



# The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik  
Agencies and  
General Health

NOVEMBER '21 • ISSUE NO. 195



## GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

### ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE?

A: VERY SATISFIED; B: IT'S OKAY; C: NOT SATISFIED

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



## HEALTH STAT

### PUBLIC, PRIVATE OR NO HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE U.S.

Category	Pop. percentage
Private plans (Cigna, etc.)	61.3
Public plans (Medicaid, etc.)	37.4
None	10.3

Note: The small number of people covered by both private and public plans was included in both categories.  
Source: Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, 2019



## HEALTH TIP

### HELP AVOID OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS: BE SPECIFIC

Nobody likes paying out of pocket when insurance can cover it instead. So when you call your insurance company to find out if X is covered, don't ask, "Is X covered?" Instead, ask: "Will there be any out-of-pocket costs if test X is done by provider X for reason X on date X?"

## INSIDE

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## HAMASPIK NEWS

### MARKING A BRAND-NEW GROUP HOME, AN UPLIFTING SPIRIT IS IN THE AIR

A DIFFERENT KIND OF INFLATION, THAT OF FESTIVE SCULPTURES OF BALLOONS, FILLED THE AIR OUTSIDE AND INSIDE AS HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY INAUGURATED ITS NEWEST INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA) AT THE GRAND OPENING OF THE AIRMONT BRIDERHEIM, A HELIUM-FILLED ARCH AND PILLARS CREATED A BUOYANT ATMOSPHERE THAT PERFECTLY COMPLEMENTED THE LOFTIEST ASPIRATIONS OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ALIKE.



THIS NEW HAMASPIK INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA) LOOKS LIKE YOUR STEREOTYPICAL SUBURBAN RESIDENCE BECAUSE IT IS. THE IRA IS NEW YORK'S STILL-PROGRESSIVE ANSWER TO THE MASS-HOUSING INSTITUTIONS OF OLD.

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## HEALTH NEWS

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# Services Provided by NYSHA AGENCIES

## OPWDD SERVICES

### INDIVIDUALIZED RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVE (IRA)

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

### INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES (ISS)

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

### HOME FAMILY CARE (HFC)

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

### DAY HABILITATION (DH)

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

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

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

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

### COMMUNITY HABILITATION (CH)

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

### COMMUNITY PRE VOCATIONAL

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

### SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEMP)

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

### FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (FSS)

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

### INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES (IBS)

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

### RESPITE:

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

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

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

**Sundays:** Respite program provided every Sunday.

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

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

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

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

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

### SELF-DIRECTION

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

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

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

### PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

## DOH

### EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

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

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

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

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

### NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

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

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

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

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

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

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

### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

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

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

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

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### 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

# With 'Hamaspik Medicare Select,' Hamaspik Brings Even More Services to Community

*Fully-Staffed New Division Brings Comprehensive Health Insurance to 'Dual-Eligible' Medicare-Medicaid Members*

Hamaspik has always been synonymous with “getting the people the services and supports they need.”

The agency first cemented that reputation by helping families who had children with special needs.

After many years of that, Hamaspik added Hamaspik HomeCare—bringing the agency brand of professionalism and heart to the world of seniors and others who needed aides in their own homes.

With the advent of Hamaspik Choice, New Yorkers needing managed long-term care at home got the services and supports they needed.

Now, with “Open Enrollment” running this Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, Hamaspik Medicare Select is bringing the Hamaspik brand to “dual eligibles”: New Yorkers who have both Medicare and Medicaid.

## WHAT HAMASPIK MEDICARE SELECT IS

Generally speaking, Medicare is for seniors and people with disabilities while Medicaid is for those with low income. Thus, combo Medicare/Medicaid

programs for “dual-eligibles” are for seniors and people with disabilities who have low income.

Across most U.S. states, the federal

fledged healthcare plan that covers all major and minor healthcare needs. Primary care like seeing your doctor is a given. Specialty care like orthopedics

members who speak their language. More importantly, the Yiddish also creates cultural fluency, giving members the sense that they’re VIPs who are getting service from people who get where they’re coming from.

As a federally-approved plan, the agency will boast a team of Enrollment Agents—but at Hamaspik Medicare Select, many of them boast Yiddish fluency, too.

Another one of Hamaspik Medicare Select’s defining features is the Care Manager—the highly-trained liaison who interfaces between members and caregivers, arranging appointments and allaying worries. And at Hamaspik Medicare Select, that’s all available in folksy, first-language Yiddish too.

## GETTING THE COMMUNITY ON BOARD

Mordechai Teitelbaum is Hamaspik Medicare Select’s recently-hired Director of Community Enrollments. Interviewed by the Gazette at his new Monsey office, the affable people-person declares that

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Medicare’s dual-eligible program is officially dubbed the Health Maintenance Organization Dual-eligible Special Needs Program (HMO-D-SNP). (That translates in plain English to “combo Medicare/Medicaid program for low-income seniors”!)

A number of such programs already serve the state’s general population—but none with the Hamaspik flavor.

So the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA) rolled up its sleeves and got to work. The result is Hamaspik Medicare Select.

Hamaspik Medicare Select is a full-

or podiatry is covered. Hospitalization and emergency care? Check. Hamaspik Medicare Select even covers vision.

## SPEAKING THEIR LANGUAGE

An entire team of professional staff has been hired to focus on the Jewish communities of upstate Monroe and Monsey and the downstate Brooklyn enclaves of Borough Park and Williamsburg.

From front-line Intake to back-office Member Services, personnel speak a fluent Yiddish, giving members the support they need by fellow community

## ● ► HEALTH NEWS

# Artificial Nose Cartilage Created With 3-D ‘Bioprinting’

**Edmonton, Alberta** — A team of University of Alberta researchers has discovered a way to use 3-D bioprinting technology to create custom-shaped cartilage for use in surgical procedures. The work aims to make it easier for surgeons to safely restore the features of skin cancer patients living with nasal cartilage defects after surgery.

The researchers used a specially designed hydrogel—a material similar to Jell-O—that could be mixed with cells harvested from a patient and then printed in a specific shape captured through 3-D imaging.

Over a matter of weeks, the material is cultured in a lab to become functional cartilage.

Each year upwards of three million people in North America are diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer. Of those, 40 per cent will have lesions on their noses, with many requiring surgery to remove them. As part of the procedure, many patients may have cartilage removed, leaving facial disfigurement.



**ASK THE SURGEON—HE “NOSE”:** RESEARCHERS HERE HAVE COMBINED 3-D PRINTING AND HUMAN CELLS TO MAKE REALISTIC REPLACEMENT NOSES FOR SKIN-CANCER SURVIVORS

Traditionally, surgeons would take cartilage from one of the patient’s ribs and reshape it to fit the needed

size and shape for reconstructive surgery. But the procedure comes with complications.

When surgeons would restructure a post-surgery nose, it would be straight. But upon adapting to its new environment, it goes through a period of remodeling where it warps—and visually on the face, that’s a problem.

It has to have certain mechanical properties and it has to have strength, elaborated one researcher—with the lab-made material consisting of 92 percent water at the outset, close to natural cartilage.

What’s more, researchers say their work is an example of both precision medicine and regenerative medicine. Lab-grown cartilage printed specifically for the patient can remove the risk of lung collapse, infection in the lungs and severe scarring at the site of a patient’s ribs. ★

## Hamaspik Gazette

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# Happening in Health Today

## DEEP BRAIN NEURONS ACTIVATED BY COMBO ULTRASOUND-GENETICS TOOL

**St. Louis, Missouri** — *Sonothermogenetics* refers to using the ultrasound-caused heat to stimulate a specific target deep in the brain—and thus control human behavior.

Washington University researchers, who say their work is the first of its kind, report that their new brain stimulation technique using focused ultrasound is able to turn specific types of neurons in the brain on and off and precisely control motor activity without surgical device implantation.

Researchers were able to target specific neurons in the brains of lab mice to activate specific *ion channels*, or proteins with holes that allow passage of *ions* (molecules or atoms with an electric charge). The ion channels acted as switches that turned those neurons on or off. Researchers found that focused ultrasound modulated the currents flowing

through the ion channels on average by up to 23 percent.

The research may eventually hold promise for neuron diseases like ALS.

## SCIENTISTS LEARN WHAT FUELS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM'S “NATURAL KILLERS”

**New York, New York** — If the immune system's T cells are like the surgeons in the ER, its natural killer (NK) cells are the paramedics: They arrive first and perform damage control until reinforcements arrive.

Medicine has long known that T cells use *aerobic glycolysis*, or the process of using glucose, as their “gasoline.” But now, researchers at New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) have found that NK cells are fueled by aerobic glycolysis, too. The MSK scientists found that, when encountering infection or cancer, NK cells ramp up aerobic glycolysis about five days before T cells do.

The findings are relevant to

ongoing efforts to use NK cells as immunotherapy in people with cancer, say researchers—as NK cells grown outside the body and then introduced as cancer-attackers will need the “gas” to mount an effective attack.

## WAKING JUST ONE HOUR EARLIER CUTS DEPRESSION RISK BY 23 PERCENT

**Boulder, Colorado** — A major new review of personal genetic data for 840,000 volunteers now suggests that a person's risk of major depression could be reduced by as much as 23 percent by simply waking up just one hour earlier.

The study, conducted by researchers at University of Colorado Boulder and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, represents some of the strongest evidence yet that chronotype—a person's propensity to sleep at a certain time—influences depression risk.

It's also among the first studies to quantify just how much, or little,

change is required to influence mental health.

Previous observational studies have shown that night owls are as much as twice as likely to suffer from depression as early risers. But because mood disorders themselves can disrupt sleep patterns, researchers have had a hard time deciphering what causes what.

## NEW CANCER DRUG SUCCESSFULLY BLOCKS HARD- TO-REACH GENE

**Thousand Oaks, California** — West Coast-based biotechnology firm Amgen has successfully produced a drug that can access and deactivate an elusive gene called KRAS.

The breakthrough is significant because a mutated KRAS gene is a critical part of many lung, colon and pancreatic tumors. Earlier drug-therapy efforts to target KRAS were stymied.

In early summer, Amgen's new drug Lumakras was approved by the FDA for treatment of specific forms of non-small cell lung cancer. The drug, also known as sotorasib, is the result of recent breakthroughs in chemistry that have allowed scientists to target a hidden groove on the mutant KRAS protein.

According to the FDA, KRAS mutations have long been considered resistant to drug therapy, representing a true unmet need for patients with certain types of cancer.

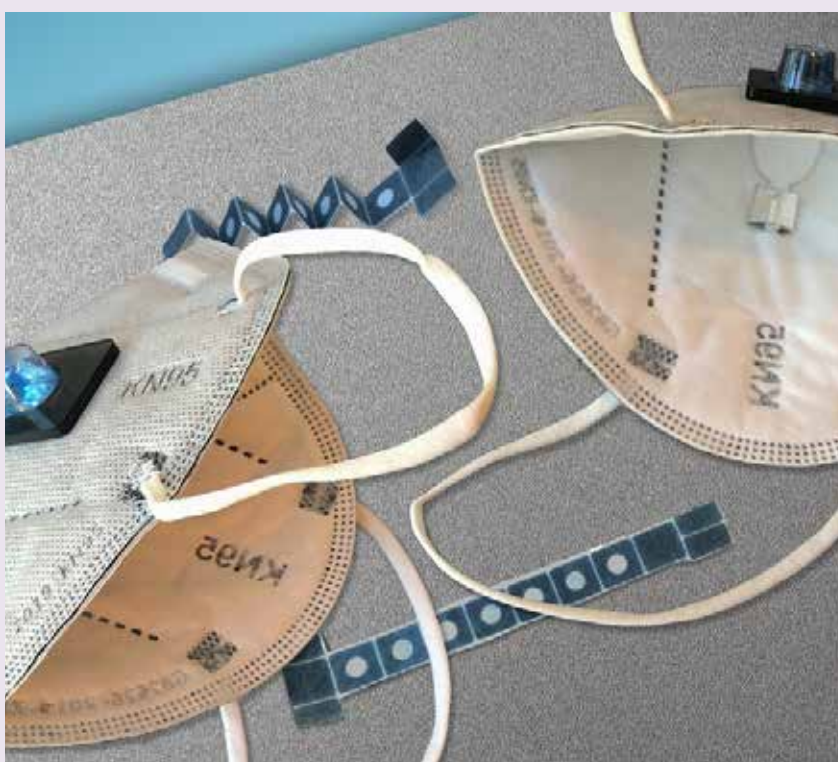
Amgen will charge \$17,900 per month for Lumakras at list price.

## NEW EXPERIMENTAL FACE MASK CAN DETECT COVID-19 INFECTION

**Cambridge, Massachusetts** — The brainiacs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) came up with a good reason to slap a mask on your face—and one that we can actually all agree on: A COVID-detecting mask.

The masks are embedded with tiny, disposable sensors that can be fitted into other face masks and could also be adapted to detect other viruses. The sensors are based on freeze-dried cellular machinery that the research team has previously developed for use in paper diagnostics for viruses such as Ebola and Zika.

The prototype face mask, invented by MIT engineering students, can diagnose the person wearing the mask with Covid-19 within about 90 minutes. The technology can also be used to design wearable sensors for a variety of other pathogens, toxic chemicals and other threats. ★



FACE IT—WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED: MIT'S NEW MASKS HAVE BUILT-IN VIRUS DETECTORS

## COMING SOON: AN IMPLANTED PACEMAKER THAT DISSOLVES AFTER USE

**Chicago, Illinois** — They already have a stent, or scaffolding for failing heart blood vessels, that dissolves and disappears after a time. Now, they've taken that concept and applied it to something bigger, better, more complex and even more life-changing: a dissolving pacemaker.

A pacemaker is one of the most common implants. It's a permanent device surgically placed under the skin of the chest. Powered by batteries, it connects to the heart via wires called leads. It helps control certain abnormal heart rhythms by sending electrical pulses to the heart muscle.

This past summer, researchers at Chicago's Northwestern University reported early success with a temporary heart pacemaker that simply disintegrates when it's no longer needed. ★



בס"ד

~~"A picture is worth a thousand words"~~

# Sometimes, a few words are needed to get the full picture!

## Progress Notes 9/6/21

Note#000789

Supervisors and Care Managers discussed the obstacles to help client's family receive services for their **children**. Client is struggling with her **mental health** and is frustrated that she isn't receiving more assistance with her children and household. An action plan was developed to ensure that children receive appropriate services and Care Manager will reach out to client to continue developing rapport and encourage her to consider **therapy**.

Actual notes\* of the work our **CARE MANAGERS** do with our **clients** daily

(\* with slight modifications to protect client identity)

Note#000588

Client is continuing to respond well with Suboxone treatment post **detox**. The **hoarding** issue has reached a serious level where hygiene is threatened. Care Manager was able to connect with a government assistance **resource** providing mold remediation and access-to-home modifications which will help with the above as well with client's difficult **mobility** issues.

Note#000298

Client expressed that he has no extended family support—coming from a **dysfunctional family**. Client isn't an American citizen, and his green card will expire in one year, and he would like assistance reapplying, or help with gaining citizenship. Client isn't satisfied with his current **therapist** and would like to find someone new. Additionally, client is struggling financially, and would like assistance finding a **new job**. Client noted his **strength** of "I live in the moment. I'm happy, and I can take care of shopping and arranging things." Care Manager will assist client with his citizenship, therapist, and job.

Note#000752

Care Manager called **psych-hospital** to check in with client. Client was pleased with the call. Client sounds a lot better; it seems that the medication reset was helpful. Client expressed sadness with his inability to engage in **prayers** properly since he's there. Care Manager arranged for the Chaplain visit him on Friday. Client was very thankful to meet the Chaplain and be able to pray properly.

Care Management is available **FREE** to all adults with NYS Medicaid who are battling mental illness

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

  
**INTEGRATED**  
HEALTH

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



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# Historic: Hamaspik of Rockland County Inaugurates Airmont Briderheim

*Newest Hamaspik Special-Needs Residence Joins Agency Group Homes Housing Dozens Across Three Counties*

The weather was balmy. The sky was blue. The crowd was ebullient. For the historic moment about to unfold, the atmosphere could not have been more perfect. It was the long-awaited opening of a new Hamaspik group home. It was the official inauguration of the Airmont Briderheim: Hamaspik of Rockland County's long-awaited but project-duration-record-breaking new Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA).

Hamaspik staff members on site to mark the occasion, many of them having long directly worked with parents of individuals with intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD), knew full well the import of the day—only second to residents' parents themselves.

Those fathers and mothers, whose sons with special needs would shortly be taking up residence at 81 North Airmont Rd. in Suffern, practically overflowed with gratitude for the event at hand.

Their boys would finally have a home of their own: A full-staffed, 24/7 supervised residential facility with all the creature comforts of a functional mainstream private home plus all the proactive yet discreet safety features required by a state-certified IRA. The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Hamaspik's public-sector partner, would have it no other way—and neither would Hamaspik, which always overdoes it practically, tastefully and judiciously.

The event officially began at 10:30 a.m. as Mr. Aaron A. Schwartz, the Airmont Briderheim's freshly-appointed Manager, welcomed guests arriving in twos and threes for a fresh catered breakfast reception.

Given new post-pandemic realities, vaccinated attendees were seen washing hands, while masks dotted the crowd and temperature scanners were on hand.

Those guests, primarily Hamaspik staff members, included the following Hamaspik of Rockland County leaders: Director of Residential Services Moshe Sabel, IRA Maintenance Manager Israel Katina, Director of Operations Shlomo Kornbluh, and Director of Development Nathan Fried. That quartet in particular had spent years working on realizing the new-IRA dream, from scouting out potential locations and narrowing down possible candidates through finalizing purchase, planning and overseeing necessary renovations, vetting and



**HOME SWEET GROUP HOME:** WITH ITS BRAND-NEW AIRMONT BRIDERHEIM, HAMASPIK OF ROCKLAND COUNTY MAKES HISTORY ONCE AGAIN



**OPENING DOORS** MEYER WERTHEIMER INSTALLS THE HOME'S FIRST MEZUZAH



**EXECUTIVE ACTION** HAMASPIK ROCKLAND'S EXECUTIVE DIR. JOEL FREUND



**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT** BRIDERHEIM MANAGER MR. AARON A. SCHWARTZ



**TAKING IT FROM THE TOP** SHLOMO KORNBLUH, ASHER KATZ, YOEL BERNATH AND JOEL FREUND LISTEN INTENTLY AS MR. WERTHEIMER REMEMBERS THE PAST AND LOOKS AHEAD



**REGIONAL LEADERSHIP** JOEL FREUND SHARES THE HOME'S JOURNEY TO REALITY

hiring the right staff and finally, putting out that long-overdue front-door welcome mat.

Other guests included Hamaspik of Rockland County Executive Director Joel Freund, Hamaspik of Orange County Executive Director Moses Wertheimer, Hamaspik Choice and Tri-County Care

head Yoel Bernath, Hamaspik HomeCare Executive Director Asher Katz and Hamaspik founder Meyer Wertheimer himself, all of whom had lent hands of experience and expertise in ironing out the lengthy new-IRA process.

Also in attendance was Mordechai

Neuman, Director of Hamaspik Rockland's trailblazing Integrated Health behavioral-health supports for adults, along with several members of his team.

Most important of all were the fathers and mothers of the gentlemen who

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 >>



# Your child deserves a childhood.

(And you deserve a break.)

Comfort Health offers a variety of services that help you manage the challenge of a child with difficult diagnoses--and live your best life.

- Care Management
- Community Habilitation
- Respite Services
- Prevocational Services
- Family & Caregiver Support



Do it for your child. Do it for yourself.

4102 14th Ave  
Brooklyn, NY  
718.408.5400

58 Route 59  
Monsey, NY  
845.503.0400

1 Hamaspik Way  
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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



## The Face of Good Outings



**MASK YOUR AIDE** ERRING TO THE SIDE OF PRECAUTION, HAMASPIK KINGS' "DAY HABBERS" BUILD SELF-CONFIDENCE AT A LOCAL BUILD-A-BEAR, HYGIENIC FACE COVERINGS AND ALL



**STRENGTH, BUILDING** YEHUDAH WORKS THOSE UPPER-BODY MUSCLES



**BOWLED OVER:** AVRUMI (T) IS ON A ROLL; HERSHY WITH DSP MOSHE SCHWARTZ (B)

## Recharging With Inspiration And Entertainment

### *Hamaspik of Kings County Treated Employees to a Full Day Event of Learning and Fun*

In the magnificent ballrooms on the Saint Charles cruise, employees at Hamaspik of Kings County enjoyed a full day—revitalizing their promise of providing even better services.

With top-of-the-line speakers, entertainers, and caterers, The Core—a combination of their annual state of the organization and staff appreciation event—both inspired and entertained.

Mr. Naftali Tessler, Chief of Staff, started off the event with his powerful, penetrating words. Taking the employees on a journey through Hamaspik of Kings County's growth over the years, he quoted the founder, R' Meyer Wertheimer, on what attributed to it. He outlined the accelerated growth of the past four years, during which the organization literally quadrupled their programs, services, and clients!

Mr. Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director, spoke with passion what Hamaspik promises to provide for each client and their family. "We provide hope, not just services," he said with feeling. Exploring concepts such as compassion, trustworthiness, competence, employee value, and adaptability, he drove the points home with inspiring examples and anecdotes that touched everyone present and

demanded of oneself to keep growing along with the organization.

Harav Meir Tzibel, from the prominent *rabbanim* in Williamsburg, spoke with fiery fervor, exhorting each employee to continue bringing their heart into everything they do. R' Meir pointed out that the name Hamaspik's numerical value equals *hartz* (heart in yiddish) portraying the organization's very strength.

Mr. Yossi Blumenfeld, CEO of GCNY marketing, gave an outsider/insider perspective on the connection and heart Hamaspik has, something that magnetizes people, in a way that no marketing can ever. He spoke about the human interaction he sees up close as our lead marketing agency, and how we are constantly growing yet remain connected with our clients.

R' Aron Aryeh Eisenberg, renowned speaker, inspired all with his heartfelt words about what our work actually means for clients although often not expressed. He called upon employees to realize the impact of their every action and interaction. Being a competent employee translates into forging on, no matter what, and continuously learning how to serve clients better.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 >>

## The Hamaspik School—Taking Education to Heart

### *Raising the Level of Education for Children with Special Needs*

Walking down the magnificent hallways of The Hamaspik School, the precious melody of young children singing, chanting, and learning fills the air. With a staff of top-tier educators—trailblazers in their respective fields—children ages 5 to 9 with Down syndrome are learning and growing more than ever.

"We want our students to enjoy learning, accomplish their academic goals, and develop their life skills," says Mr. Yehuda Spangelet, administrator of The Hamaspik School. Indeed, everything revolves around helping the children reach their potential. In addition to the phenomenal directors, principals, teachers, and paras, the school team includes on-site occupational therapists, speech therapists, physical therapists, and clinical and behavioral consultants,

so that every aspect of each child's development is addressed.

In true Hamaspik fashion, the school was founded in response to requests from the parents of children attending Aleph Bais Center, Hamaspik's acclaimed afterschool program. When the parents saw the tremendous amount their children were learning in just a few hours, they realized how much untapped potential was waiting to be fulfilled. And so, The Hamaspik School was founded.

"It's a tremendous privilege to provide our community with a fully-licensed, professional school for children with Down syndrome," says Mr. Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director at Hamaspik of Kings County. "It's incredible that these children can now receive a solid education that pushes them to grow and thrive." ★



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## With New Private Spaces, Acclimating to Optimal Personal Attention

*Residents of Orange County's Hamaspiik Way Inzerheim Thriving Under More Personalized Apartments and Living Quarters of Newly Reconfigured Group Home*

Nothing makes your place yours more than *your* touch: Those preferences in colors, shades, styles, décor, furnishings and that endless array of personal knickknacks that make your space, well, *yours*.

After all, what makes your home *your* home more than all those things that shout *you*?

Visit any bedroom around the Hamaspiik Way Inzerheim, Hamaspiik of Orange County's newly-revamped group residence (formerly known as the Dinev Inzerheim), and you'll see each individual's unmistakable personal touch—from unique linens and bedspreads to handpicked furniture items and, naturally, those handmade framed pieces of art on the wall.

Same thing for all the common areas of each of four "sub-homes" into which the Inzerheim has now been divided: They are really not that common at all. In contrast to a standard group residence

featuring large common areas shared by all, like living and dining areas, the new Inzerheim is primarily centered on this: Privacy and individuality. And nothing says privacy and individuality more than your own home.

For the young women residing at Hamaspiik Way, that privacy has given them the space to open up, blossom, flourish and grow, says Mrs. Fisher, Manager of two of the four "sub-homes." (The other, equally-qualified Manager is Mrs. Heiman, like Mrs. Fisher a longtime Inzerheim veteran.)

"Everyone has their own private space," she elaborates, "and staff has much more time to give each individual private attention."

So what's the best thing about the new living quarters?

Both staff and residents feel that "this is their home," replies Mrs. Fisher, "and they *want* it to be their home."

And nothing says "your own home" more than privacy and individuality. ★

## New Community Liaison for Hamaspiik's Medicare Managed Care Programs Unites Care Managers and Members

*Answering Questions and Solving Problems, Cultural Concierge Joel Polatsek Speaks Everyone's Language*

If people who speak Yiddish are new to you, you just may not do when a Yiddish-speaker says, "Nu?"

That richly-nuanced one-syllable phrase, reportedly originating in centuries-ago Russian, basically translates to, "Well?" But depending on how, when and by who it's used, it can mean a whole lot of other things, including, "So?", "Hurry up!", "That's inappropriate!" and, "Stop that right now!"

It's also used to communicate, "I'm-in-the-middle-of-my-religious-Jewish-prayers-during-which-conversation-is-prohibited."

So when a non-Yiddish-speaking Hamaspiik employee calling a serviced senior kept hearing, "Nu...? Nu...?" when he called, confusion reigned.

But a call to Joel Polatsek explained away all of that.

As Hamaspiik's new Community

Liaison, Mr. Polatsek is not just fluent in Yiddish and English but also conversant in both worlds. He interfaces between the Care Managers of several Hamaspiik Medicare Managed Care programs and their many members in the diverse communities served by those agencies.

At the same time, notes Hamaspiik VP of Business Development Moshe Gluck, Hamaspiik boasts several native Spanish-speaking staff targeting the Spanish population.

Mr. Polatsek will also eventually oversee additional Liaisons for communities across the greater Hudson Valley and Downstate.

Mr. Polatsek is the community's "insider connection" to those agencies, should they feel misunderstood or frustrated in any way. "You want to get things resolved, call me: I'm the middleman!" he declares. "You can reach out to me for any issues!" ★

## Keeping it In-House



**NO PLACE LIKE HOME:** AT HAMASPIK OF ORANGE COUNTY'S CATHERINE GROUP HOME, "FEELING AT HOME" COMES IN THE FORMS OF: BUILDING A LEGO HOUSE; GETTING ALL DRESSED UP FOR AN INFORMAL PHOTO SHOOT; AND SETTING OUT AN IMPRESSIVE SUKKAH

## Picking Winners



**FRUITS OF THEIR LABORS:** THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY MEN'S DAY HAB OUT COLLECTING APPLES (BOTTOM RIGHT), WEIGHING IN (BOTTOM LEFT), AND CELEBRATING THEIR MANUAL EXPLOITS WHILE OUT STANDING IN THE FIELD



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

# Investing in Your Own Backyard

*On-Site Sensory Playground at Rockland Men's Day Hab Gives Gentlemen Plenty of Accessible Therapeutic Stimulation*



**WELL, "WATER" YOU KNOW?** ENJOYING THE RELAXING BENEFITS OF NATURAL WHITE NOISE

If it looks like a lot of thought, time, surgical planning and expense went into it, you'd be right—because at a sensory playground, that's exactly what Hamaspik did.

In the backyard of Hamaspik of Rockland County's Men's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) building, that is.

Upon entering the bright, attractive area that all but shouts fun, you might even think you're in the family area of a contemporary amusement park. (Yeah,

it's that good!)

What once was a drab, almost-repellent strip of concrete, dirt and grass underwent what one might dub the backyard edition of an extreme makeover—leaving in its wake the kind of outdoor play space you'd ordinarily only see in public parks nestled in the most affluent of suburbs.

Accessibility to the space is provided from all sides. A towering and freshly-painted outdoors wooden staircase



**HOP TO IT** AN ACTIVE GAME OF BACKYARD HOPSCOTCH IS WELL UNDERWAY THIS FINE DAY

descends from all floors straight into the yard. For individuals who use wheelchairs, a ramp that wraps two sides of the building makes the yard accessible from the basement. Paths straddling both sides of the structure are at ground level front to back, granting direct access from the front parking lot.

The first three of the universal five senses—sight, sound, touch, taste and smell—are irresistibly and harmoniously addressed here. Across the inviting landscape, therapeutic stimulation abounds.

That stimulation begins from the ground up with weather-proof soft outdoor foam underfoot for much of the backyard expanse, aiding in the maintenance and improvement of balance. Fencing decked in deep-green faux vegetation, supported by a phalanx of real live fir trees, form the yard's perimeter, creating a sacred space of pleasant privacy not unlike a Japanese garden that invites the visitor to find himself there. A wooden bridge, rising and falling over rich blue matting invoking the endless sea, sparks crossings into lands of imagination. Colorful benches marked by cutout images of leaves and acorns create spaces for relaxing rest. A sizable sand table serves up ample opportunity for tactile free play.

Perhaps crowning the backyard-reimagination project is the waterfall.

Organically tucked into one corner of the yard yet lending a commanding presence, the looming fixture features whitewater relaxingly rushing over shelves of real rock to collect in a bed of smooth large stones. A state-of-the-art concealed pump and filter system constantly circulates that water to keep things flowing. Evoking those liberating outdoor mountain hikes, it's not

surprisingly a Day Hab favorite, with the gentlemen regularly flocking to its side to unwind.

Take that situation and toss in a generous scoop of summer sunshine—and you've got the stimulatory, therapeutic experience that is the Day Hab's sensory playground. For the gentlemen of Hamaspik of Rockland County's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program, this cutting-edge sensory playground is quite literally in their very own backyard. And this past summer, the "boys" have spent a good few afternoons hanging out in that playground for the senses.

Yitzchok, of the Day Hab's longtime regulars, likes hopping the hopscotch game, reports equally-longtime Manager and Hamaspik pillar Pinchas Knopfler. That age-old playground game, said to originate in the Roman era of ancient England as a footwork-improving training exercise for legionnaires, is still working its magic right here, as Yitzchok (and others) regularly try their hands at squarely placing their feet and completing quite the intricate feat.

Just behind that is a long line laid out on the matting that is anything but straight. Inviting backyard-goers to give it a try, the line challenges visitors to traverse its narrow and winding length without falling off or otherwise misplacing a step—creating further hybrid opportunities for fun and physical development. Were law-enforcement officers present, quips Mr. Knopfler, individuals might find themselves cited for demonstrable inability to walk in a straight line. But they manage to do it anyhow, he notes.

But as far as Daniel, Dovid, Zalmy and others are concerned, knowingly attests Mr. Knopfler, it's the waterfall for them. ★

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● ► TRI-COUNTY CARE NEWS

## Hamaspik of Rockland County Inaugurates Airmont Briderheim

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

would soon be moving in for good. They were on hand to quite literally pound in the final nails of the construction project: the ceremonial installment of the faith-based *mezuzah* scroll holders on the doorposts of their sons' soon-to-be occupied bedrooms.

### Marking the Day

With a substantial crowd present, various Hamaspik leaders—from founder Mr. Wertheimer on down—were honored with installing a *mezuzah* on one of the home's many doorways. (The bedrooms themselves would get “*mezuzahed*” by parents later.) Attendees then repaired to the dining room and living room, where round tables awaited.

Serving as Master of Ceremonies, Shlomo Kornbluh took the podium next to the head table to formally welcome the seated assemblage.

First thanking God for the historic moment, Mr. Kornbluh noted that the Airmont Briderheim is Hamaspik of Rockland County's first new residence in over a decade—and paying homage to the several key staff members whose ongoing efforts were instrumental in its realization. With that, he introduced Joel Freund.

The Hamaspik Rockland chief executive recalled the painstaking documentation required before

the project could even be initially approved, followed by working with a contractor and then by a phenomenon we all know now as COVID. But with the pandemic's first wave passing, new obstacles arose—the overcoming

of which could not have happened without the invaluable interventions of State Sen. Simcha Eichenstein, long a friend both of special-needs parents and the agencies that support them like Hamaspik. Mr. Freund also thanked Home Manager Schwartz for his dedication and hard work—noting that Mr. Schwartz's relatively rapid rise from frontline Direct Support Professional

(DSP) to Manager proves that quality work is always rewarded at Hamaspik.

Mr. Kornbluh then called upon Meyer Wertheimer to speak.

Invoking the theme of gratitude as symbolized by the biblical bringing of “First Fruits,” Mr. Wertheimer connected that ancient concept to the contemporary residential inauguration—saying that both involved looking back at the recent past and being thankful for it. He also mentioned the obstacles Hamaspik had encountered since opening in Rockland County—hurdles which the agency has long since overcome. He ended with blessings for all.

Resuming his place at the lectern, Mr. Kornbluh then surprised the Hamaspik founder with a customized gift—a glass-and-steel “tree” with pendant-mounted photos of each Hamaspik of Rockland County group home dangling from its branches. For the founder of an agency that began with but one group home, the gift truly represented the fruits of his labors—and of the entire employee body that joined the Hamaspik family since.

A short while later, the fathers of the gentlemen slated to take up residence in the Airmont Briderheim made their rounds of their sons' rooms. In their hands were *mezuzos*, hammers and nails.

But in their hearts was something hands cannot hold.

For them, it was the close of one trying chapter of their lives—and the beginning of a redemptive new one. ★



**A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION** DIR. OF OPERATIONS SHLOMO KORNBLUH SHARES SOME WORDS



**SWEET DREAMS** A BRAND-NEW BEDROOM



**DINING IN** A ROOMY DINING/LIVING AREA

## Recharging With Inspiration And Entertainment

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

After a few hours of education and inspiration, all employees transferred to a smaller boat for a cruise on the Raritan Bay, accompanied by light refreshments. Upon their return to the Saint Charles cruise, employees had a great time choosing a personal gift from the display of beautiful, high-end watches while a watch-maker adjusted the sizing to whoever needed.

What followed thereafter was hours of entertainment over a delectable five-course meal.

The Berko brothers provided their signature musical experience, with the highlight being a song newly composed for Hamaspik by the renowned Mutty Illowitz. The comedic duo, Hilly Hill and Yoely Lebowitz, had everyone laughing with their combined wit and humor.

A video presentation featuring every aspect of Hamaspik, had Mr.

Wertheimer expressing how each department uniquely impacts clients, coming full circle like a loop. The video showed moments in a “regular” day at the offices, and all the programs. The game show that followed, led by Mr. Boruch Perlowitz, had each employee frantically trying to answer the questions about Hamaspik of Kings County. The camaraderie was electric and fun. After a full day of inspiration and entertainment, *badchan R'* Feivel Klein wrapped up the event beautifully, highlighting the key takeaways from each part of the day.

“I want to thank Mr. Yossi Moskowitz for working tirelessly to arrange this incredible day of inspiration,” said Mr. Wertheimer, Executive Director at Hamaspik of Kings County. “It was a real learning experience. Seeing how each employee seeks to learn more about how to help more, showed me once again what a great team we have.

## Hamaspik Medicare Select

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

his agency will be “the experts that you call for all Medicare questions.”

Towards that end, Mr. Teitelbaum has hired a team of licensed insurance agents (as required by the state). In turn, his team has been reaching out to well-established local M.D.s and other caregivers in the agency's targeted communities—as well as to the clinics and medical centers caring for those communities.

“They want to work with us,” he says—resulting in Hamaspik Medicare Select members to get “amazing benefits.”

With that outstanding network of providers available, Hamaspik Medicare Select stands poised to provide members the care they need from the familiar caregivers they want.

“We can compete with other providers not just because we're heimish,” Mr. Teitelbaum continues, using the proprietary Yiddish phrase that at once means folksy, familiar and one-of-ours, “but because we're also really professional.” ★

*Hamaspik Medicare Select is a Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan (HMO D-SNP) with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Hamaspik Medicare Select depends on contract renewal. This information is not a complete description of benefits. For a complete list of covered services and other important information, review your Evidence of Coverage or call 888-426-2774. For TTY users, please call 711.*

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It's already weeks after the event, but I keep hearing back from employees how the inspiration carried through to their every-day services through the

multiple initiatives we set up and their commitment to grow. I feel privileged to have such amazing people with us, and I'm proud to be a part of this.” ★



# The Autism Update

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

## WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM DISABILITY INCLUSION GROUP REACHES 1ST MAJOR MILESTONE

**London, England** — The Valuable 500, the World Economic Forum's corporate disability-inclusion project, has now reached its first major goal: recruiting the active participation of 500 global corporations.

As members of the Valuable 500, said companies are now officially committed to increasing the number of employees with disabilities in particular, and improving life with disability in general.

The Valuable 500 currently counts such global heavyweights as Apple, Google, Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, and Sony among its ranks. The group collectively represents over \$8 trillion in annual revenue and over 20 million global employees.

Each has publicly pledged to promote disability inclusion in various ways—including ad advertising campaigns featuring people with disabilities, producing adaptive products, or increasing disability employment opportunities.

## AUTISM-DETECTING CANVAS DX SOFTWARE SYSTEM FDA- APPROVED FOR MARKETING

**Palo Alto, California** — There are a number of high-tech devices and systems available for the ongoing detection and treatment of autism. Now, meet one of the newest.

Northern California-based Cognoa, a pediatric behavioral health technology company, recently snagged FDA approval to market its Canvas Dx diagnostic system.

The system, for usage by medical professionals only, consists of three main components: a mobile app for caregivers and parents to answer questions about behavior problems and to upload videos of their child; a video analysis portal that allows manufacturer-trained and certified specialists to view and analyze uploaded videos of patients; and a health care provider portal that is intended for a health care provider to enter answers to pre-loaded questions about behavior problems, track the information provided by parents or caregivers and review a report of the results.

## TEST ANALYZES RNA IN SALIVA TO BOOST AUTISM DETECTION

**Syracuse, New York** — An autism saliva test dubbed Clarifi ASD was recently granted Breakthrough Device designation by the FDA. Clarifi ASD was developed by upstate New York's Quadrant Biosciences, a developer of novel molecular diagnostic tools.

Clarifi ASD is indicated for use in assessing the likelihood that a child has autism spectrum disorder (ASD) based on an evaluation of RNA epigenetic biomarkers in the saliva sample.

The test has the potential to substantially increase the efficiency of ASD identification, and lead to more rapid referral for early intervention, according to Quadrant.

"We are thrilled to have received this important designation, and look forward to working collaboratively with the FDA to quickly advance this much-needed technology," said Quadrant CEO Richard Uhlig. The test will "ultimately help millions of children and families get appropriate treatment faster," he said.

## FEDERAL GOV'T GETS NEW NATIONAL AUTISM COORDINATOR

**Washington, D.C.** — There is a technical difference between "Coordinator" and "Acting Coordinator." But practically, there's none—both mean that there is someone in charge.

That's good news for the federal office of National Autism Coordinator—a role recently vacated by Ann E. Wagner, Ph.D., who retired after over 20 years of public service. Dr. Wagner has now been replaced by Susan A. Daniels, Ph.D., America's new Acting National Autism Coordinator.

The National Autism Coordinator role was created by 2014's Autism CARES Act. The Coordinator oversees national autism spectrum disorder research, services, and support activities across the federal government—following the strategic plan developed by the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC).

A key function of the Coordinator is to ensure that autism-related initiatives are not unnecessarily

duplicated across the government's numerous departments and agencies.

## COURT ALLOWS ANTI-MASK LAWSUIT AGAINST PA.-BASED DISNEY STORE TO PROCEED

**Whitehall, Pennsylvania** — For American kids unable to visit the storied Disney theme parks in person, the Walt Disney Co.'s themed Disney Stores nationwide may be a reasonable facsimile.

But for a Pennsylvania boy with autism who couldn't keep on an anti-Covid mask last summer due to his

disability, the Lehigh Valley Mall's Disney Store was hardly a "Magic Kingdom."

The boy's mother sued Disney for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) after employees denied him entry. Disney filed for dismissal. But U.S. District Judge Joseph F. Leeson denied Disney's motion.

The allegations cover all of the elements of a valid ADA claim, according to the judge. The ruling allows the case to move forward and attorneys for each side to begin gathering evidence. ★

## PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LESS ABLE TO IDENTIFY FLEETING ANGER, OTHER FACIAL EXPRESSIONS



**NOT GETTING IT:** THOSE WITH AUTISM LESS LIKELY TO PICK UP OBVIOUS EXPRESSIONS

**Birmingham, England** — If an expression of joy or pain were to quickly cross one's face, a person with autism is less likely to catch it, says new research at the University of Birmingham.

The research says that the ability of people with autism to accurately identify facial expressions is affected by the production speed and intensity of those expressions.

In particular, people with

autism tend to be less able to accurately identify anger from other facial expressions, researchers found.

The study had 60 participants, about half with autism, try to identify emotions from a series of moving images made up of dots. The images were displayed at a range of emotional intensities by varying the amount of movement in each expression, and at a variety of speeds. ★



HEALTH NEWS

# Rockland’s Montefiore Nyack Hospital Acquires ROSA Knee Replacement Robot

## High-Tech Surgeon-Supporting System Boosts Regional Healthcare, Outcomes

**Rockland NY** - There are only two hospitals in Rockland County—making medical trips to “top” hospitals in Manhattan and elsewhere, and their highly-sought-after specialists and complex procedures, not uncommon for Rockland residents.

But now, Hudson Valley residents have another good reason to stay local—at least if they want the latest technology deployed in repairing their failing knee joints.

Rockland’s very own Montefiore Nyack Hospital, itself acquired and upgraded by the Bronx-based Montefiore Health System in June 2018, upgraded



**NEW TECH KEEPS ROCKLAND ROLLING: MONTEFIORE NYACK’S NEWEST SYSTEM**

its technology recently after its Joint

Replacement Center acquired its first-ever Robotic Surgical Assistant (ROSA) Knee system.

That multi-million-dollar knee replacement system is manufactured by Warsaw, Indiana-based Zimmer Biomet. It helps orthopedic surgeons create a pre-operative surgery plan that is personalized to each patient’s unique knee anatomy. This helps ensure more-precise implant placement and incision points for optimal results.

Unlike other robotic surgical systems, ROSA Knee does not actually perform any surgery on its own. A system-trained human surgeon is on site at all times.

According to an explanatory hospital press release, ROSA Knee first creates a detailed 3D image of the patient’s knee, then uses a camera and optical trackers to know exactly how the knee is positioned during surgery, even if it fractionally moves. “This information, combined with your surgeon’s skill, helps to position your implant precisely based on your unique anatomy,” read the release.

The ROSA Knee system hit the market in January of 2019. According to financial filings, in 2019, Zimmer Biomet sold \$1.6 billion of its total knee technology in the Americas alone.

### HEALTHY EATING

## Potatoes

<p><b>INTERMEDIATE</b></p> <p>PREP TIME: <b>0:20</b></p> <p>READY IN: <b>1:20</b></p>	<p><b>YIELDS: 12-15 SERVINGS</b></p> <h3>Potato Kugel</h3> <p>GOOD OLD POTATO KUGEL</p> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 potatoes</li><li>• 1 onion</li><li>• 6 eggs - beaten</li><li>• 1/2 cup seltzer</li><li>• 1 cup oil</li><li>• 1 tablespoon salt</li><li>• 1/2 teaspoon black pepper</li></ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preheat oven to 550°</li><li>• Heat the oil</li><li>• Peel potatoes and onion</li><li>• Grate the potatoes and onion in a food processor or blender</li><li>• Mix the eggs, salt, pepper, and seltzer in well</li><li>• Add the hot oil</li><li>• Pour into a 9 x 13 baking pan</li><li>• Bake at 550° for half hour</li><li>• Lower oven to 350° and continue baking for an additional 30 minutes</li></ul> <p><b>CHEF’S TIP:</b></p> <p>After peeling, keep potatoes in water to prevent potatoes from browning</p> <p><b>BENEFITS:</b></p> <p>Everyone thinks of potatoes as bad food, but in fact, potatoes are full of vitamins. The potato’s fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and vitamin B6 content, coupled with its lack of cholesterol, all support heart health. Potatoes also contain significant amounts of fiber.</p>
<p><b>EASY</b></p> <p>PREP TIME: <b>0:10</b></p> <p>READY IN: <b>0:25</b></p>	<p><b>YIELDS: 20-25 PIECES</b></p> <h3>Fluffy Potato Latkes</h3> <p>PERFECT LATKES FOR ALL YEAR ‘ROUND</p> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 potatoes</li><li>• 4 eggs</li><li>• Salt to taste</li><li>• Black pepper</li><li>• 1/2 cup flour</li><li>• 1/2 tsp baking powder</li><li>• Oil for frying</li></ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peel potatoes</li><li>• Shred the potatoes</li><li>• Mix all ingredients together</li><li>• In a large frying pan, heat oil</li><li>• Pour 1/4 cup or 2 heaping tablespoon to form latkes</li><li>• Fry for five minutes then flip and fry for additional 2-3 minutes</li></ul>
<p><b>EASY</b></p> <p>PREP TIME: <b>0:15</b></p> <p>READY IN: <b>1:15</b></p>	<p><b>YIELDS: 8-10 SERVINGS</b></p> <h3>Heartwarming Potato Soup</h3> <p>HEARTWARMING FULFILLING SOUP GREAT FOR ANY OCCASION</p> <p><b>INGREDIENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 large onion - diced</li><li>• 4 cloves garlic - crushed</li><li>• 8 potatoes - cubed</li><li>• 1lb carrots - shredded</li><li>• 2 tablespoon corn starch</li><li>• 1 tablespoon consommé soup mix</li><li>• Salt to taste</li><li>• Dash black pepper</li><li>• Water</li></ul> <p><b>DIRECTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In an 8-10 quart pot, sauté onions and garlic for about 5 minutes or till translucent</li><li>• Stir in potatoes and carrots</li><li>• Dissolve the corn starch in 1 cup of cold water, stir well</li><li>• Add water, just about to cover the potatoes</li><li>• Add salt, pepper and soup mix</li><li>• Stir constantly to prevent burning</li></ul>



# Public Health and Policy News

who received a clinical diagnosis of a flu-like illness during a 2009 H1N1 outbreak in Iceland.

“To our knowledge, our project is the first major, rigorous study to individually link passively-collected cell phone metadata with actual public health data,” said study author Prof. Ymir Vigfusson. “We’ve shown that it’s possible to do so without comprising privacy and that our method could potentially provide a useful tool to help monitor and control infectious disease outbreaks.”

## CALIFORNIA INSURER SUED FOR NOT REGULARLY UPDATING DOCTOR LISTS

**San Diego, California** — If you’re an insurance company, you’re going to have thousands of doctors and specialists who take your insurance—meaning, they’re “in-network.”

However, what if your list of doctors and specialists—your “provider directory”—is not up-to-date, so that members go see a doctor they *think* is in-network but actually is *not*?

So-called “ghost networks,” or provider directories that contain many more listings than actual in-network providers, are illegal under federal law, as well as various state laws nationwide. California insurer Molina Healthcare is now getting sued by the City of San Diego for having an overall error rate of 58 percent in 2019.

California law requires insurers to update their online listings on a weekly basis. As for New York, online directories must be updated every 15 days.

## ANONYMOUS CELL PHONE DATA CAN QUANTIFY BEHAVIORAL CHANGES FOR FLU-LIKE ILLNESSES

**Atlanta, Georgia** — Cell phone data that is routinely collected by telecom providers can reveal changes of behavior in people who are diagnosed with a flu-like illness, while also protecting their anonymity, a new study by Emory University finds.

The researchers analyzed data for over 90,000 encrypted cell phone numbers. They were permitted to link the encrypted cell phone metadata to 1,400 anonymous individuals



**KEEPING TELEHEALTH ON THE FRONT SCREEN:** AN ARMY OF LOBBYISTS IS STILL SWARMING CAPITOL HILL TO ADVOCATE PERMANENT RETENTION OF COVID-ERA ONLINE HEALTH RULES

## ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTIVE OF EXPANDING VIRTUAL CARE, SAYS HHS LEADER BECERRA

**Washington, D.C.** — Due to the national coronavirus lockdown, what until then was a technological curiosity became for many a necessity: Telemedicine.

Virtual visits with doctors and caregivers spiked during the pandemic after Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers gave providers more flexibility to get reimbursed for such services.

And now, with many provider groups lobbying Congress to permanently expand coverage for telehealth, President Joe Biden’s top health official signaled that the administration supports broadening the use of virtual care in the long term.

“We are absolutely supportive of efforts to give us the authority to utilize telehealth in greater ways,” said Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra in a recent interview. “We want to make sure that we don’t leave anybody behind and that telehealth is available to all Americans, universally.”

## TELEHEALTH LOBBYING EXPLODES ON CAPITOL HILL TO PROTECT INDUSTRY GROWTH

**Washington, D.C.** — Business has been good the past year or so for telehealth companies. And they’re not about to let it all just slip away.

That’s why, according to a recent extensive report by health-news outlet *STAT News*, telehealth companies are now embarking on massive lobbying efforts to secure their interests on Capitol Hill.

The goal is clear: Lawmakers are weighing whether to permanently loosen regulations that were temporarily eased during the pandemic. Among other changes, providers have been allowed to practice in states where they are not licensed, and Medicare has been permitted to pay providers the same for virtual visits as in-person ones. Lobbyists for the rapidly growing industry are determined to keep those changes intact.

Companies stepping up their lobbying include industry giant Teladoc, as well as

Amwell, Amazon, CVS Health, Walmart, and several prominent health systems.

## HEALTHCARE DEMAND PROJECTED TO FLATTEN OR EVEN DROP, SAYS REPORT

**Brentwood, Tennessee** — Given the trend of the \$4 trillion U.S. healthcare industry in recent years, you’d think that it would simply keep growing. But not if you ask health system analytics company Trilliant Health.

A recent report by the Tenn.-based company posits that softening demand and increasing supply suggest that pricing trends are ultimately unsustainable for healthcare providers.

That report is based on a review of some 70 billion medical claims across 309 million patient visits. Most significantly, it contradicts the commonly held belief that the U.S. demand for healthcare is rising—according to the report, it’s actually not.

In fact, says the forecast report, future demand for healthcare services will be relatively flat or even declining.

## FEDS EXPANDING VALUE-BASED MODEL FOR HOME HEALTH CARE COME JANUARY '22

**Bethesda, Maryland** — It’s better to get paid for how *well* you do it—not for *what* you do.

That’s the idea behind value-based payments—a concept that’s been around for years now in medicine and public health. In plain English, it would translate to a surgeon getting paid more for a surgery with a successful outcome than one that doesn’t end well.

But now, the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is planning to accelerate its shift to paying home health services providers more based on higher-quality care. The so-called *value-based purchasing model* both rewards home health agencies for better care and saves Medicare money, CMS now says.

The home health value-based purchasing (HHVBP) model, a CMS pilot program launched in January 2016, will be expanding nationwide come January 2022. ★



**THERE MIGHT BE AN APP FOR THAT SOON, TOO:** EMORY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH SHOWS IT’S POSSIBLE IN THE FUTURE TO TRACK FLU-PATIENT BEHAVIOR WITHOUT VIOLATING PRIVACY



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# In the Know

Ouch! You just banged your knee on the table edge. Painful—but really no big deal. You get that black-and-blue mark, the pain fades, and within a week, that bruise fades away, too.

Not so for people with hemophilia.

Hemophilia is a Latin-based medical phrase deriving from the ancient Greek *haima* (blood) and *philia* (affinity)—meaning, a tendency to bleed. And for people with hemophilia, even a small injury causing internal bleeding (which causes those black-and-blue bruises under the skin) can be a big problem.

## DEFINITION

Hemophilia refers to a group of bleeding disorders in which blood does not clot properly. But first, some background information.

Blood flows through the body in tubes called vessels. Bleeding happens when a blood vessel is broken. Blood vessels can break in two ways—externally or internally. Externally means the bleeding happens outside the body. Internally means the bleeding stays inside the body.

Examples of external bleeding are ordinary cuts and scrapes.

Examples of internal bleeding are ordinary black-and-blue bruises from ordinary trips, falls or accidents, or from major medical emergencies like bleeding in the brain, or organ damage.

Normally, the blood responds to bleeding with clotting factors and platelets. Clotting factors are 13 different kinds of natural proteins. Platelets are tiny disk-shaped pieces of cells.

When a blood vessel breaks, the body sends clotting factors and

platelets to clot, or plug up, the break. That's why and how an ordinary cut stops bleeding—that crust of dried blood on a cut that stopped bleeding is a blood clot, or clotting factors and platelets in action.

In hemophilia, blood does not clot properly because the blood has low levels of clotting factor protein #8 or #9, referred medically as Factor VIII or Factor IX. In other words, for people with hemophilia, a broken blood vessel—whether from a bruised knee or a paper cut—can be a major problem in need of urgent immediate care.

What's more, the lower the level of proteins needed for healthy clotting, the less the body is able to naturally form those critical blood clots when blood vessels break—and the higher the possibility of serious health problems.

## Types

There are several different types of hemophilia. The two most common are Hemophilia A and Hemophilia B.

Hemophilia A is caused by a lack (or decrease) of clotting factor VIII. Hemophilia B is caused by a lack (or decrease) of clotting factor IX.

Others not-uncommon types are Hemophilia C and Von Willebrand disease.

Hemophilia C is caused by a lack (or decrease) of clotting factor XI.

In Von Willebrand disease, a part of the factor VIII molecule known as the von Willebrand factor or ristocetin cofactor is reduced. The von Willebrand factor involves helping the platelets attach to the lining of a vein or artery. This missing factor results in prolonged bleeding time because the platelets are unable to attach to the wall of the vessel and form the blood clot that eventually

stops the bleeding.

Von Willebrand is similar to hemophilia, but is not usually called by this name. It is more common and usually milder than hemophilia.

In “ultra-rare” cases, as the National Hemophilia Foundation describes it, people can have hemophilia because they have the very rare care of missing clotting factors other than No. 8 or No. 9.

To preface, in the U.S., a rare disease or disorder is defined as one that affects fewer than 200,000 people. That would include the rare clotting-factor deficiencies like I, II, V, VII, X, XI, XII and XIII—along with all other rare disorders. For example, deficiency Factor I is estimate to occur in no more two individuals per every million. Factor II, for its part, is even less—estimated to occur in one out of every two million people (as is Factor V, too). The rarest of these, Factor XIII, is estimated to occur in one in five million people.

## Who is affected

Hemophilia occurs in about one of every 5,000 male births. Based on a recent study that used data collected on patients receiving care in federally-funded hemophilia treatment centers during the period 2012-2018, about 20,000 and as many as 33,000 males in the United States are living with the disorder. Hemophilia A is about four times as common as hemophilia B, and about half of those affected have the severe form. Hemophilia affects people from all racial and ethnic groups.

Most forms of hemophilia are inherited, as it a genetic disease. But still, about 30 percent of people with hemophilia have no family history of the disorder. In these people, an unexpected change occurs in one of

## ALL ABOUT... HEMOPHILIA

Sources: American Lung Association, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), Mayo Clinic, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)





the genes associated with hemophilia.

So in plain English, to summarize, hemophilia is a rare disorder in which the blood doesn't clot normally because it lacks clotting factors. If one has hemophilia, he or she may bleed for a longer time after an injury than they would if the blood clotted normally. Small cuts usually aren't much of a problem. If one has a severe deficiency of the clotting factor protein, the greater health concern is deep bleeding inside the body, especially in the knees, ankles and elbows. That internal bleeding can damage the organs and tissues, and may be life-threatening.

## SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms of hemophilia vary, depending on the level of clotting factors. If one's clotting-factor level is mildly reduced, a patient may bleed only after surgery or trauma. If the deficiency is severe, a patient may experience spontaneous bleeding—for such individuals, even a simple bump on the head can cause bleeding into the brain. While that rarely happens, it's one of the most serious complications that can occur.

Put simply, hemophilia symptoms can range from the minor to the catastrophic.

Common symptoms of hemophilia include:

- Bleeding into the joints. This can cause swelling and pain or tightness in the joints; it often affects the knees, elbows, and ankles
- Bleeding into the skin (which is bruising) or muscle and soft tissue causing a build-up of blood in the area (called a hematoma)
- Bleeding of the mouth and gums, and bleeding that is hard to stop after losing a tooth
- Bleeding after surgery or dental work
- Bleeding after getting any medical shots
- Bleeding in the head of an infant after a difficult delivery
- Blood in the urine or stool
- Frequent and hard-to-stop nosebleeds, usually without a known cause

More serious symptoms include:

- Bleeding in the head and sometimes in the brain which can cause long-term problems, such as seizures and paralysis
- Death can occur if bleeding cannot be stopped or if it occurs in a vital organ like the brain
- “Side effect” symptoms include:
  - Painful, prolonged headache
  - Repeated vomiting
  - Sleepiness or lethargy

- Double vision
- Sudden weakness or clumsiness
- Convulsions or seizures

Seek emergency care if you or your child experiences:

Signs or symptoms of bleeding into the brain—like “the worst headache ever!”

An injury in which the bleeding won't stop

Swollen joints that are hot to the touch and painful to bend

## CAUSES

As mentioned, hemophilia is caused by a deficiency in one of the blood's several clotting factors.

many genes that are not present on the Y chromosome. This means that males only have one copy of most of the genes on the X chromosome, while females have two copies. As such, males can have a disease like hemophilia if they inherit an affected X chromosome that has a mutation in either the factor VIII or factor IX gene. Females can also have hemophilia, but this is much rarer. In such cases both X chromosomes are affected or one is affected and the other is missing or inactive. In these females, bleeding symptoms may be similar to males with hemophilia.

A female with one affected X chromosome is a “carrier” of hemophilia. Sometimes a female who

Coagulation factor tests check the function of one or more of the clotting factors. Clotting factors are known by Roman numerals (I, II, VIII, etc.) or by name (fibrinogen, prothrombin, hemophilia A, and so on.).

One may be tested for one or more factors at a time.

## TREATMENT

Treatment includes regular replacement of the specific clotting factor that is reduced.

The best way to treat hemophilia is to replace the missing blood clotting factor so that the blood can clot properly. This is done by infusing (administering through a vein) commercially prepared factor concentrates. People with hemophilia can learn how to perform these infusions themselves so that they can stop bleeding episodes and, by performing the infusions on a regular basis (called prophylaxis), can even prevent most bleeding episodes.

Good-quality medical care from doctors and nurses who know a lot about the disorder can help prevent some serious problems. Often the best choice for care is to visit a comprehensive Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC). An HTC not only provides care to address all issues related to the disorder, but also provides health education that helps people with hemophilia stay healthy.

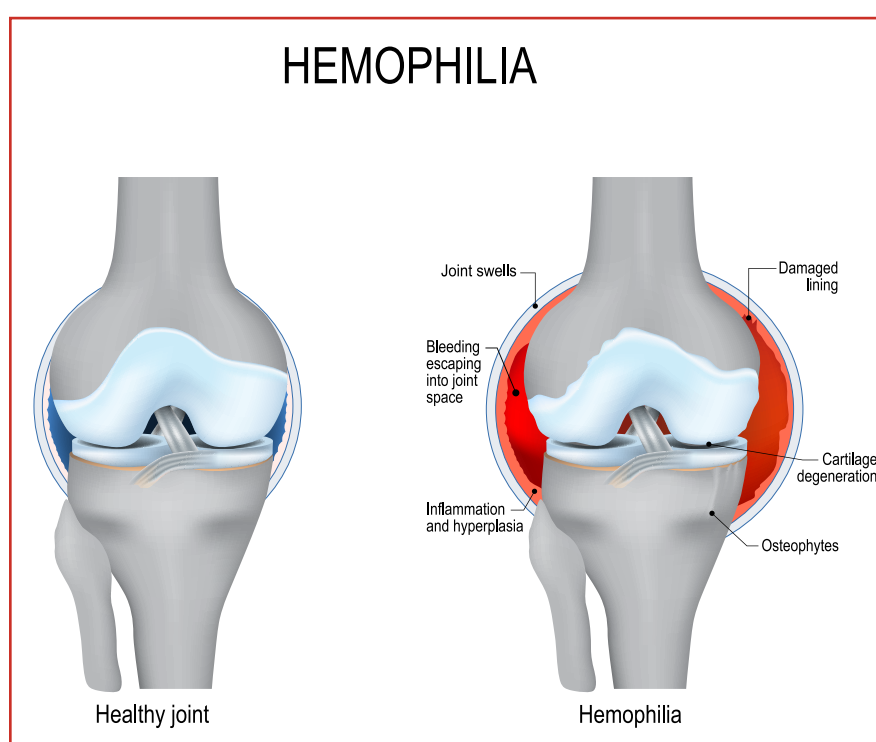
## Inhibitors

About 15 to 20 percent of people with hemophilia develop an antibody (called an inhibitor) that stops the clotting factors from being able to clot the blood and stop bleeding. Treatment of bleeding episodes becomes extremely difficult, and the cost of care for a person with an inhibitor can skyrocket because more clotting factor or a different type of clotting factor is needed. People with inhibitors often experience more joint disease and other problems from bleeding that result in a reduced quality of life.

## PROGNOSIS

Your doctor may recommend medicines or clotting factor replacement therapy to treat the bleeding disorder. Some bleeding disorders are lifelong conditions, and some can lead to complications.

Sources: Mayo Clinic; CDC; Nation National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI); National Cancer Institute (NCI); U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM), Stanford Health; National Hemophilia Foundation ★



As mentioned, most cases of hemophilia are caused by genetic defects (more on that shortly)—but 30 percent of people with hemophilia have no hemophilia family history.

In very rare cases, a person can get acquired hemophilia—which occurs when the immune system attacks clotting factors in the blood. This can be associated with autoimmune conditions, cancer, pregnancy, or multiple sclerosis.

In more genetic detail, hemophilia is caused by a mutation, or change, in one of the genes, that provides instructions for making the clotting factor proteins needed to form a blood clot. The change or mutation can prevent the clotting protein from working properly or to be missing altogether.

These genes are located on the X chromosome. Males have one X and one Y chromosome (XY) and females have two X chromosomes (XX). Males inherit the X chromosome from their mothers and the Y chromosome from their fathers. Females inherit one X chromosome from each parent.

The X chromosome contains

is a carrier can have symptoms of hemophilia. In addition, she can pass the affected X chromosome with the clotting factor gene mutation on to her children.

Although uncommon, other causes of bleeding disorders include liver disease, vitamin K deficiency or blood-thinning medicines.

## DIAGNOSIS

Many people who have or have had family members with hemophilia will ask that their baby boys get tested soon after birth.

About one-third of babies who are diagnosed with hemophilia have a new mutation not present in other family members.

To make a diagnosis, doctors will perform certain blood tests to show if the blood is clotting properly. If it does not, then they would do clotting factor tests, also known as factor assays or coagulation factor tests, to diagnose the cause of the bleeding disorder. These blood tests show the type and severity of hemophilia.





## Status Report

# Happening In Hospitals Today

### COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS REDUCE 30-DAY READMISSIONS IN HIGH-RISK ACO PATIENTS

**Boston, Massachusetts** — So, say you have health insurance from an *accountable care organization* (ACO), not your standard *health maintenance organization* (HMO). Caregivers are paid more by ACOs when they keep you healthier—while caregivers are paid by HMOs under a set *fee-for-service* “menu,” regardless of how you turn out.

Now, say you were an ACO member in the hospital for whatever high-risk treatment (say, heart disease)—and your ACO benefits include a *community health worker*, a trained professional who helps you with appointments, medication and activities of daily living at home.

Now, let’s say you were an ACO-member hospital patient who got a community health worker to help you after you went home: Are you less likely to be re-hospitalized within 30 days than a patient who *doesn’t* get a community health worker?

According to new Massachusetts General Hospital research, the answer is “Yes!”

### HEART-ATTACK ER TESTING CAN BE ERRONEOUS FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS: STUDY

**Edinburgh, Scotland** — One of emergency rooms’ standard procedures for possible heart-attack patients is to test their blood for levels of *troponin*—a protein released into the bloodstream upon damage to heart muscle: The more troponin in the blood, the likelier it’s a heart attack.

There are two troponin tests: *standard* and *high-sensitivity*.

But now, new research at the University of Edinburgh has found that the high-sensitivity troponin test could be way off—if a patient in question also has reduced kidney function. A healthy kidney should have an *estimated glomerular filtration rate* (EGFR) of at least 90.

The research found that, in kidney

patients with low EGFR, the high-sensitivity troponin test flagged up to six times as many patients as actually having heart damage, when in fact they did not.

The finding may require emergency medicine to develop a new approach to diagnosing suspected heart-attack patients who are also low-kidney-function patients.

### UNITEDHEALTHCARE GETTING STRICT ON COVERING NON-EMERGENCY ER VISITS

**Minnetonka, Minnesota** — Private insurance giant UnitedHealthcare doesn’t want to pay your emergency-room bill—if your visit to that emergency room really wasn’t an emergency, that is.

Starting this July 1st, the insurer said it will be auditing bills involving its’ members visits to ERs. Any claims deemed to involve non-emergencies—such as the treatment of conjunctivitis, or pink eye—will be subject to limited or no coverage.

“Unnecessary use of the emergency room costs nearly \$32 billion annually, driving up health care costs for everyone,” UnitedHealthcare said in a statement provided to industry-insider news outlet *MedPage Today*. “We are taking steps to make care more affordable, encouraging people who do not have a health care emergency to seek treatment in a more appropriate

setting, such as an urgent care center.”

### BROOKLYN’S KINGSBROOK JEWISH MEDICAL CENTER ENDS INPATIENT CARE

**Brooklyn, New York** — One chapter of Brooklyn history closed and another opened this past July, as the Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center finalized a years-long plan to end inpatient services. Patients in need of hospitalization are



**CLOSE OF AN ERA:** KINGSBROOK OPENED IN 1929 AS THE “DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL - HOME FOR THE INCURABLES”, UNDERGOING SEVEN MAJOR EXPANSIONS INTO ITS CURRENT CAMPUS FORM

now being sent to other area hospitals, as Kingsbrook closed 200 beds and stopped admitting patients as part of a transition plan unveiled in 2018.

Under that \$700 million consolidation plan, Kingsbrook is being turned into a medical village providing only emergency services, primary, specialty and post-acute care.

However, doctors at the 303-bed hospital and community members have strongly opposed the consolidation plan. The hospital, owned by the Manhattan-based One Brooklyn Health System, actually began diverting patients to other hospitals in early June. Staff affected by the change was offered positions at other One Brooklyn facilities.

### UNDER TEN PERCENT OF PATIENTS AWARE OF HOSPITAL PRICE-POSTING LAW: SURVEY

**New York, New York** — It may

now be law that hospitals have to tell you how much they cost. But, as it turns out, very few people know about it.

In fact, just-under ten percent of the public knows that prices for hospital services have to be available to the public, according to a recent survey by the Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker.

The survey found that only nine percent of adults knew that hospitals are required to post the prices of treatments and procedures on their websites. It also found that just 14 percent of respondents said they or a family member had gone online in the last six months to research the price of a hospital’s treatment.

The so-called price transparency mandate is a rule imposed on U.S. hospitals by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It’s been in effect since January 2021.

### CALIF. HOSPITAL STOPS DOUBLE INFECTION SPREAD WITH CUSTOM-BUILT SYSTEM: CASE STUDY

**Los Angeles, California** — In 2020, U.S. hospitals had limited formal

systems for containing Covid-19. At the same time, Southern California was coping with an outbreak of *Candida auris* (C. auris)—a dangerous and still-emerging fungal infection first found in the U.S. in 2015.

After C. auris cases surged in Southern California in summer 2020, Los Angeles-based UCLA Health changed its computer software to handle the new double threat. The hospital’s infection-prevention specialists and computer nerds created a new Covid/C. auris screening for new patients. The modified software also helped identify potential cases early, flagged high-risk patients for in-house lab testing, and triggered reminders about strict C. auris cleaning protocols.

The hospital’s creative response was described in a case study presented at the most recent conference of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. ★



**DRAWING A LINE:** UNITEDHEALTHCARE GETS SERIOUS ABOUT NON-SERIOUS ER VISITS





# The Senior Care Gazette

News from  
the World of  
Hamaspik  
HomeCare and  
Senior Health

## Understanding Alzheimer's or Dementia Behavioral Problems—and Resolving Them With Practical Solutions

*Hamaspik HomeCare Presents Plain-English Answers to the Questions Everyone Has About Hamaspik HomeCare*

One of the major caregiving challenges with individuals who have Alzheimer's or Dementia is coping with troubling behaviors and personality changes. Aggression, hallucinations, wandering, or difficulties eating or sleeping can be very upsetting, and make your role as caregiver even harder. Making matters even more difficult is the fact that behavioral issues are often made worse by your loved one's environment, inability to deal with stress, or frustrated attempts at communicating.

Above all, whatever problems you're dealing with, always remember that the person with dementia is not being deliberately difficult! But by making the following simple changes, you can ease

your loved one's stress, better manage his or her symptoms, and significantly improve his or her well-being—as well as improve your own caregiving experience.

### BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS: COMMON CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

- **Environmental stressors:** Loud or unidentifiable noises, shadowy lighting, mirrors or other reflecting surfaces, garish colors, or patterned wallpaper. Reducing these can reduce agitation and disorientation.
- **Caregiver negativity:** A negative response to a behavioral problem often escalates the behavioral problem. Be flexible, patient, and

relaxed—respond to the emotion behind the behavior, not the behavior. When your negative emotions rise, take a cool-down time-out.

- **Physical inactivity:** Sedentary habits exacerbate behavioral problems like aggression, wandering, and difficulty sleeping. Conversely, simple exercises like walking or even seated exercises can reduce them—as can simple household activities like washing vegetables for dinner, folding laundry, watering plants or helping cook.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY CAUSE(S) OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

- Observe body language to imagine

what the person might be feeling or trying to express.

- **Ask:** What happened just before the behavioral problem began? What triggered it?
- **Are the patient's needs being met?** Is he or she hungry, thirsty, or in pain?
- **Was the comfort zone disturbed?** For example, was his/her favorite music stopped? Would playing it restore that comfort zone and calm the person?
- **What was your reaction?** Did your reaction escalate or de-escalate the behavioral problem?

Most important: A patient with dementia responds to facial expression, tone of voice, and body language far more than words—so use eye contact, a smile, and a reassuring touch to convey messages and compassion. ★

Call Hamaspik HomeCare Intake at 845-503-5700 to see if your loved one is eligible for a home health aide. Having a home health aide can alleviate caregiver stress on the family member and increase well-being for your loved one.

## Giving Heart Health Legs to Stand On

*Treating and Preventing Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)*

The heart, of course, is the most important part of the body when it comes to *vascular health*—that is, having healthy blood vessels. When critical heart arteries are blocked, the result all too often is heart attack.

But the heart isn't the only part of the body that can be affected by blood vessels in poor shape—the legs can be affected, too. This happens with *peripheral artery disease* (PAD).

This condition is a type of heart disease affecting approximately eight million people nationwide. It occurs when arteries in the legs narrow due to plaque buildup, leaving them unable to properly circulate blood. Common symptoms of PAD include discoloration of the legs and/or feet, especially when elevated; wounds or sores on one or more toes, or a foot, which heal slowly or don't heal at all; and cold feet compared to other body parts. Other symptoms include painful muscle cramping, occurring mostly when exercising, walking or climbing

stairs; thin, shiny skin; absence of hair; or even gangrene (death of tissue due to lack of blood flow).

Treatment may consist of: medications to lower cholesterol, high blood pressure and/or blood sugar, as well as drugs that help prevent blood clots, widen blood vessels and improve blood flow. Surgical treatments include *angioplasty*, which reopens clogged arteries, or *bypass*, which reroutes blood around a blocked vessel with a newly installed vessel. "Clot-busting" drug injections on site can also help.

Often, PAD goes untreated or even undiagnosed. However, if left untreated, PAD can lead to serious cardiac or heart related issues, or even amputation. So the best way to treat PAD is to prevent it in the first place. And the best way to try to prevent PAD is to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Here's how:

- If you are a smoker, quit smoking
- Work to control your blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels

- **Exercise regularly.** Talk to your doctor to determine what exercise program is best for you
- **Follow a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet** and eat more fruits and vegetables. If you are overweight or obese, work with your doctor to develop a reasonable weight-loss plan

Keep in mind that it is possible to have PAD without even having any symptoms—which is why regular checkup visits to your doctor, complete with blood and lab tests, are vital. ★

In addition to keeping up with your health and improving quality of life for yourself or your loved one, contact Hamaspik HomeCare at 845-503-0700 to see if you or your loved one is eligible for a home health aide (HHA). Having a home health aide can improve quality of life for seniors who are struggling with self-care.

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