running into rabbis!”

Rabbi Spero asked him whether he was Jewish. It turned out he was.

In conveying that fresh experience to

the *Hamaspiik* crowd, Rabbi Spero drove home the point that one can never know how one little experience can influence others, even years later.

A keynote address was then delivered by Rabbi Elazar Zilberman of New Square, New York. His message was one of *shalom bayis* (domestic harmony), underscoring the importance of communication between parents, especially when a child with special needs is involved.

After the Shabbos meal formally ended, an informal singalong for the men was led by Emcee Schwartz. The uplifting get-together also featured surprise guest Mr. Shimon Kolyakov, founder of popular outreach website TorahAnytime.com.

At the same time, two simultaneous inspirational speeches for women were delivered. One, in English, was given by noted force of inspiration Rebbetzin Ginsburg; the second, geared for the Yiddish-speaking crowd, was delivered by Rebbetzin Teitelbaum. Both sessions were jam-packed.

Also just for the womenfolk was an “Oneg Shabbos” informal get-together, headlined by the performers “the Singing Saals.” Those vocalists were followed by a comedy skit on how to laugh through the challenges of special-needs parenting. Chairs were reportedly not necessary, what with guests on the floor with laughter.

Guests stayed up in small groups until 4:30 a.m., catching up with old friends—and making new ones.

A day of inspiration

Guests were seen by the *Gazette* getting their Shabbos day started as early as 7:00 a.m. A rich assortment of coffee and tea was available for that early-morning jumpstart, and men were seen enjoying the synagogue for personal Torah study sessions.

Two formal *Shacharis* morning services were held beginning at 8:15 and 9:30 a.m., with the latter constituting the central and more-attended one. That central service was led by Cantor Ungar and choir.

An informal but ever-popular event followed *Shacharis: A Kiddush* [semi-formal meal/social event, usually



A TOUCH OF GLASS: A PROFESSIONAL ARTISAN PLIES HIS TRADE, CREATING GIFTS FOR ALL

associated with lifecycle celebration—ed.]. With good food and great conversation in endless abundance, the guests bonded over shared experiences and personal anecdotes in the company of peers who truly know.

Along a parallel track, two uplifting talks for women were held. Rebbetzin Rabinowitz spoke in Yiddish. For those preferring English, Mrs. Reyhanian shared her riveting, novel-like true-life experiences of early life in, and escape from, fundamentalist Iran. Her speech conveyed strength and serenity that anyone could apply to their own daily struggles.

But then came lunch.

Tables set to wedding-level perfection (and not just any wedding, either), décor and all, greeted guests—“making everyone feel so welcome and special!” one guest later recounted.

Rabbi Spero was the meal's keynote address, dwelling at rousing length on the theme of life-perspective. One could endure grueling work, uncomfortable sleep, rigid rations and limited communication with loved ones while exiled from home—but in enduring what essentially are identical circumstances, one could be a sentence-serving prisoner who comes home a shadow, or a tour-serving soldier returning to a hero's welcome.

Said Rabbi Spiro: It all depends on the perspective.

After the meal, a late-afternoon Minchah was followed by two simultaneous *Shalosh Seudos* “Third Meals”. One had a decidedly Chasidic twist, *zemiros* (traditional Shabbos hymns) and all, and was led by scholar, speaker and poet Rabbi Feivel Klein. The other was headlined by noted collegiate football player-turned-inspirational lecturer Rabbi Label Lam.

Yet another surprise for mothers in attendance was announced in the afternoon. Entitled “Harmony of Symphony and Inspiration,” it had every guest speaker consecutively deliver powerful nuggets of wisdom, interspersed with vocal interludes of magical song led by guest talent and joined by all.

A night alive with light

The night was only getting started with the post-Shabbos *Maariv* night prayer services. A rousing *Havdalah* ceremony marking the end of Shabbos was led by Cantor Ungar and the choir, with 30 minutes of nonstop inspiration. Not to lose the emotional momentum, a keyboardist struck up the band and joyous dancing broke out.

In the break between Havdalah and dancing and the start of the *Melaveh Malkah* (“Escorting the Queen”) post-Shabbos meal, guest speakers were seen chatting with guests, with each surrounded by a small crowd. More importantly, guests were seen talking with one another, trading inspiration and motivation.

Then, before the *Melavah Malkah* began, the crowd got lively to the music of a three-man band, dancing for joy for close to 30 minutes.

Headlining the post-Shabbos meal was *Hamaspiik*'s very own Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director of *Hamaspiik* of Kings County. He shared remarkably-emotional personal childhood inspiration on how the most trying life circumstances can turn around when one makes giving to others a part of life, no matter how hard.

Guestspeaker Rabbi Elazar Silberman next delivered an inspirational slide show and talk on faith in God—and how to live life intentionally instead of just letting things happen.

Rabbi Feivel Klein then reviewed the Shabbos in rhyme, including the *Melavah Malkah* which he described in real time.

A hysterically funny live skit by the comedy duo of Feldman and Langsam had the crowd in stitches, drawing the *Melavah Malkah*—and the entire Shabbos—to an official close on the highest of notes.

After that post-Shabbos meal and performance, guests were already seen leaving. Many stayed the night, awakening Sunday morning to a sumptuous buffet breakfast.

But the difference on their faces between arrival and departure said it all. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



Writing the Book on Reading



READ IT AND LEAP: AT THE ALEPH BAIS CENTER'S CELEBRATION, THE NOW-MASTERED SIDDUR PRAYERBOOKS REGALLY AWAIT THEIR READY-TO-JUMP-FOR-JOY RECIPIENTS

Flying High



DISABILITY PARTICIPATION TAKES OFF: (L) IS ALL WONDER AT THE MARVEL OF AIRBORNE MACHINES; PINCHAS (R) IS EXCITED TO ARRIVE AT THE LOCAL AIRFIELD

They Can Now Daven. And Read. And Learn.

Children with Down Syndrome Celebrate Their Mastery of Kriah

The air was charged with emotion. The joy was palpable. As the precious little children clutched their siddurim with earnest determination and obvious pride, the audience looked on with tears in their eyes. This wasn't just a siddur play—this was the culmination of hard work, persistent effort, and creative solutions. The patience and perseverance from their devoted teachers allowed them to reach this childhood milestone—the mastery of kriah.

At the acclaimed Aleph Bais Center, the after-school program geared for young children with Down's Syndrome, each child has acquired the skills of kriah completely—learning how to pronounce each ois and nekudah perfectly and enunciate each syllable precisely.

"Our motto is: Expect from them, and they'll live up to it. When you set a realistic goal for each child, they'll get there," shares Mrs. Idy Weiss, Director

of Aleph Bais Center. "In the special needs world, you don't hear of children celebrating a siddur play. But we were determined to change that. For the past two years, we've been working toward this goal and with Hashem's help, we achieved it!"

They were able to reach this milestone despite being an after-school program by making the learning extremely hands on. Everything was taught via unique methods, fun games, and entertaining activities.

"The dedicated staff at Aleph Bais Center, who utilized the short amount of time each day, enabled this accomplishment!" says Mr. Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director at Hamaspik of Kings County. "We were zocheh to achieve a previously unachievable task. The fact that these children can now open a siddur and daven from it is the biggest present we can give them and their parents." ★

Writing Another Chapter of Colorful Local History

First Visit by Hamaspik Group to Orange County Airport

If you live in upstate Orange County, bet you didn't know where the U.S. Army had a training field right in your backyard.

And unless you're a serious history buff, you probably couldn't name where the Hudson Valley's only NASCAR event (so far) took place.

Then you've got an onsite light generation aviation school rated best pilot training program nationwide in 2018 by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)—and that's right in your backyard, too.

While a single auto race came and went, the military turned over its facility to the county in 1962, and private citizens are constantly becoming pilots, history was still yet to be made.

Despite its routine part of life today, metal machines taking to the sky like birds hasn't lost its wonder since the days of the Wright brothers. And so, on one fine sunny day this spring, Yehudah "Yidel" Kleinman and his charges pulled

up in a handful of vehicles to engage in that all-American informal pastime of watching planes fly.

Mr. Kleinman directs Hamaspik of Orange County's Men's Day Hab program, and on that day, the young men of that long-running Hamaspik mainstay pulled up outside a fence of that 600-acre facility in Montgomery, New York. They spent the next hour observing single-engine craft taking off and landing.

"The mission of the Orange County Airport is to promote General Aviation and foster economic development by strategically planning, developing and operating an effective and efficient airport," begins the mission statement of Orange County Airport.

Given the recent visit by the gentlemen of Hamaspik of Orange County's Men's Day Hab, one might want to incorporate disability inclusion into that mission, too. ★

► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

In Loving Memory of Mommy, Words (and Actions) From the Heart

Hamaspik Group-home Resident Pens Loving Pledge to Father After Passing of Mother

It's one of those little things in life that underscore all those big things in life. The things that really matter.

Sometimes, all it takes to express them is a few words. And yet other times, all it takes is a single letter.

Malky, a longtime resident of Hamaspik of Rockland County's Fosse Shvesterheim Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) in South Monsey, accomplished both.

When her mother passed away earlier this year after a significant illness, Malky joined her family in grief.

But after the seven-day Shiva mourning period, Malky penned a poignant missive to her father.

Deeply touched, Manager Mrs. Landau requested and received permission to pass it on to management and from there to the *Gazette*.

Capturing the human heart's capacity for empathy, sensitivity, inscrutable wisdom and a limitless love—a capacity that respects no

disability—the letter speaks for itself.

With Malky's permission, the *Gazette* is only too happy to share it with you.

Dear totty,

I love you. I lit a candle for mommy's neshoma because now she is in a better place and she sees her daughter from shamayim. animes together with father and oma and opa when mashiah comes I'll see mommy again. I'm happy that mommy feels better now and can talk and walk and is with hashem. I am going to do mitzvos for a zechus for mommys neshama. I collected tzeduka for a zechus for mommy. Can you please give it to someone who needs it?

You are my favorite father. I love you!

Love your daughter

Malky

Somewhere, someone's Mommy is surely smiling.

Need we say more? ★

Hamaspik Rockland's Forshay Briderheim Marks First Yahrzeit of Moishy Sternberg

Beloved Resident Remembered by Forshay Rebbe, Staff; Eternalized with Mishnah Study, Uplifting Yahrzeit Dinner

Moshe "Moishy" Sternberg, longtime resident of Hamaspik of Rockland County's Forshay Briderheim, tragically became one of the early faces of the pandemic's grim toll. Equally at home at Forshay and the synagogue across its street he religiously frequented, he remains missed by all.

At the time, to buoy Moishy's soul and raise their own spirits, the Forshay residents undertook the traditional study of a volume of the Mishnah, the "encyclopedia" codifying the laws of the Torah.

Those near-daily study sessions, led by driven Direct Support Professional (DSP) Aaron Schwartz around the home's dining-room table, got underway in fall of 2020. They continued through this past winter, concluding the volume's final paragraph on Moishy's first *yahrzeit* passing anniversary—and enjoying a climactic completion

ceremony this past May.

That event was held at the Hamaspik Terrace ballroom at the agency's Monsey headquarters. Joining Forshay residents and staff were several Hamaspik employees who loved Moishy. Moishy's beloved mother, stepfather and other family members were present. The event was also crowned by Grand Rabbi Chaim L. Rotenberg, a.k.a. the "Forshay Rebbe," at whose synagogue Moishy was a faithful regular.

Addressing the crowd, the Forshay Rebbe hailed the spiritual value of people with disabilities. Longtime Forshay DSP Moshe Feder paid the sweetest of tributes to Moishy. But then, backed by a live keyboardist and drummer, community entertainer Isaac Weiss had everyone laughing and, shortly, on their feet dancing.

The gentlemen went home with satisfied hearts and fresh energies. ★

The Emotionally Mighty Pen

Dear totty,

I love you. I lit a can for mommys neshoma because now she is in a better place and she sees her daughter from shamayim. animes together with father and oma and opa when mashiah comes I'll see mommy again. I'm happy that mommy feels better now and can talk and walk and is with hashem.

I'm going to do mitzvos for a zechus for mommys neshoma. I collected tzeduka for a zechus for mommy. Can you please give it to someone who needs it? You are my favorite father. I love you!

Love your daughter
Malky Per

MISSIVE WITH A MESSAGE: MALKY'S INNOCENT WORDS ARE RICH WITH POWER

Tribute to a Dear Brother



REMEMBRANCE, HONOR, GOOD CHEER: GRAND RABBI ROTENBERG (C-RIGHT, SEATED), FORSHAY'S AARON SCHWARTZ (L, STANDING) AND GUESTS SHARE A WARM MOMENT; ISAAC WEISS' ANTICS BRING DOWN THE HOUSE; A PERHAPS-FUTURE DRUMMER CHECKS IT OUT

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

HISTORIC STUDY TIES 100-PLUS GENES TO AUTISM

New York, New York — Over 100 genes appear to be involved in autism spectrum disorder (ASD), says research at one of the world's leading centers for autism research and treatment for children: the Seaver Autism Center for Research and Treatment at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital.

The Seaver Center study, which involved over 50 centers around the world, identified 102 genes associated with ASD, including a few dozen previously unrecognized.

Knowing the genes involved in ASD will help researchers better understand the causes and possibly develop new drug therapies for children with severe impairments, according to researchers.

CORNELL'S ATTAIN AUTISM TRANSITION PROJECT MAKING HEADWAY

Ithaca, New York — The Yang-Tan Institute, a research center within New York's Cornell University, is proceeding with its Autism Transition to Adulthood Initiative (ATTAIN).

The project, now well into its second of six years, is identifying how young adults with autism can achieve success after graduating high school.

Using its nationally-representative database for policy-driven research exclusively focused on transition-aged youth with autism—a national first—the ATTAIN project will be built around another Cornell-driven project: NYS PROMISE.

That federal project, brought to New York State by Gov. Cuomo in early 2014, collected six years of data on youth with disabilities who were getting federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and also partaking of transition services from school to employment. The ATTAIN project will essentially see who did best with NYS PROMISE.

STUDY FINDS GIRLS WITH AUTISM DIAGNOSED 1.5 YEARS AFTER BOYS

East Providence, Rhode Island — According to the groundbreaking Rhode Island Consortium for Autism Research and Treatment (RI-CART) study, girls with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are diagnosed with the condition later than boys by an average of 1.5 years.

"Among the most prominent findings of immediate clinical importance, we found that females received a first diagnosis of ASD at a later age than males," reads the study. "Our study also

suggests that new strategies for earlier diagnosis of ASD in females may be warranted."

One reason girls with autism get their average diagnosis later, according to the researchers, is because of "more advanced language abilities in females with ASD." In turn, that means, that girls generally start talking earlier, making it harder to diagnose them with autism (because autism is commonly indicated by delayed or absent speech).

MALE ANTI-SOCIAL FEELINGS, REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS, REDUCED BY NASAL OXYTOCIN SPRAY

Leuven, Belgium — Repetitive behaviors and feelings of social avoidance among adult men with autism may be reduced by a daily nasal spray of oxytocin.

Oxytocin is a hormone produced by the brain that fosters healthy bonding between people.

According to a placebo trial of 20 adult men (with half getting real oxytocin and the other ten getting a placebo "dummy spray"), the oxytocin group reported reductions of repetitive behaviors and social-avoidance feelings up to one year after the trial ended. The placebo group did not. The oxytocin group also reported higher feelings of

"vigor," or feeling energetic, active and lively,

Participants received the nasal spray every morning for four weeks. Participants filled out surveys at the study's start, at its end four weeks later, and one month and one year after its end.

NEW CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT ON NATIONAL BAN OF SHELTERED WORKSHOPS, SUBMINIMUM WAGE

Washington, D.C. — The idea of closing sheltered workshops, which pay people with disabilities subminimum wage for performing rote tasks, has been around for decades.

Workshop-closure proponents, have long claimed such employers take advantage of employees with disabilities, who—they say—instead need better job training and opportunities.

Legislation at the state and federal level in the last decade has progressively chipped away at the workshops. New York State, for example, agreed in 2014 to phase them out.

Recently, legislation introduced by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash. (herself a special-needs mom) would nationally phase out subminimum wage over the next five years. ★

FEDERAL REPORT: MORE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES GRADUATING

Washington, D.C. — Things are looking better for America's high-schoolers with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)—at least that's what the federal Dept. of Education (ED) now says.

According to the report from the ED's National Center for Education Statistics, the high school graduation rate for those with disabilities rose to 68.2 percent for the 2018-2019 school year. That's up from 67.1 percent the year prior.

However, students with disabilities continue to lag far behind their peers, the report shows. The national graduation rate for all students is currently 85.8 percent.

Meanwhile, New York State's Education Department is asking




HATS OFF TO MAINSTREAMING! MORE AMERICAN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL, SAYS DEPT. OF ED.

schools to offer aging-out students with disabilities the opportunity to

attend summer school and continue their education through the next

school year, as needed, to earn diplomas or other credentials. ★

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.



INTRODUCING



INTEGRATED
HEALTH

A Hamaspik initiative.
Available to mainstream Medicaid
members, 21+ years, with chronic
medical or behavioral conditions.

MEDICAL BEHAVIORAL PSYCHIATRIC ADDICTIONS

UPSTATE 845-503-0444
Intake@IntegratedHealthRC.org
www.IntegratedHealthRC.org

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

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

The “Somebody” in “Somebody’s Gotta Do Something...”

Hamaspik’s Integrated Health Responds to Albany’s New Push to Support People With Serious Mental Illness

It’s a part of life most people don’t want to face.

It’s a fact of daily existence as real as the homeless person we may pass each day on our morning commute. But it’s a fact, like that long-struggling street-bound soul, that’s too-often overlooked with a grim aversion—and a dash of fleeting guilt—borne of our own clockwork routines.

Serious mental illness is a side of society that tends to become someone else’s problem.

Until the costs start piling up.

When grossly excessive substance-use disorder, outbursts of unstable and dangerous behaviors, harm to self or others, and repeat hospitalizations build up—and often in that order—then it’s society’s problem.

Cognizant of a growing problem, New York State’s Dept. of Health—which runs the Medicaid program covering many people with serious mental

illness—is now focusing on serious mental illness, or SMI in public-health jargon. And via the state Office of Mental Health (OMH), it’s joined forces with its private-sector partners—Specialty Mental-Health Care Management Agencies like Integrated Health.

At Integrated Health, the long-running mental-health support program offered to the community by Hamaspik in Brooklyn and the Hudson Valley, serious mental illness has long been taken with the utmost of seriousness.

At any spur of the moment, Mordechai Neuman, LCSW Integrated’s Director of Clinical Services at Hamaspik’s upstate Monsey office, can rattle off cases his teams of Care Managers have positively helped. Those cases, ranging from singles as young as 18 to well-established family pillars in their 70s, have come to Integrated with a host of mental-health woes. The agency has been able to help most, he humbly

but proudly notes. “There’s a lot of need out there,” he says, “and people so far have trusted the Hamaspik name to treat them with discretion and respect.”

But with Albany’s new emphasis, Integrated has followed suit.

“We work in the trenches, where success is sometimes measured by ‘fewer hospitalizations,’ not necessarily ‘no hospitalizations,’” Mr. Neuman now says.

Asked for real-life examples of people with SMI Integrated has recently helped, Mr. Neuman waxes circumspect—the nature of healthcare’s HIPAA laws, never mind the community’s heightened sensitivity toward stigma, preclude most specific details.

However, he continues, many such individuals Integrated now also works with are “forgotten children”—those old friends we all remember from our earlier school years that were mainstream in every way then but far from it today. In those youthful times, mental illness lurked in the wings of genetic predispositions—only to emerge later in adult life on the more-overt end of the mental-illness spectrum.

“Sometimes they’re in a position to hide it,” he states—but frequently, he adds, they’re not. And that’s where they, a loved one or a respected personal rabbi, respond to Integrated’s new outreach push.

However, he goes on, “Our job is not treatment” of serious mental illness but rather, effective support and guidance.

“In order for people to navigate the labyrinth of treatment options,” he says, “they need a neutral Care Manager.”

Major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, self-harm, substance-use disorder and the like reap a grim toll, respecting no demographic. And due to their complex, multifaceted nature, treating them requires a team approach of equal intensity.

The program’s several dozen Care Managers—trained professionals on the front lines of community mental-health care—have been receiving ongoing new trainings and materials on how to work with individuals struggling with SMI. New relationships with local and regional psychiatric hospitals and other treatment centers have been forged. And a new advertising campaign in community circulars is well under way—targeting Integrated’s additional target audience with a message of hope and light at the end of the tunnel.

A typical example (and one that occurred several times in the past week alone, adds Mr. Neuman) is an individual hospitalized for a mental-health episode and in need of supports post-discharge. In such cases, Integrated and hospital social workers efficiently communicate, ensuring that support plans from Integrated are included in the patient’s discharge papers—and specifically, support from a Care Manager that kicks in as soon as the patient leaves.

And for each of those patients, that Care Manager is that somebody. ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

New Alzheimer’s Drug Approved by FDA

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

trials showed that it reduced plaques and tangles in patients’ brains—regardless of negligible improvements in cognition and function.

With its Aduhelm decision the FDA has agreed that if plaques and tangles are reduced, symptoms are reduced.

“It is expected that the reduction in amyloid plaque will result in a reduction in clinical decline,” elaborated the FDA’s

Dr. Patrizia Cavazzoni in an official statement. “This reduction in plaques is reasonably likely to result in clinical benefit.”

Additionally, the FDA’s approval—unlike other drug approvals—is not targeted to one specific set of patients, as in late-stage patients of specific cancers. This could mean that any Alzheimer’s patient, at any disease stage, could conceivably get an Aduhelm prescription.

However, according to Biogen, the average yearly cost of Aduhelm will be \$56,000. And finally, the drug is not a cure and does not reverse the disease’s progression. ★

**YOUR ULTIMATE
SOURCE FOR GROUP
INSURANCE SOLUTIONS!**


Reliable Brokerage, Inc.
We get you protected.



888.783.6286
CALL FOR YOUR NO-OBLIGATION INSURANCE QUOTE
HENRY KELLNER & ASSOCIATES
E-mail us at: info@reliablebrokerage.com
Visit us on the web at: www.ReliableBrokerage.com

HEALTH NEWS

In trial, experimental obesity drug reduces participants' weight by average of 15 percent

London, England — Seems that there's a pill for everything nowadays (which is not to say that good-old-fashioned personal care is no longer needed, of course)—including losing weight, now.

But this one seems to actually make a real difference—at least according to STEP.

A major global study by the University of London's Centre for Obesity Research had close to 2,000 participating obese adults in 16 countries take the drug, semaglutide, or a placebo. All participants were overweight or obese.

Participants took a 2.4mg dose of semaglutide (or matching placebo) weekly via subcutaneously (under the skin) injection; similar to the way people with diabetes inject insulin.



A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR WEIGHT LOSS: IN A RECENT GLOBAL STUDY, EXPERIMENTAL DRUG OZEMPIC (SEMAGLUTIDE) SEEMS TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE WEIGHT IN PEOPLE WITH OBESITY

Overall, 94.3% of participants completed the 68-week study, which started in autumn 2018.

Those taking part also received individual face-to-face or phone

counselling sessions from registered dietitians every four weeks to help them adhere to the reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity, providing guidance, behavioral

strategies and motivation. Additionally, participants received incentives such as kettle bells or food scales to mark progress and milestones.

In those taking semaglutide, the average weight loss was nearly 34 pounds, with a reduction in BMI of -5.54. The placebo group observed an average weight loss of 5.7 pounds, with a reduction in BMI of -0.92.

What's more, about 35 percent taking the drug lost more than one-fifth of their total body weight.

The Phase III randomized trial, dubbed the Semaglutide Treatment Effect in People with Obesity (STEP) Trial, was conducted at 129 academic and medical sites worldwide. The average weight of participants was 231 pounds. ★



EGGPLANT!

EASY

YIELDS: 4 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:15

READY IN: 1:15



Babaganush Eggplant Dip

THE PERFECT DIP FOR SHABBOS!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium eggplant
- 3 cloves garlic
- 5 tablespoons mayonnaise
- Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- Pre-heat oven to 375°
- Wrap eggplant in silver foil
- Bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until tender
- Remove from oven and let cool completely
- Remove peels
- Blend all ingredients in immersion blender

FOR SMOKED VERSION: wrap eggplant well in silver foil and place directly on flame; then follow same directions.

CHEF'S TIP:

To remove the eggplant's bitter flavor, slice and sprinkle salt on both open faces. Let salt sit for 20 minutes, then rinse well.

BENEFITS:

Eggplant contains an impressive across-the-board array of minerals and vitamins, including copper, fiber, folate, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus and potassium, as well as vitamins C, K, and B6, thiamin, niacin, and pantothenic acid.

MEDIUM

YIELDS: 6 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:10

READY IN: :50



Simple Eggplant Parmesa

A BIT DIFFERENT THAN YOUR TYPICAL EGGPLANT PARMESAN!

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- ½ cup corn flake crumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- 1 small eggplant
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- 1 cup shredded cheese

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 400°
- Pour melted butter into an 11x7 baking dish; set aside
- Place egg in a shallow dish; set aside
- In a separate shallow dish, combine corn flake crumbs, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper; set aside
- Slice eggplant. Dip each slice in egg and coat with crumb mixture. Place in prepared baking dish
- Bake for 20 minutes
- Turn slices and bake for another 15 minutes
- Pour marinara sauce over eggplant and top with mozzarella cheese
- Bake for 3 more minutes or until cheese is just melted

EASY

YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS

PREP TIME: 0:15

READY IN: 0:35



Roasted Veggies

ENJOY THIS HEALTHY, TASTY SIDE DISH!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 eggplant
- 1 butternut squash
- 1 onion
- 1 tomato
- 1 red pepper
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt to taste
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

- Cube all vegetables
- Line baking sheet with non-stick parchment paper
- Spread cubed vegetables in single layer across sheet, ensuring each is separate
- Drizzle with olive oil
- Season with salt and garlic powder
- Roast for 20 min
- Mix all together
- Season with black pepper (and more salt if needed)

Public Health and Policy News

disease affects people differently with its variety of symptoms, including walking and balance problems, but can usually be treated or managed.

AIR POLLUTION SPIKES LINKED TO LOWER TEST SCORES FOR UTAH KIDS

Salt Lake City, Utah — Something's in the air when it comes to 3rd Graders getting lower test scores at school—at least if you ask researchers at the University of Utah.

The scientists found an association between reduced test scores and more frequent exposure to air pollution spikes in Utah's Salt Lake County. Schools with a higher proportion of students of color and from households experiencing poverty were exposed to more peak pollution days than were schools serving middle- to upper- class and predominately white students. Specifically, they found that more frequent peak air pollution exposure was associated with reduced math and English language arts (ELA) test scores for third graders in all primary public schools in Salt Lake County during the 2016-2017 year.

Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), the tiny particles responsible for hazy air pollution, are detrimental to children's health even inside the classroom. Mounting evidence has linked chronic exposure with poor academic performance in K-12 students.

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE PATIENTS BIGGEST USERS OF NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Washington, D.C. — According to a report recently released by the



A SMOKING GUN? UNIVERSITY OF UTAH RESEARCH SUGGESTS A LINK BETWEEN INCREASED EXPOSURE TO LOCAL AIR POLLUTION AND DECREASED TEST SCORES AMONG THIRD GRADERS

Washington-based Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC), people with the chronic kidney illness, end-stage renal disease (ESRD) are the nation's biggest users of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), a vital benefit covered by Medicaid.

The report was originally requested by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

That committee had asked MACPAC to "examine...the benefits of NEMT from state Medicaid programs on Medicaid beneficiaries, including beneficiaries with chronic diseases including ESRD [end-stage renal disease]... and to examine the benefits of improving local coordination of NEMT with public transportation and other Federally-assisted transportation services."

ACCELERATING FDA APPROVAL OF COMPLEX GENERICS COULD SAVE \$1.3 BILLION A YEAR

Washington, D.C. — Accelerating FDA approval for complex generic drugs is an untapped avenue that could improve access to low-cost drugs for patients while also saving the U.S. billions per year, according to an independent analysis commissioned by Teva Pharmaceuticals.

Regulatory delays for complex generics cost the U.S. health system an estimated \$1.3 billion each year, according to that analysis.

Complex drugs, which include epinephrine auto-injectors and inhalers used to treat asthma, are critical to the care of conditions such as metastatic breast cancer, osteoporosis and diabetes.

"With more complex products on the verge of losing exclusivity and patent protection, it is important for policymakers to achieve demonstrable progress in increasing access to complex generics in the U.S. market," according to the analysis.

MORE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS, BETTER MENTAL HEALTH, SAYS STUDY

Hamburg, Germany — Choosing to

live in a place with many different kinds of birds and plants may be good for you, even those living things probably won't show up on any real estate listing,

That's the informal conclusion of a study that showed that people in areas with greater local *biodiversity*, or variety of life, have better mental health than those in areas with lesser biodiversity.

The study compared health data gathered from about 30,000 people in nearly 15,000 households in Germany with estimates of the diversity of bird and plant species in the region. While investigators found a positive link between a greater diversity of birds and plants and good mental health, they found no such link for physical health. They also found a relationship between mental health and neighborhood park and green-space availability: the closer the park, the better.

The findings were published in *Landscape and Urban Planning*.

VERIZON JUMPING INTO STILL-EXPLODING TELEHEALTH INDUSTRY

New York, New York — Telecommunications giant Verizon is joining the crowded virtual care market on Monday, banking on continued demand for virtual care post-COVID-19.

The new telemedicine platform for providers is dubbed Verizon BlueJeans TeleHealth.

The BlueJeans video conferencing company, bought out by which Verizon last year, has now been reworked for healthcare customers. According to Verizon, the new BlueJeans will provide a streamlined and simplified installation and user experience.

Hospitals and doctors' offices were slow to offer telemedicine to existing patients before the coronavirus hit the U.S. early last year. Some providers, especially small, resource-strapped facilities, reported problems with the cost or overhead of implementing new telehealth solutions. BlueJeans is meant to ameliorate some of these problems. ★

MARKETING OF GAIT-IMPROVING DEVICE FOR MS PATIENTS APPROVED BY FDA

Silver Spring, Maryland — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the marketing of a new device inserted into the mouth that helps certain people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

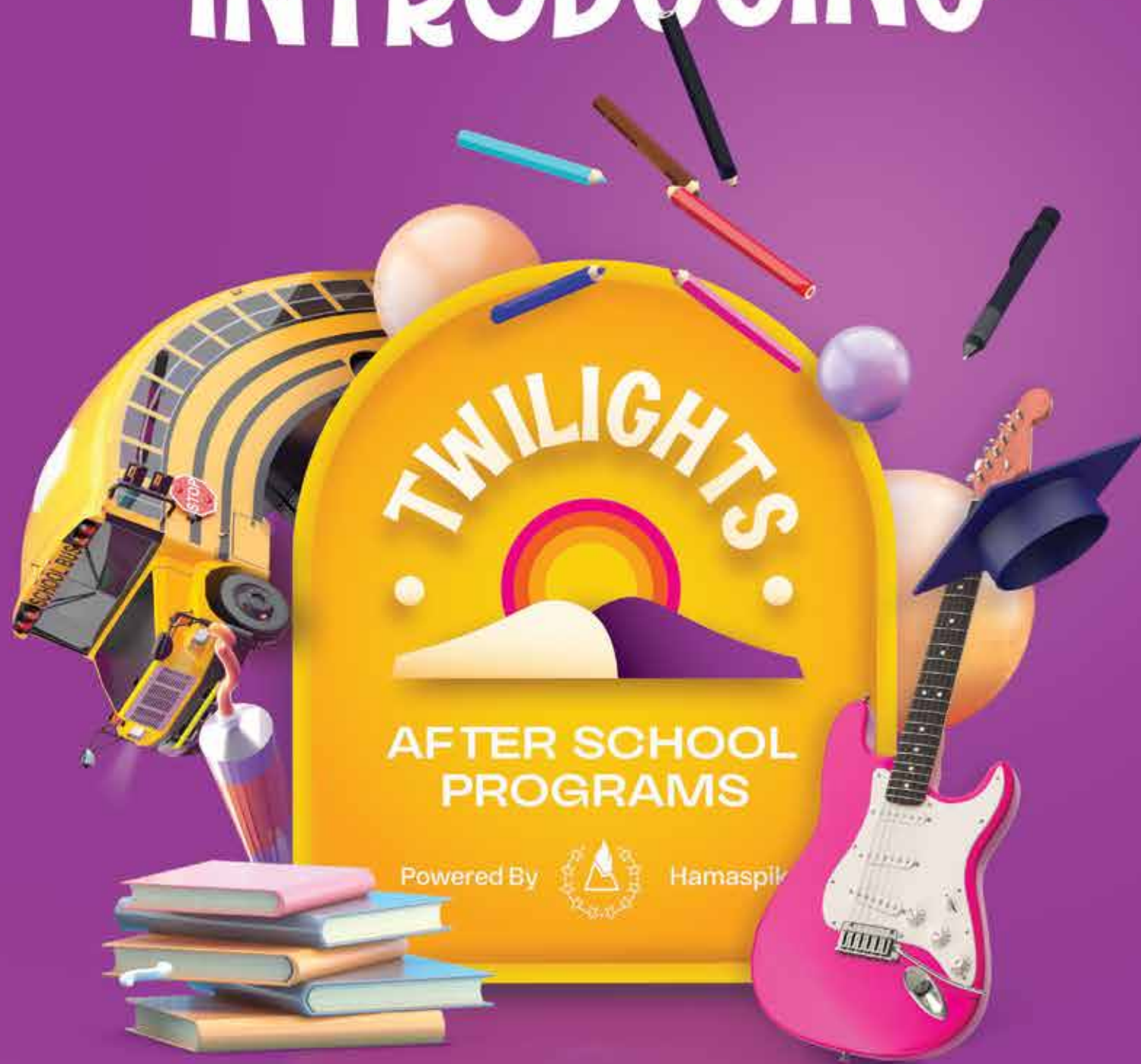
The device, called the Portable Neuromodulation Stimulator (PoNS), consists of a non-implantable apparatus that stimulates specific nerves via the tongue to help treat motor deficits. The PoNS device is intended for prescription only as part of existing therapeutic exercise programs for patients 22 and up.

Multiple sclerosis disrupts communications between the brain and other parts of the body. The autoimmune



SUPPORT ON THE TIP OF THE TONGUE: THE PONS DEVICE HELPS REDUCE WALKING DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS BY STIMULATING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM THROUGH THE MOUTH

INTRODUCING



Fun and learning doesn't need to end at the end of your child's school day. **Twilights** is a full community of after school and weekend programs powered by Hamaspiik, each distinctly designed for specific age group and life stage.

For information and enrollment call us

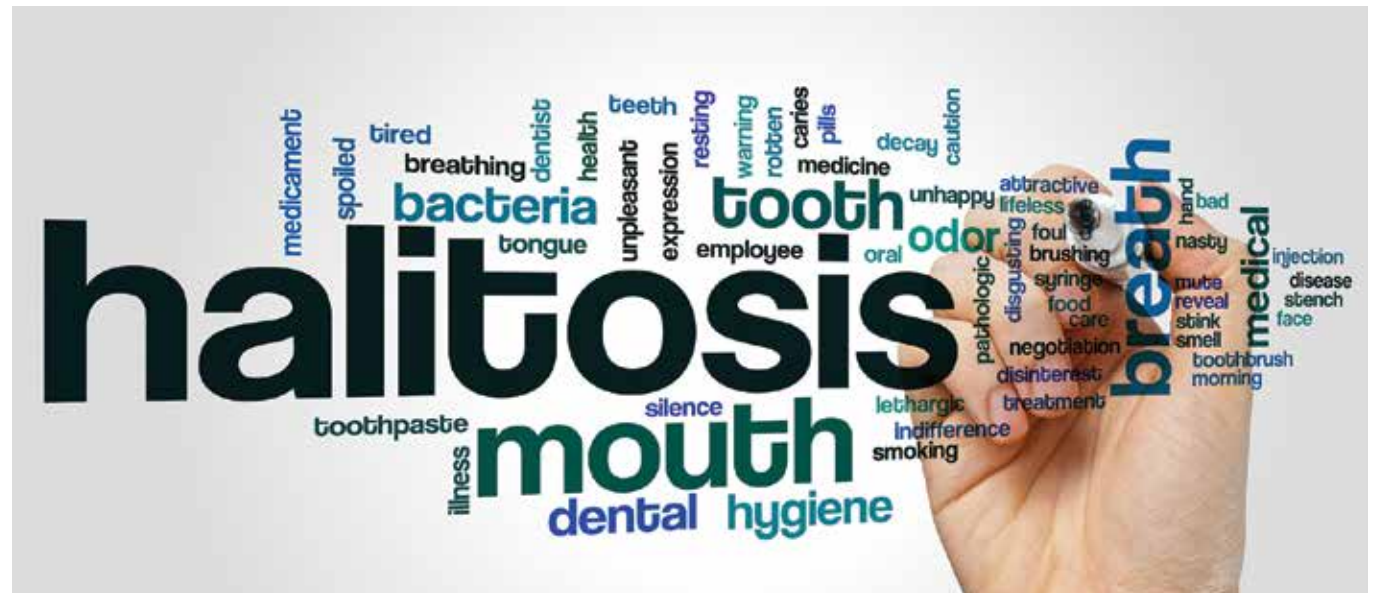
Orange County: 845.774.8400 / hamaspikorange.org

Kings County: 718.387.8400 / hamaspikkings.org

In the Know

ALL ABOUT... HALITOSIS (BAD BREATH)

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Harvard Medical Center, WebMD



Bad breath—medically known as halitosis—needs no introduction. The malodorous condition is primarily a social problem, frequently causing discomfort in others, shame in the person with it, and negative labeling. It can even cause anxiety.

Almost everyone experiences halitosis once in a while. But for some, bad breath is a daily problem, and they struggle to find a solution.

The good news, however, is that most cases of breath unpleasant-smelling enough to be noticed by others can be easily treated without professional medical intervention.

Perhaps the most common misconception is that halitosis can be treated with over-the-counter products, like the many “breath mints,” chewing gums, mouthwashes and the like. It can’t. These products merely cover the bad smell with a good one—treating the symptom, not the cause.

The fact is that halitosis is primarily caused by certain foods, health conditions or habits—factors that go beyond the mouth, but which can be remedied and counteracted easily. If those simple changes don't work, one may need to see a doctor for a thorough diagnosis and treatment plan.

Either way, halitosis doesn't need to remain an embarrassing long-term problem. Do read on.

DEFINITION

“Halitosis” comes from the Latin *halitus*, or breath, or *halare*, or to breathe.

According to Harvard Medical Center, approximately 30 percent of the population complains of some sort of bad breath.

Halitosis often occurs after a garlicky meal or in the morning after waking.

SYMPTOMS

If you think you have halitosis, ask a close relative or friend to give you an

objective opinion. Doing so is important because it's hard for the person himself or herself to be objective—some people just *think* they have bad breath when they actually do not, while others, unfortunately, *do* have halitosis but just don't notice it. Such people may not be aware of their own halitosis—only learning about it from a relative, friend, or coworker, which in turn causes some degree of discomfort and distress. In severe cases, bad breath may negatively impact personal relationships and a person's quality of life.

CAUSES

While bad breath comes out of the mouth, causes often begin well beyond the mouth. Here are the primary causes of halitosis:

- **Food.** The breakdown of food particles in and around the teeth can increase bacteria and cause that unpleasant odor. Also, certain food items like onions, garlic and spices enter the bloodstream after digestion, where they are carried to the lungs and affect the breath.
- **Tobacco products.** Smoking causes its own unpleasant mouth odor. Also, tobacco users are likelier to have gum disease, itself another source of bad breath.
- **Alcohol and coffee.** These common beverages are known to at least temporarily cause halitosis.
- **Poor dental hygiene.** Without daily regular brushing and flossing, tiny pieces of food stay in your mouth and cause bad breath. Also, without regular brushing, a colorless, sticky film of bacteria called plaque forms on your teeth. Built-up plaque then can irritate the gums and eventually form plaque-filled pockets between the teeth and gums known as periodontitis. The tongue also can trap bacteria that produce odors. Finally, dentures that you don't clean regularly, or which don't fit right, can collect bacteria and food particles that generate odors.

- **Dry mouth.** Among other things, saliva functions as the mouth's natural cleanser, removing tiny pieces of food that cause bad breath. But with a condition called dry mouth or xerostomia (zeer-o-STOE-me-uh), production of saliva is decreased, causing bad-breath-causing particles to increase. Because dry mouth naturally occurs during sleep, it often causes what is known as "morning breath." It can also be worse if you sleep with your mouth open. Chronic dry mouth can be caused by a problem with the salivary glands, or by some other diseases.
- **Medications.** Bad breath is the side effect of some medications, because these medications cause dry mouth (leading to bad breath). In other cases, some medications release certain chemicals into the bloodstream that then cause bad breath, similar to garlic (see above).
- **Infections in the mouth.** In cases of tooth decay, gum disease or mouth sores—all of which can collect odor-causing bacteria—halitosis can result. Surgical wounds after tooth extraction or other oral surgeries can likewise have the same effect.
- **Other conditions of the mouth, nose or throat.** Sometimes, bad breath can be caused by small stones that form in the tonsils and which are then covered with odor-making bacteria. Chronic infections or inflammation in the nose, sinuses or throat, which can contribute to postnasal drip, also can trigger halitosis.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Step One

The first step in diagnosing and treating halitosis is to reduce bad breath, help avoid cavities and lower your risk of gum disease by consistently practicing good oral hygiene. Thus, the first step is to conduct a thorough inspection of your daily oral hygiene habits:

- Do you brush your teeth every

morning? Every night? At work? After meals?

- Do you regularly floss your teeth?
- Do you regularly clean your bridge or dentures? If you regularly wear such a removable device, clean it thoroughly at least once a day or as directed by your dentist. If you wear a dental retainer or mouth guard, clean it each time before you put it in your mouth. Your dentist can recommend the best cleaning product.
- Do you also brush your tongue? (As mentioned, halitosis can also be caused by an unclean tongue; you'd be surprised that you can usually find over-the-counter "tongue cleaner" or "tongue scraper" devices in the toothbrush aisle of your local pharmacy or supermarket. Alternatively, some tooth brushes have these devices attached to them.)
- Do you change your toothbrush every three to four months or when it gets frayed?
- Do you see your dentist on a regular basis (generally twice yearly) to have your teeth or dentures examined and cleaned?
- Finally, do you drink enough water? (Coffee, soft drinks or alcohol can lead to a drier mouth.)
- In a related vein, do you also rinse your mouth out with water after you eat? A simple technique to treat and prevent halitosis is simply to swish that water around your mouth for several seconds before swallowing it—this washes away a lot of the food particles around your teeth and

mouth that cause halitosis.

At the same time (or later, if none of the above work), avoid bad-breath-causing foods like onions and garlic. Eating a lot of sugary foods is also linked with bad breath.

These interventions should effectively eliminate halitosis by treating its cause. If making these positive changes doesn't effectively eliminate halitosis, it's time to see the dentist.

Step Two

With causes of halitosis related to oral health, the dentist will work with you to help you better control it. The dentist may identify one of several possible dental conditions as the cause. Armed with that information, you can proceed to treat it as the dentist orders. However, if the dentist suspects a more serious condition causing the halitosis, you may next be referred to your doctor.

While there are sophisticated detectors that can identify the chemicals responsible for bad breath, such devices aren't always in use at many dental and medical offices.

If the halitosis is found to be due to buildup of plaque on the teeth, the dentist may recommend an anti-bacterial mouthwash. The dentist may also recommend an anti-bacterial toothpaste whose specialized ingredients also kill the bacteria that cause plaque buildup.

If the halitosis is due to gum disease, you may be referred to a periodontist (dentist who specialized in gums). Gum disease can cause the gums to pull away from the teeth, leaving deep pockets that

fill with bacteria that cause bad breath.

In some cases, the periodontist will only need to professionally clean out those pockets of bacteria. In other cases, poorly-fitting implants made need to be replaced because they are breeding pockets of odor-causing bacteria.

If, after seeing a dentist, the halitosis is thought to be caused by an underlying health (not dental) condition, the dentist will likely refer you to your doctor.

Step Three

If the doctor finds your halitosis is caused by dry mouth, you can chew gum or suck on candy (preferably sugarless) to stimulate saliva. The doctor (or dentist) may prescribe an artificial saliva preparation or an oral medication that stimulates saliva flow.

In other cases, the doctor will discover that the patient's halitosis is caused by one of several miscellaneous medical causes.

Some cancers, or even conditions like metabolic disorders, can cause a distinctive odor on the breath because of the specific chemicals that they produce.

Similarly, chronic reflux of stomach acids (gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD) can also be associated with halitosis.

Tonsillitis, respiratory infections such as sinusitis or bronchitis, and some gastrointestinal diseases may be responsible for a small number of cases of bad breath.

Advanced liver or kidney disease and uncontrolled diabetes can also lead to unpleasant breath.

PROGNOSIS

In summary, halitosis is typically caused by bacteria present on the teeth and debris on the tongue—so it's no surprise that most cases of halitosis are associated with various oral conditions. In cases where halitosis is medical, the patient is likely to experience serious symptoms beyond bad breath and should seek medical attention for those, too.

Regardless of cause, with proper identification of the bad odor's root source, that cause can be counteracted and eliminated—once again making your presence around family, friends and co-workers a breath of fresh air.

IS HALITOSIS A MADE-UP THING?

Social critics will be quick to opine that "halitosis" is just a made-up word and not a real medical condition—and that halitosis was merely invented by the mouthwash industry to sell mouthwash. Dentists and doctors will counter that, no, halitosis is a real thing—at least for their halitosis patients.

So, who's right? Both.

It is documentably and demonstrably true that mouthwash companies, primarily Listerine, resurrected usage of the old Latin phrase *halitosis* in the 1920s as a marketing gimmick. As a Jan. 2015 article in *Smithsonian Magazine* put it, "advertisements for Listerine transformed halitosis from a bothersome personal imperfection into an embarrassing medical condition that urgently required treatment... the owner of the company, Jordan Wheat Lambert, and his son, Gerard, came up with a marketing plan that would forever change the dental aisle."

Indeed, a walk through that dental aisle at your local supermarket will bring you face to face with a wide variety of breath mints, breath strips, chewing gums, and mouth rinses that boast treatment of bad breath.

On the other hand, it is established scientific and medical fact that there are things beyond the physical cleanliness of your mouth and teeth that produce bad breath.

As for the notion that fresh-breath-product companies literally invented a new word, that's not the case—the first known use of "halitosis" appeared in 1874, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Bottom line? Remember that halitosis—at least the real medical halitosis—isn't "treated" or "cured" by over-the-counter products. They may kill some germs that may cause some bad breath—but your real treatment will be to regularly brush, floss and otherwise keep your mouth physically clean. ★





Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today

SURVEY: 76 PERCENT OF U.S. PATIENTS TO TRANSITION TO TELEHEALTH

New York, New York — Sure looks like telehealth has arrived!

According to a survey conducted by New York-based management consulting company McKinsey, some 76 percent of respondents suggest that they were highly or moderately likely to use telehealth going forward.

Benefits of telehealth include convenience, access to care, better patient outcomes, and a more efficient healthcare system.

The convergence of cloud technology, video conferencing, and telepresence have infiltrated nearly every industry and business—including healthcare. But while video technology is among the many initiatives helping facilitate the growth of telemedicine, many healthcare CIOs still struggle with the best way to use video services. Securing data in the cloud remains a key concern, as does the ease of use of telemedicine systems for patients and healthcare providers alike.

U.S. HOSPITALS UP, DOWN IN COVID-WRACKED 2020: REPORTS

Washington, D.C. — American hospitals barely survived, or managed to even thrive, during and after the pandemic—depending on which recent report you read.

According to a recent analysis of the U.S. hospital industry by Healthcare Dive, a healthcare media outlet, funding from March 2020's \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was critical in keeping most major American hospital systems out of the red.

That report found that while several merely avoided catastrophic financial failure due to CARES funding, others remained profitable. Some, like California's Kaiser Permanente healthcare system, were even able to close out 2020 with positive operating and net income—and even refund unspent CARES funding.

But according to an industry survey



MASKING THE BOTTOM LINE: WHILE A GOOD NUMBER OF U.S. HOSPITALS WERE FINANCIALLY HIT HARD BY THE PANDEMIC, SEVERAL MANAGED TO NOT JUST SURVIVE BUT THRIVE, SAY REPORTS

by Medicaid's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), U.S. hospitals were overwhelmed by COVID-19, financially and morale-wise.

MISSISSIPPI PROPOSES SCRAPPING SOME NURSE-PRACTITIONER LICENSING

Jackson, Mississippi — In an effort to speed more nurse practitioners (NPs) into direct service of the general public where they are sorely lacking, especially in rural areas, Mississippi state legislators are working on doing away with certain existing NP licensing requirements.

Lawmakers in the House and Senate are considering several bills dealing with occupational licensing.

House Bill 1303 would remove a requirement that nurse practitioners enter into a collaborative agreement with a physician to serve patients.

The bill would exempt nurse practitioners, or "advanced practice registered nurses," from having to contract with a physician after 3,600 hours of practice.

"Nurse practitioners will continue to serve in the most rural, underserved part of our state," said bill sponsor Rep. Donnie Scoggin. "This will help to save Medicaid millions of dollars as we try to improve the chronic, poor health care of the state of Mississippi."

CLEVELAND CLINIC'S NEW 'QUANTUM COMPUTER' TO SPEED MEDICAL RESEARCH

Cleveland, Ohio — Medical research takes huge amounts of time. So why should a human being do it if a computer could do it?

That's the thinking behind a new ten-year business deal between the Cleveland Clinic and IBM.

The Clinic's new Global Center for Pathogen Research and Human health will use IBM-made quantum computing, cloud computing and artificial intelligence. The Center will streamline data collection and analysis to speed research into viruses and genomics.

Quantum computers simultaneously test multiple solutions to a single problem, giving them quicker processing speeds and faster results. Currently, research suggests it takes at least a decade to get a drug to a patient from the moment of scientific discovery.

The hardware will also make the Cleveland Clinic the first U.S. private-sector institution to buy and operate IBM's Quantum System One quantum computer.

HOSPITALS, LABS, OTHER PROVIDERS MAKING MILLIONS OFF COVID TESTS

Washington, D.C. — The

coronavirus pandemic was, and is, good for at least one part of the economy.

According to Medicare claims analyzed for Kaiser Health News (KHN) by industry consultant Hospital Pricing Specialists, hospitals are charging up to \$650 for a simple, molecular covid-19 test that costs \$50 or less to run.

What's more, a recent national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) found that charges by some large health systems for those simple tests range anywhere from a meager \$20 to an astronomical \$1,419. Some free-standing emergency rooms are charging more than \$1,000 per test.

Lab companies, for their part, have been charging \$100 per test.

As the pandemic second year, no procedure has been more frequent than tests for the virus causing it. Gargantuan volume—400 million tests and counting, for one type—combined with loose rules on prices have made the service a bonanza for hospitals and clinics.

KAISER TAPS MICROSOFT, ACCENTURE FOR CLOUD COMPUTING PARTNERSHIP

Oakland, California — Kaiser Permanente, the West Coast powerhouse hospital system, has now partnered with Microsoft and Accenture, the global professional-services company, to build up and scale its cloud environment.

The new cloud computing system will ultimately support Kaiser's 85,000 medical professionals and 12.4 million members.

According to Kaiser, the multiyear agreement will leverage Microsoft's Azure system to enable stronger cloud computational power and data insights readily available to care teams. This will allow members—and patients—to benefit from more timely and personalized healthcare.

Microsoft, Google and Amazon Web Services are all pushing deeper into healthcare in a battle to provide cloud computing and data storage technology to hospitals and payers. ★



COMPUTE THIS: CALIF.'S KAISER PERMANENTE HEALTH SYSTEM IS NOW USING MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSITION ITS STAFF-MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO CLOUD COMPUTING



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

Obesity: What's the big idea?

As you age, your metabolism slows—meaning that some people who never had to watch their weight now have to do so. In other words, obesity can be an issue for seniors, too. So let's talk about it!

First, obesity is usually measured by body mass index (BMI)—a scientific way of screening whether a person is underweight, overweight, or obese. Normal BMI is 18.5 to 24.9, while obese is anything 30.0 and up.

Second, physical size does not necessarily mean you're obese. The problem here is excess *body fat*, not *mass* or *weight*. A person could be physically "big" but actually *not* have excess body fat—and a "small" person could have a proportion of body fat well beyond healthy. So the problem

is what too much body fat can cause. Obesity can cause asthma, cancer and depression, and can also cause high cholesterol and heart disease.

Obesity is the result of eating too much and not getting enough physical activity. In turn, the real cause of that is whatever causes you to eat too much and not get enough physical activity. So to really treat obesity, you've got to treat its cause(s)—not simply "lose weight" or "go on a diet." You've got to look at the big picture: Eating and exercise habits, family situations, health in the community, and peer pressure.

Discouraged? Don't be! You can do this!

In other words, if you feel that the end result seems so far away, you may

as well dismiss it entirely. But, please don't! Any and every healthy step should be applauded—beginning with your own self-praise. One step at a time, one healthy decision at a time, one day at a time, reversing obesity really isn't impossible. Here's what to do:

1. Adopt a fun daily exercise routine! Take a daily walk with a friend or grandchild. As you get better at it, make it longer and/or add more exercises to it.
2. Quit noshing and stick to only three solid, healthy meals a day. Besides being better for you, you'll reinstate the family meal, too. Slow and steady weight loss is considered the best way to keep it off permanently. Avoid drastic and unrealistic diet changes.

3. Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains give you more "munching satisfaction" so you can feel full and satisfied on larger portion sizes with less calories.

Obesity is a symptom of an increasingly ailing and dysfunctional society in which material affluence and abundance—at least according to one study—actually increases unhappiness. But by taking positive steps to counteract obesity, you will get to where you should be. ★

Contact Hamaspik HomeCare's Intake at 845-503-0700 to see if you or your loved one qualifies for a home health aide, a trained professional who helps seniors with safe exercise and healthier meal preparation.

Protecting Seniors With Medical Alert Technology

Based on Need, a Range of Devices and Systems Cater to a Range of Seniors

According to the CDC, one out of every four older adults falls every year. Of those, 20 percent are serious. And falling once doubles the chance of falling again in the future.

Despite our best efforts to prevent falls, they can still occur. That's why it's vital to provide immediate help when they do—and that's where medical alert systems can be critical.

A medical alert system is a device (or set of devices) that a senior can push a button on to call an ambulance immediately after a fall or other medical emergency. Some consist of a button on a wristband or necklace. Some consist of devices with buttons on walls, night tables or kitchen counters. Some go on ceilings, walls or even floors and beds and automatically call an ambulance if the senior being watched hasn't moved in a little while—or if the senior falls down.

As a general rule, these systems serve three categories of seniors: Independent/active, aging-in-place,

and memory-impaired.

Active seniors can use mobile devices to maintain their independence as long as possible. According to a 2017 study, 48 percent of seniors' falls happen outdoors. So, mobile-based systems ensure that help is always available and that emergency personnel can quickly pinpoint an incident location.

With seniors' increasing health into later years, more seniors will need life alert buttons in case of falls. While some 75 percent of older adults plan to stay in current homes their entire lives, not having a constantly-present caregiver creates a fall risk. For these seniors, home-based alert systems can be vital. They include voice-activated (hands-free) wall buttons, automatic fall detectors, and even automated medication dispensers and reminders.

For seniors with Alzheimer's or dementia, combo mobile/home-based systems include pinpoint location tracking, activity monitoring,

automatic fall detection, and "geofencing" that alerts everyone if a senior leaves a set area.

Leading medical alert system companies include Bay Alarm Medical, MobileHelp, Medical Guardian, LifeFone, Aloe Care Health, GetSafe, and RescueTouch.

There are many medical alert

systems out there for seniors and their loved ones and caregivers to choose from. Some are home-based. Some are mobile-based. Some are both. At the end of the day, which one to choose depends primarily on the senior's health and independence needs. Ask your case manager if you have a managed long-term care (MLTC) plan, which may cover some systems. ★

Please call Hamaspik HomeCare to see if you or your loved one is eligible for a home health aide (HHA), who can provide oversight and supervision to prevent falls. A life alert button in place can help your loved one get help quickly if a fall occurs when aide is not present.

**WHY STRUGGLE ALONE
WITH CARING FOR YOUR
ELDERLY LOVED ONES?**

Call today to see if they qualify
for home care!

Call Hamaspik HomeCare's
Intake Dept. directly at

845-503-0700



בס"ד

"Thank You, Hamaspik HomeCare"

- The Homecare Agency that keeps me safe 24 hours a day -



Hamaspik HomeCare
Legendary Support, Extraordinary Care

1.855.HAMASPIK (426.2774)

INFO@HAMASPIKCARE.ORG

WWW.HAMASPIKCARE.ORG

☆ **MONROE** / 1 HAMASPIK WAY - MONROE, NY 10950

☆ **MONSEY** / 5 PERLMAN DRIVE - SPRING VALLEY, NY 10977

☆ **BORO PARK** / 1105 McDONALD AVE - BROOKLYN, NY 11230

☆ **WILLIAMSBURG** / 44 LEE AVE - BROOKLYN, NY 11211