



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of Hamaspik
Agencies and
General Health

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GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

DO YOU EVER EXPERIENCE VERTIGO?

A: NO; B: OCCASIONALLY; C: OFTEN

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



HEALTH STAT

DIZZYING STATS

Prevalence of vertigo episodes in U.S.

At least one episode in lifetime	40%
Average age at first episode	39%

Source: National Library of Medicine



HEALTH TIP

TEETERING ON YOUR TOES? GRAB SOME GINKGO

Extracts from the leaves of the ginkgo tree, native to China, have health benefits for several conditions, including vertigo. A 2014 double-blind *Journal of Otolaryngology* study found ginkgo slightly more effective than betahistine, a commonly-prescribed dizziness drug.

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WHAT LIES BENEATH: SEA LIFE AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE AT LEAST ONE THING IN COMMON, WHAT WITH A WORLD OF COLOR AND PERSONALITY BEYOND THAT OTHERWISE INSCRUTABLE SURFACE

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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.

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: Full day respite program during the summer break weeks.

Respite 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 Getaways: A weekend retreat for individuals receiving respite services.

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.

ARTICLE 16 CLINIC

Provides medical, diagnostic, and therapeutic services for persons with developmental disabilities. Such as: Physical therapy · occupational therapy · speech therapy · psychology · social work · psychiatry · nutrition

PARENTAL RETREATS

Providing: Getaways and retreats for parents of individuals with disabilities

EMOD, VMOD AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Individuals who are eligible and approved for OPWDD services who reside in non-certified home and community-based settings may qualify for AT, E-Mod, and V-Mod services funded through the OPWDD HCBS Waiver.

Assistive Technology : Any device, item, equipment, product, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or to improve an individual's functional capabilities and/or independence in performing activities of daily living (ADL).

E-Mods: Physical adaptations to an individual's home, like ramps, lifts and grab bars, needed to ensure his or her health, welfare and safety and to maximize independence and reduce need for institutionalization and/or more restrictive, costly living arrangements.

V-Mods: Physical adaptations to the individual's vehicle that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual or that enable the individual to function with greater independence.

DOH

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

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

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

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

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

Ongoing Service Coordination (OSC): Provides ongoing support for families of children enrolled in the Early Intervention Program.

NURSING HOME TRANSITION AND DIVERSION (NHTD)

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

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

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

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

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

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

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM

A comprehensive structured program providing functionally-impaired adults an array of services in a protective daytime setting. Each individual participant receives services in accordance with an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) based on a personalized assessment.

SENIOR DINING PROGRAM

Serves balanced nutritious meals to older New Yorkers up to five days a week in a variety of settings. Eligible to seniors age 60 and up, as well as to spouses younger than 60 and individuals with disabilities residing in eligible seniors' homes..

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.

Home Health and Personal Care Services (HHA/PCA): Our PCA/HHA assist individuals with personal care needs, activities of daily living, and light housekeeping. They are extensively trained, screened and supervised by a RN.

NHTD/TBI Home & Community Support Services (HCSS): 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 (RN): Providing skilled observation and assessment - care planning - paraprofessional supervision - clinical monitoring and coordination - medication management - physician - ordered nursing interventions and skilled treatments.

HHA/PCA Training: Free PCA/HHA training and competency testing offered for those interested in a home care career.

CDPAS/CDPAP: CONSUMER DIRECTED PERSONAL AIDE SERVICES/PROGRAM

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.

NYS HCR

ACCESS TO HOME

Providing home modifications for people with physical disability.

RESTORE

Providing emergency repairs for low incomes homeowners over the age of 60.

US AND NYS AGRICULTURE

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Provides federal reimbursements for the costs of nutritious meals and snacks which are served to eligible children and adults at participating daycare centers, after-school programs, or shelters.

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

THE HAMASPIK GAZETTE

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

MAMTAKIM

A summer camp for individuals approved for OPWDD services.

BOE

THE HAMASPIK SCHOOL

Private chartered school for kids age 5 - 10 with developmental disabilities, taking education to heart and teaching them in a way they can learn thru an individualized plan, Including ABA, OT, PT, SPL and Multi-sensory hands-on learning.

KINDERVILLE

A summer camp for individuals approved for OPWDD services.

OMH

SIPUK, ARTICLE 31 CLINIC

Mental Health-licensed behavioral health, Article 31 Clinic, servicing all ages.

OMH/DOH

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 ages 0-21 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

The Drive for Disability Inclusion

At Family's Behest, Care Manager Successfully Arranges for Individual's Participation at Family Wedding

Needless to say, caring for an individual with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) is not exactly a walk in the park.

That fact is especially true when the individual in question is blessed with multiple disabilities.

Regardless of function level, each individual on the caseloads of Tri-County Care is treated like the gem that he or she is—a beautiful human being worthy of mainstream acceptance and inclusion regardless of ability or absence thereof.

So when a wonderfully devoted family of an individual with special needs, who also gets supports and services from Tri-County Care (TCC), sought to include their beloved son and brother at an upcoming family wedding, Tri-County got in on the family action.

It had been years since the individual had actually been able to attend any such family lifecycle celebration. A combination of

variables and circumstances, primarily family economics and often-intense high-maintenance care needs for the individual himself, had precluded any such excursion or jaunt about town, and certainly anything of the sort out-of-town.

But now, with the marriage celebration approaching, the family wanted to make it work. Fortunately, so did their TCC Care Manager.

That Care Manager, who requested anonymity so as to focus on the work, not the worker, got behind the wheel in every way but literally. “I decided that nothing was going to stop me and that I would do whatever it would take to get a ride for my individual,” he tells the *Gazette*.

The first order of the day was to procure a disability-accessible vehicle. (One of the several chronic obstacles facing the family is that their minivan is a standard-issue, not the ramp-equipped modified vehicle that many families affected by disability

are blessed with.)

So to help the family and individual, the Care Manager first reached out to multiple organizations—but received lackluster responses such as, “We only provide trips for medical purposes” or, “We do not provide trips that far, especially right before Pesach [Passover].” (The wedding celebration venue was a considerable drive away from the family's home.)

The Care Manager ultimately was informed that Chesed 24/7, a well-known and respected community social-supports organization based in New Square, New York, boasted a small fleet of ramp-equipped accessibility minivans. These were regularly put at the disposal of individual community members on a per-need basis.

With the free rental of a duly-equipped minivan now squared away thanks to Chesed 24/7's magnanimity, the Care Manager moved on to the second order of the day: securing a reliable driver for that van—especially

one willing, ready and able to ferry an individual with disabilities, and several family members, to and from a wedding a long drive away.

Our Care Manager quickly reached out to a family friend of the individual, who in turn reached out to yet another family friend. Shortly thereafter, the Care Manager received a phone call.

The caller essentially said this: “My son is now off from yeshivah and would be happy to be someone's driver.”

It wasn't much later that the Care Manager called Chesed 24/7's loan van coordinator with the young volunteer driver's contact information. That organization and the laudable volunteer were soon communicating about where and when to pick up the van.

Within a few hours, the individual was participating in his family's celebration, dancing with all his brothers—helped along by a decidedly driven Care Manager. ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

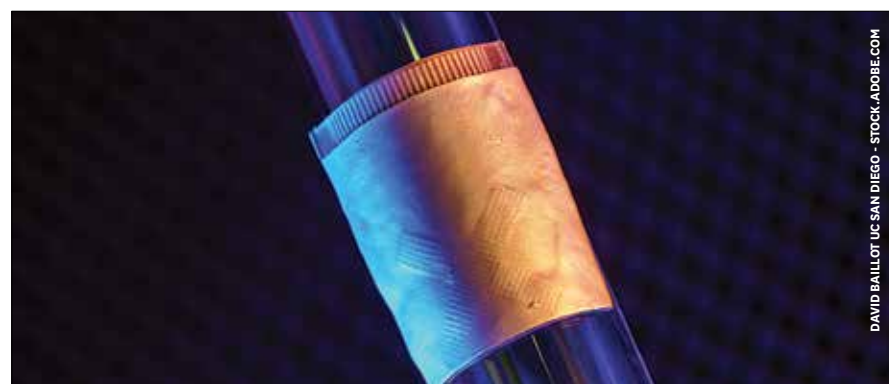
Nano-Engineering Lab Develops Experimental Wearable Ultrasound Device

Postage Stamp-Sized Sensor Images Heart While User Moves

San Diego, California — Never mind the costly, bulky traditional ultrasound devices that require patients to be lying or sitting still for the machine to produce a quality image. How about just gluing a small device directly on the skin and then going about your day?

That's the basic gist of the cardiac imaging device being developed by medical engineering researchers at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The wearable ultrasound device, which can assess both the structure and function of the human heart, can be worn for up to 24 hours and works even during strenuous exercise. It's also roughly the size of a postage stamp.

The goal is to make ultrasound more accessible to a larger population, said UCSD researchers. Echocardiograms, or ultrasound examinations of the heart, currently require trained technicians and bulky



NOW HEAR THIS: UC SAND DIEGO'S EXPERIMENTAL STAMP-SIZED ULTRASOUND SCANNER IS NOT ONLY TINY AND WEARABLE DIRECTLY ON THE SKIN, BUT ALSO SCANS THE HEART LIVE

devices. But the new wearable, non-invasive device provides real-time, automated images of the difficult-

to-capture pumping activity of the heart, even when the patient wearing it is exercising.

The experimental device uses ultrasound to continuously capture images of the four chambers of the heart in different angles, and analyze a subset of the images in real time using custom-made artificial-intelligence (AI) software.

Another benefit of the system is that it avoids usage of CT and MRI scans, which could expose patients to radiation.

Cardiac diseases are the leading cause of death among the elderly, and with the signs of cardiac diseases being transient and unpredictable, they're hard to spot. This has upped demand for more advanced, inclusive, non-invasive and cost-effective monitoring technologies.

Cardiac imaging is an essential tool to assess long-term heart health and detect problems as they arise. It's also used to care for critically-ill patients. ★

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Happening in Health Today

STUDY FINDS HUMOR-BASED MENTAL-HEALTH CAMPAIGN HELPS MEN LIVE HAPPIER LIVES

Atlanta, Georgia — Nothing accesses a resistant man more than humor—and now, there's a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prove it.

Man Therapy is a lighthearted national mental-health campaign to encourage men to take their mental health and life happiness seriously. The CDC surveyed two groups of men, one accessing Man Therapy's resources and a comparison group using standard mental-health resources.

The survey of several hundred working-age men in Michigan found that, compared to standard resources, Man Therapy reduced days impacted by negative mental health and increased social problem-solving over a three-month follow-up period.

Man Therapy targets blue-collar men 16 to 64. Its fictional spokesman, Dr. Rich Mahogany, encourages men to get professional therapy to defy stigma, tackle depression, and seek help in times of crisis.

NEW ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANCE TEST FOR COMMON HOSPITAL BUG ELIMINATES UNRELIABILITY

Giessen, Germany — Infections of patients in hospitals with the antibiotic-resistant bacterium *Enterobacter* is a big problem. And knowing when to use colistin, a last-ditch antibiotic when all others fail, is an even bigger problem. That's because some of *Enterobacter*'s 3,000-plus strains are already colistin-resistant—so treating such an infection with colistin may only make it even more resistant.

Some hospitals counter that by first testing a patient's sample. If colistin kills it, they know it's not resistant—and they've also avoided strengthening an already-resistant strain. But such *Enterobacter* colistin tests are currently unreliable, complicating treatment.

To solve that, researchers at Germany's University of Giessen developed a new test that eliminates uncertain results. Based on bacterial

biology (too complex to explain here!), the test provides yes/no resistance results.

PEDIATRICIANS GROUP ISSUES FIRST-EVER GUIDANCE FOR TEENAGE HOSPITAL PATIENTS

Itasca, Illinois — Doctors and other trained staff already know how to treat hospitalized adults. Children who need hospitalization have a range of specialists of their own.

But now, the Illinois-based American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a leading industry group for doctors who treat children and young adults, has issued an historic first list: a policy statement on the "unique and essential needs" of adolescents, or patients who are neither children nor adults.

According to the AAP, "it is important that those who care for hospitalized adolescents have knowledge, experience, and compassion when dealing with the multifaceted and nuanced needs of this population."

Notable recommendations are

including giving teens extra respect and individuality by allowing them to decorate their rooms, and providing them with reading materials and educational activities.

EXPERIMENTAL SOUND "TORNADO" MAY BREAK DOWN BRAIN BLOOD CLOTS

Raleigh, North Carolina — You can simply push an object out of the way. Or, you can use a tool with a spinning head to break the object into small pieces while you're also pushing it away.

That's the basic idea behind new ultrasound technology being developed at North Carolina State University (NCSU).

Standard ultrasound equipment produces a "wall" of inaudible sound waves for medical tests and procedures. But the experimental new ultrasound being tested by NCSU produces a "tornado" of inaudible sound waves for medical tests and procedures.

The research is specifically focusing

on using vortex ultrasound technology to break down blood clots in blood vessels servicing the brain.

In experiments on models, researchers found that their device works faster than standard ultrasound devices in eliminating cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), a form of brain blood clots.

CHEMISTS DEVELOP NEW MOSQUITO REPELLENTS THAT WORK—AND SMELL—BETTER

Washington, D.C. — For decades now, the primary mosquito repellent you bought before your child went off to camp was built around a chemical known by the acronym DEET. But while DEET is effective at keeping those biting bugs at bay, it is smelly and its protection short-lived.

But now, a study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* finds that at least two safe new alternatives made from *terpenoids*, or compounds found in many plants' essential oils, have some advantages over DEET, including a pleasant aroma and much longer protection.

Researchers chemically modified two terpenoid-based natural repellents to make them last up to nine hours. The new repellents also were easier to dissolve in water, meaning they can be formulated without high alcohol concentrations. They were also found to be as good as DEET at repelling Asian tiger mosquitoes, which have spread in the U.S. and carry diseases. ★

NEW YORK RESEARCHERS DISCOVER ULTRA-THIN NEW FILTERING LAYER IN BRAIN

Rochester, New York — Given the complexity of the human brain, it's perhaps unsurprising that scientists have now discovered a previously-unknown part—despite everything that modern medicine, brain scans and all, already know about the brain.

The brain and spinal cord have a three-layer "helmet." The delicate inner layer is the *pia mater*. The middle layer is the brain-cushioning *arachnoid*. The tough outer layer is the *dura mater*. Researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center have found what they are now calling the *subarachnoidal lymphatic-like membrane* (SLYM)—a super-thin layer between the arachnoid and *dura mater*.

The SLYM in fact is only a few cells thick at most. As a *mesothelium*, a type of membrane known to line



THE COMPLEX BRAIN GETS EVEN MORE COMPLEX: THIN NEW BRAIN LAYER DISCOVERED

and protect other organs in the body, the SLYM contains immune cells. It apparently functions as a

filter of *cerebrospinal fluid*, the liquid bathing the brain and spinal cord. ★

בס"ד



**Yiddish
& English**
Speaking Therapists

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A HAMASPIK PROJECT FOR THE MAINSTREAM COMMUNITY
POWERED BY HAMASPIK'S 25 YEAR EXPERIENCE AND COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY.



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Fishing for New Experiences

Hamaspik of Orange County's Men's Day Hab Visits Retail Aquarium in North Jersey

One of the missions of the Day Habilitation (Day Hab) Program, which was founded and funded by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), is—in plain English—to get participants out into the mainstream community as much as possible.

The idea is to contrast, to the extent possible, with the sequestration of the institutions of old, where people with disabilities were kept 24/7 under virtual lock and key—and all-too-often literally, out of society's sight and certainly out of mind.

Today, thankfully, individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) are irreversibly in the mainstream. With community partners like Hamaspik, the OPWDD has largely achieved its mission of full disability integration and the ultimate closure of most institutions. In New York, as in most other states, all but a handful of institutions are closed for good, with residents relocated to non-restrictive settings like New York's supportive or supervised Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) group homes, or Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs).

In keeping with that overarching ethos of putting people first, Hamaspik of Orange County's Men's Day Hab—as is the case with all Hamaspik Day Habs—recently got the gentlemen under its care out into the community yet again, this time with a day trip of a decidedly fishy variety.

That's because the gentlemen visited the Fish Hut, a retail purveyor of home aquarium denizens located in Saddle Brook, New Jersey.

That fish store is located just under 50 minutes away from Kiryas Joel—but the experience it gave the excited visitors put it worlds apart from their home village.

The idea to visit a fish store sprung from just having learned a bit about fish in their regular daily studies at Day Hab, says Hamaspik Day Hab Curriculum Professional and Boys Respite Manager Moshe Schwartz. In fact, adds Hamaspik of Orange County Executive Director Moses Wertheimer, it has even earlier origins—as several young men supported by Hamaspik received job-coaching services at such retail fish stores.

Having called ahead to notify Fish Hut of their plans, Mr. Schwartz and crew were warmly greeted by the store's very own Mr. Junior Berger



GETTING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR: FISH HUT'S ENTRANCING ENTRANCE TO THE AQUATIC WORLD (L), WHERE THE GENTLEMEN PICK FISH (R)



FINDING FISH: THE GENTLEMEN WITH THE DAY HAB PROGRAM, ACCOMPANIED BY STAFF, MAKE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE AISLES OF FISH HUT TO FIND THEIR FINNED-AND-SCALED FAVORITES. AS ANYONE WITH A FISH TANK WILL TELL YOU, FISH ARE REMARKABLY THERAPEUTIC CREATURES

once they arrived.

Later chatting by phone with the *Gazette*, Mr. Berger expressed happiness that the “boys” had patronized his store. “They were wonderful,” he recalls.

Fish, as it turns out, are wonderfully therapeutic creatures.

While Mr. Berger says the Hamaspik visit was his first for any organized group of customers with special needs, he does testify to feedback collected over the years on the benefits of fish in tanks for people with various health needs.

“I used to do maintenance for fish tanks for people getting chemo,” he recalls. “They zone into the colors and movements [of the fish],” he explains. “So many times, they forget what’s going on [with their discomforting treatment].”

In fact, a 2015 joint study by England’s National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth

University and the University of Exeter found that people spending time watching fish in aquariums and fish tanks saw measurable improvements in their physical and mental wellbeing.

That study, published in the journal *Environment & Behavior*, assessed people’s physical and mental responses to tanks containing varying levels of fish. Researchers found that viewing aquarium displays led to noticeable reductions in blood pressure and heart rate, and that higher numbers of fish helped to hold people’s attention for longer and improve their moods.

But back to our store visit. What was it like working with the Hamaspik contingent?

“It was really cool,” Mr. Berger says, “seeing their excitement and how we helped them. They were excited to go from tank to tank,” which they did as they roamed the tank-lined dark corridors of the fish store. Mr.

Schwartz seconds that sentiment, reported that his charged “loved” seeing fish of all colors, never mind fish food and aquarium equipment of all kinds.

Eventually, though, the gentlemen found themselves at the register, freshly-retrieved selections in hand. Per their customers’ preferences, Mr. Berger and crew had filled several bags with water and then dropping popular fish-tank fish known as tetras and black mollies into them. (As an aside, Mr. Berger notes, his store’s most-sold fish is the African cichlid, in its several varieties.)

So what did they like the most about their fish trip?

“First, they love traveling,” says Mr. Schwartz.

“Next, going to a store to buy things,” he adds. “It made them feel good about themselves—that *they’ll* be the ones caring for them.” ★

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The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

RESEARCHERS DISCOVER NEW FUNCTION OF MOUSE BRAIN, OPENING HUMAN RESEARCH TARGETS

Irvine, California — When scientists discover that part of a mouse's brain controls a part of the mouse's function, the next step is to see if that discovery can apply to impaired human brains.

That's the gist of a new finding at the University of California, Irvine, where scientists have figured out that the *cilia* in the brains of lab mice control those mice's ability to judge and perceive time.

The *cilia* are microscopic hairs on the surface of the brain's *striatum*. The *striatum* helps



SIGN OF FUTURE AUTISM BRAIN RESEARCH: STARTING WITH LAB MICE, UC IRVINE SCIENTISTS NOW HAVE A NEW AVENUE OF RESEARCH

control executive functions like working memory, attention, planning and decision-making. When researchers removed the *cilia*

from mice, they were unable to learn new motor tasks, showed repetitive motor behavior and exhibited delays in decision-making.

Researchers hope that the discovery may lead to new treatments for function-impairing conditions like autism. ★

STUDY SUGGESTS LINK BETWEEN TURNER SYNDROME AND AUTISM

London, England — Nearly two-thirds of people who have Turner syndrome also have symptoms of autism, and almost one-quarter meet the diagnostic criteria for autism, suggests a new study by University College London.

Turner syndrome, which affects about four in every 10,000 women, usually results from a missing or mosaic X chromosome. The condition is associated with distinctive changes throughout the body, but its most well-known traits include short stature.

Because many people with the syndrome also have neurocognitive differences, researchers attributed those for decades to the fact that girls with Turner syndrome are shorter than most people and/or are more likely to be hard of hearing. But now, the study says that women with Turner have trouble making friends because they don't understand social rules the way neurotypical people do.

STANDARDS OF "EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE" MUST IMPROVE, WRITES AUTISM RESEARCHER

Boston, Massachusetts — Much of modern treatment of autism is based on what's called *evidence-based practice* (EBP). The phrase refers to medications, techniques,

tools or methods that have been scientifically shown to work. But has that underlying science been enough to show that the practice actually works?

In an editorial in the journal *Autism*, Boston College researcher Kristen Bottema-Beutel opines that research quality thresholds for declaring something evidence-based are much too low.

In turn, she writes, "Low standards result in practices with questionable efficacy being labeled EBPs and promoted for use," which in turn "perpetuate the continued production of low-quality autism intervention research."

According to the op-ed, while there have been close to 1,000 autism studies over the last three decades, "the number of high-quality studies remains scarce."

MENTAL-HEALTH HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR YOUTH WITH AUTISM FAR HIGHER THAN PEERS: REPORT

Stillwater, Oklahoma — Young people with autism get hospitalized for mental-health reasons far more frequently than young people with other conditions, or with no conditions. So says a data analysis recently conducted by Oklahoma State University (OSU).

The study found that in 2016, young people in the U.S. ages ten through 20 who had autism had twice as many mental-health

hospitalizations as those with no conditions. What's more, that group was 11 times as likely to undergo mental-health hospitalizations as their peers with complex or chronic conditions other than autism.

The heightened levels of hospitalizations are estimated to U.S. healthcare over \$100 million a year overall, according to researchers. The research also estimated the cost of a mental-health hospitalization to be just shy of \$7,500 per stay.

FEDERAL AUTISM MONITORING NETWORK GETS FRESH FUNDING

Washington, D.C. — Here's how the federal government knows—at least officially—how many children with autism are out there: the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network.

Starting in 2000, the ADDM Network—a project of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—has been tracking the number and characteristics of eight-year-old children in the U.S. who have ASD. The ADDM Network includes ten funded sites and one CDC-managed site in Georgia.

Thanks to a recently-passed bill, the ADDM Network program is now in its sixth phase of funding. Its participating sites include the East Coast's Johns Hopkins and Rutgers Universities, central U.S. outposts like Vanderbilt and Washington Universities, and California's

UC San Diego.

In the current phase of funding, the CDC is investing more than \$20 million over four years to continue tracking at nine sites.

MASSIVE DATA REVIEW FINDS NO BIOMARKER CAUSE OF AUTISM

Southampton, England — Here's one basic definition of *biomarker*: "A measurable substance in an organism whose presence is indicative of disease, infection, or environmental exposure."

Biomarkers can be anything from blood pressure and heart rate to x-rays and genetic tests.

However, according to modern science, there currently are no diagnostic biomarkers for neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism—at least according to one study.

A systematic search for such possible biomarkers turned up no positive results, report researchers now in *World Psychiatry*.

That study, conducted by the England-based University of Southampton, first searched two major global research databases, isolating 780 potential studies. But of those studies—374 biochemical, 203 neuroimaging, 133 neurophysiological and 65 neuropsychological, plus five genome-wide association studies—researchers found none that met meaningful criteria. ★

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Hamaspik of Rockland County Hosts Grand Shabbaton for Men's Group Homes

Residents, Staff and Families Enjoy Family-Oriented Weekend

They sure are family now!

If living in a Hamaspik of Rockland County Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA)—or in any Hamaspik group home, for that matter—didn't make residents feel like family, well, they certainly feel like family today.

And not just towards other residents of the same group home—towards all other Hamaspik group homes too.

But it gets better.

Not only do the individuals supported residentially by Hamaspik of Rockland County now feel like one big family, but so do all their Managers—as well as the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who support each of those individuals.

Now throw in the wives and children of each Manager and DSP—and you have a sizable crowd of instant family, and the scene and theme of the recent weekend event hosted by Hamaspik Rockland for its entire men's residential body.

Gathering for a Shabbos weekend



A PLACE FOR ALL AT THE TABLE: MANAGERS AND THEIR TEAMS ENJOY THE MORALE-BOOST

of recreation, inspiration and appreciation, the entire Hamaspik of Rockland County men's group-home family spent a recent weekend together at the Hamaspik Resort in upstate Rock Hill, New York.

In attendance were group-home Managers of the Airmont, Arcadian, Concord, Grandview,

and Wannamaker group homes—respectively, Messrs. Aaron Schwartz, Solomon Lebowitz, Zalman Kepetch, Elazar Berger, and Joel Horowitz.

As is the case with their day jobs, their weekend here centered first on the presence of their beloved charges—the individuals with disabilities whom their residences support. Throughout the weekend, a helpful Manager or DSP was always on hand to accommodate any request or need.

In a vital show of support and appreciation, Moshe Sabel—Hamaspik of Rockland County's devoted longtime Director of Residential Services—attended with his team of Managers.

But of equal importance to the weekend's unofficial theme of family was the presence and inclusion of each man's wife and family. (And perhaps most symbolic of that theme was the Friday-night Shabbos dinner, at which each private family table lovingly included two individuals from Hamaspik's men's group homes—but more on that soon.)

The event, orchestrated by Hamaspik of Rockland County Special Events Coordinator Avrumi Markowitz, along with Mr. Kepetch, started around 11 a.m. on a Friday morning, as the first vehicles began pulling into the Resort's parking lot. While many DSPs and their families arrived with their own cars, several full Hamaspik vans transporting individuals and some staff also arrived.

Upon entry, each Hamaspik employee was given a welcome



UPLIFT: THE LIMINOVER REBBE INSPIRES ALL

package including a warm personalized thank-you letter. All guests then were invited to make their way to the hotel's ballroom for a fresh hot lunch.

Later in the afternoon, with the sundown Shabbos approaching, DSPs broke away from the company of family to tend to the family of their company—the individuals they support. The DSPs first took the time to ensure that each individual's luggage had been neatly unpacked in their hotel rooms. They then helped them shower and dress in formal Shabbos attire.

While all that was going on, children played in areas and rooms—complete with plenty of games and toys—set aside for them, while the wives naturally gravitated to one another.

Both before and after the sunset Shabbos candle-lighting, a spiritual exercise long the province of the Jewish woman and homemaker, the womenfolk found instant kinship with their soul sisters.

While some knew each other prior, most were meeting each other for the first time, points out Mr. Kepetch. Hence, conversations along the lines of, "Oh, your husband *also* works here?!" were heard.

But the true significance of that was the sense of bonding and identification that many of the women, meeting each other for the first time, found in each other. In fact, reports Mr. Kepetch, any reticence or hesitation—due to residual societal stereotypes—that they may have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 >>

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●► HAMASPIK NEWS

Shabbaton

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

felt towards their husbands' line of work were readily dispersed and dispensed with, discovering as they did that "Hamaspik employee" is a badge of honor.

They were thus seen sitting together in large groups throughout the Shabbaton, chatting about all things related to being a now-proud Hamaspik wife. And on Saturday night, once Shabbos was over and electronic device usage resumed, many were seen exchanging phone numbers with their new friends.

As for the Shabbos itinerary itself, here's what chronologically happened:

After the sundown candle-lighting, the menfolk repaired to the on-site shul (synagogue), where the full amenities of your average neighborhood shul made guests feel right at home.

Following the prayer services, a grand Friday-night communal meal was served in the main ballroom. Maximizing the family atmosphere were round tables for each of the several dozen staff families—each ensconced within cubicle-like partitions for maximum personal privacy.

Thus, joined by wife, children, and two beloved individuals, each DSP



SERIOUSLY UNSERIOUS BUSINESS: LANGSAM & FELDMAN PLAY OUT A COMICAL OFFICE SCENE

or Manager felt surrounded by his family—together creating the very picture of disability mainstreaming, non-judgement and acceptance, where not only was the line between “family” and “job” blurred but where, at least for one beautiful Shabbos, it didn't even exist.

Mr. Kepetch accentuated the magical atmosphere with a few spoken words of inspiration to the entire crowd.

After the meal, once DSPs had carefully helped their charges off to bed, DSPs and managers stayed up to socialize over snacks and drinks set

up in a side ballroom.

Despite retiring at late hours, staff members were seen rising early for a 7:30 a.m. early-morning Torah study session in the shul. On top of that, each was at their individuals' bedsides come 8:30 a.m., gently walking each through their morning routines including hygiene, medication, dressing and breakfast. (At the same time, breakfast for women and children was served in a second ballroom.)

Next came the formal morning shul services—followed by a Kiddush pre-meal meal of sorts and then a

grand family luncheon for all.

After an afternoon rest break and the Minchah evening shul services, the crowd assembled in the ballroom for the traditional Shalosh Seudos (“Third Meal”). Airmont Briderheim Manager Aaron Schwartz shared a few words.

Following the Maariv and Havdalah post-Shabbos services, a *Melaveh Malka* post-Shabbos meal was served just for individuals and children, after which the individuals were tucked into bed.

Then, another *Melaveh Malka* was served. The appreciation event, for staff and spouses only, was also joined by Forshay Briderheim IRA Manager Mrs. Sarah Fisher and her husband, the respected Rabbi Yitzchok Fisher of Monsey, New York, who traveled in to be present. Wannamaker IRA Manager Joel Horowitz capably served as emcee. In special appreciation of the Managers' hard work year-round, the *Melaveh Malka* featured fine food, live music, a comedy skit by popular duo Langsam & Feldman and a keynote address by the Liminover Rebbe, Rabbi Yaakov Shlomo Meisels, a distinguished communal spiritual leader. The Rebbe drove home the point of the great merit the Hamaspik staff have for caring for “God's children.”

While all the DSPs and Managers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 >>

●► HEALTH NEWS

Rise in Out-of-Pocket Health Spending Fastest since 1985

Uncovered healthcare expenses grew 10.4 percent in 2021

Bethesda, Maryland—According to the National Health Expenditures Report by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), out-of-pocket health care spending increased by 10.4 percent in 2021—a rate not seen since 1985.

The report also found that U.S. spending on healthcare in 2021 grew by 2.7 percent over 2020, reaching a total of \$4.3 trillion, or around \$12,900 per person.

Out-of-pocket spending had actually fallen by 2.6 percent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as Americans put off doctors' appointments and other health services. Year 2021's spike was driven in part by increased use of dental services, eyeglasses and medical



SHOPPING FOR GOOD HEALTH: OUT-OF-POCKET MEDICAL SPENDING SPIKED IN 2021, SAYS CMS

supplies following the 2020 decline, the CMS Office of the Actuary found.

At the same time, the number of uninsured individuals in the United

States decreased for the second year in a row in 2021, thanks to increased enrollment in Medicaid and private health insurance, the report noted. But even with insurance, Americans may find themselves paying out-of-pocket for deductibles, co-pays and services that are not covered.

Most Americans receive their health coverage from their employers, meaning they have little say in what services are covered. That lack of choice can limit competition and drive up prices. CMS data showed spending on health care by private businesses rose by 6.5 percent in 2021, compared with a 2.9 percent decline seen in 2020. The majority of this increase was driven by contributions to employer-sponsored private health insurance premiums.

The report also showed that spending on retail prescription drugs rose by 7.8 percent in 2021, marking a total of \$378 billion.

The National Health Expenditures Report has been collecting U.S. health care spending data since 1960. ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK



A Warm Welcome



A PLACE AND A GIFT FOR EVERYONE: SEATS AWAITING GUESTS BORE WELCOME BAGS (L) WHILE GAMES FOR SIBLINGS WEREN'T FORGOTTEN (R); A BUFFET DINNER AWAITED (TOP)

Starting the Summer on the Right Wing

With 'Wings' Psychotherapy Services for the Entire Community, a New Season for Anyone Takes Flight

Once synonymous with developmental disabilities, Hamaspik—in classic fashion—is now reshaping the mental health landscape in our community with all its initiatives in recent years.

From Specialty Mental Health Care Management to Community Oriented Recovery and Empowerment programs, Hamaspik is bringing its brand of uncompromising quality and caring heart to the field of mental wellness for all—and now, in the form of Wings, a conventional psychotherapy practice now offering services to the entire community.

Wings is geared for mainstream community members who may have never benefited from any program in the past—as well as those already supported by Hamaspik or elsewhere for developmental disabilities, care management, and the like.

“While we put an emphasis on supporting parents and siblings of those

with special needs, our services are open to the entire community—and covers the full spectrum of the many subcultures within it,” says Mordechai Neuman, LCSW, Director of Wings.

Located at the Monsey Hub, home to Hamaspik of Rockland County's headquarters, the Wings clinic is centrally and conveniently situated in the heart of “downtown Monsey's” Rt. 59, making it accessible to the entire community.

The ambience of its picturesque therapy rooms lends itself to the healing process, and Wings' seasoned clinicians run the cultural gamut of the greater communities that they simultaneously serve and hail from, making the experience even more effective.

With a full team of licensed mental-health counselors under the clinical supervision of Raphael Hess, LCSW and Yocheved Jacobsohn, LCSW, and led by Mr. Neuman, Wings—and clients' mental health—has taken flight. ★

Hamaspik Rockland's UpClub Hosts Successful PTA-Style Event at New Center

Parents Meet and Greet Caring Staff, Treated to Self-Care Presentation by Veteran Social Worker

“It was a very successful event,” declares Joy Stimmel, LCSW. “Guests were taken care of spiritually and physically.”

The event in question? A “meet-and-greet” for parents, hosted Hamaspik of Rockland County's UpClub After-School Respite (ASR) programs.

The event—which featured, among many other things, a therapeutic presentation by the above veteran social worker—was in many ways a PTA evening, at which parents meet teachers, find out how children are doing, and see their children's classrooms.

The event had several purposes, says Mrs. Esty Schonfeld, Day Services Oversight Manager: One, an “opening ceremony” to present Hamaspik of Rockland County's newly-opened multipurpose Day Services center. Secondly, she says, “I also wanted mothers to meet each other.” And thirdly,

for parents to meet staff of the three UpClub programs: UpClub Kids for boys 3-10 and girls 3-13; UpClub Mainstream for boys/girls ages 3-8; and UpClub Teens for girls 13+.

The event, attended by many mothers, began with a walkthrough tour. Guests then sat in the multipurpose room, where chairs and tables had been decorated with welcome packages.

Mrs. Stimmel then opened with an interactive icebreaker, then explaining that Respite is equally for parents. She emphasized that Respite gives parents vital, critical breaks for self-care—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

What were mothers most impressed with? “That someone was really taking notice of them and their needs,” answers Mrs. Stimmel. “If there's anybody who does this well, it's Hamaspik. They are at the forefront of embracing the whole family.” ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Making Dreams Come True

Chol Hamoed Trip to American Dream Brings Joy to Hundreds of Families

Hamaspiik of Kings County's grand trip to American Dream mall on Chol Hamoed Pesach was a true highlight of Yom Tov for more than 15,000 who attended, over 2,000 clients and their family members.

The Chol Hamoed trip is a major event for clients of Hamaspiik of Kings County, giving them the opportunity to attend an all-expenses-paid, fantastic trip with entertainment and excitement for every age and stage. For many of these families, taking such a trip is not simple, as it can be hard to find a venue where a child with special needs or mental health challenges, together with their siblings, will be happy and feel welcomed. On a Hamaspiik trip, however, every aspect is geared to their needs.

While the American Dream amusement park is exciting on its own merit, Hamaspiik of Kings County took it to the next level. Alongside the rides and amusements offered by the park itself, Hamaspiik brought in performers such as singers, magicians, and strolling entertainers, to enthrall the crowd and ensure that there is something for everyone to enjoy. A complimentary refreshments bar — complete with fruit, yogurts, drinks, chocolate, and more — provided hundreds of thousands of snacks and meals throughout the two shifts (morning and afternoon). Finally, every person who attended the trip received a take-home gift at the end, distributed from inside a specially-hired storefront at the entrance to the mall, just to make it more exciting and special for the families.

At Hamaspiik of Kings County, no detail was spared to ensure that the trip was not just a trip, but an experience. And indeed, parents and children alike marveled at the thoughtfulness and attention to detail that went into the trip.

The trip's theme and slogan "Making

Dreams Together" was printed on the custom-designed tickets mailed to each family, and appeared on all materials used on the trip — including brochures, custom-designed maps of the park, signs directing families from the parking lot to the venue, and a welcome video. No stone was left unturned and no detail was too small to play a part in making this trip something the families would always remember.

Safety and security are paramount at Hamaspiik events, and this was no different: Hamaspiik employed private security teams to work alongside the park's own employees, to ensure safety, direct flow of traffic, prevent overcrowding through careful crowd control, provide direction and help to the families, and be on hand for any emergency situations that might arise. Lost and found stations were strategically placed in case of need, and security officers spanned the entire mall grounds. The foresight and planning ensured a smooth event for the thousands of attendees, who could truly enjoy the experience knowing that every detail was taken care of.

Safety, logistics, behind the scenes

While planning and executing such a trip is undoubtedly a tremendous undertaking, the overwhelming feedback from Hamaspiik of Kings County's delighted clients proves that every bit of effort was worth it.

"Being able to give joy to so many people from so many walks of life is an unbelievable experience," Mr. Hershel Wertheimer, Executive Director at Hamaspiik of Kings County, shares. "To know that we have been a part of providing simchas Yom Tov for 15,000 people — individuals with special needs or mental health challenges and their families — gives us the fuel to keep going." ★

Grand Shabbaton

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

also received elegant gifts at the Melaveh Malka, the Managers surprised Mr. Sabel at the last minute with a gift of their own—a sterling silver wine decanter to thank him for his years of dedication.

Sunday morning was marked by morning shul services followed by breakfast—with all guests going home, recalls says Mr. Kepetch, "in a good mood and with energy to go forward."

Which is exactly the way it's supposed to be when you spend the entire weekend with your beloved family. ★

Scenes Behind the Dreams



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: HAMASPIK'S SECURITY SQUAD ENSURED SAFETY AND SECURITY



HIT IT: SINGER AND BAND SET THE MOOD



PUT A FUN SPIN ON IT: A SHOW FOR KIDS



ON THE JOB: EXEC. DIR. WERTHEIMER (C) AND MANAGER YOSHI MOSKOVITZ (L) ON SCENE



STRIKING THE RIGHT CHORD: THE 'YIDDISHE NACHAS' CHOIR BUOYED THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Public Health and Policy News

TOO MUCH SODA, TOO FEW FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR U.S. CHILDREN FINDS CDC SURVEY

Atlanta, Georgia — A new state-by-state government report overseen by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that young American children are not getting enough fruits and vegetables nowadays—but, unfortunately, they are drinking too much soda and other sugar-laden drinks.

The CDC survey first questioned parents of over 18,000 children ages



SOFT DRINKS, HARD FACTS: U.S. CHILDREN ARE DRINKING TOO MUCH, SAYS CDC POLL

one through five about their children's eating habits.

"This is the first time we've had state-level estimates on these behaviors," noted senior study author Heather Hamner, a CDC senior health scientist, in a media interview.

Among other things, the survey reported that, on average, almost half of U.S. children did not eat even one single vegetable every day. (That figure was highest in Louisiana at 64 percent and lowest in Vermont at 30.4 percent.)

Meanwhile, about 57 percent of U.S. children overall had at least one sugary drink every week.

INDUSTRY OUTLET OUTLINES HEALTH TECH IN 2023

Washington, D.C. — Speaking to several experts in healthcare and related fields, industry outlet *Healthcare Dive* recently published a report on what technology in the healthcare field will look like for the rest of 2023.

For starters, while 2022 was a "down" year, 2023 will be "up" health-tech-wise, with more technology going mainstream.

More specifically, quoted experts predicted the following: Telehealth will shift to long-term chronic care and specialty care and away from urgent care; the number of *digital point solutions*, or problem-solving software, in healthcare will actually decline (as will care navigators); and both providers and authorities will increase cybersecurity.

At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) will start seriously augmenting and supporting real doctors and nurses, considering that the FDA has approved over 520 medical AI-based tools since November 2022 alone.

PSYCHIATRIST CALLS FOR POST-TRAUMA SUPPORT FOR CPR PROVIDERS AND BYSTANDERS

New Haven, Connecticut — It's one thing to practice CPR on a dummy. It's quite another when one is actually doing it in real life—on a real human being suffering a real life-or-death medical emergency—or seeing someone doing it. A real-life CPR situation, even though most CPR patients do survive, is traumatic—for patient, responder and



"ALLERGEN?! SAYS WHO?": "SESAME," NOW SAYS THE FDA—NOW REQUIRING NEW LABELING

bystander alike.

"Let's do more to support health professionals and bystanders in the aftermath," reads the subtitle of an editorial by Amanda J. Calhoun, MD, a psychiatry resident at Yale School of Medicine.

"We need more research into the mental health effects of witnessing and performing CPR, both in the hospital and outside of it," Dr. Calhoun writes. "We need to increase awareness of the psychological trauma... and urge people to seek professional mental health support if they are struggling, even for those who are healthcare professionals."

SAFE-HEALTHCARE GROUP WARNS ON UNDERREPORTED HOSPITAL DEVICE MALFUNCTIONS FOR 2023

Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania — Modern medicine may be more technology-driven than ever, leading to better prevention and results than ever. But with all that technology comes with ever-increasing complexity—which can lead, and has led, to patient harm.

To keep the professional and lay public informed of possible problems in today's healthcare, the Penn.-based Emergency Care Research Institute (ECRI) global watchdog group releases warning lists in several categories every year.

One of ECRI's health-tech hazards for 2023 is this telling insight: hospital staff underreporting device malfunctions because they're too busy with time-sensitive patient care, and/or they don't know how to officially report any such malfunction. "As a result, broken, malfunctioning, poorly manufactured, or poorly designed devices may remain in use," ECRI warns.

NEW FEDERAL REQUIREMENT: SESAME MUST BE LISTED AS ALLERGEN ON FOOD LABELS

Washington, D.C. — Good news for people allergic to anything containing sesame: Sesame is now required to be

labeled as an allergen on packaged foods, including dietary supplements.

However, consumers may not see sesame listed as an allergen on some products right away, simply because the new FDA rule only applies to packaging manufactured in 2023, not before—many packaged food items at your local grocery were manufactured weeks or months before hitting those shelves.

Also keep in mind a food product's ingredients can be changed at any time, so it's a good idea to check the label every time you buy the food product.

Sesame now joins eight other foods already declared as major food allergens by federal law. Those eight major food allergens are milk, eggs, certain fish, certain shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.

MEDICARE TO DOWN-RATE NURSING HOMES THAT OVERPRESCRIBE ANTIPSYCHOTICS TO SENIORS

Washington, D.C. — As part of the White House's effort to boost safety and accountability in U.S. nursing homes, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced new actions to reduce the inappropriate dispensing of antipsychotic medications to residents of nursing homes.

Those actions include targeted, off-site audits to determine whether nursing homes are accurately assessing and coding individuals with a schizophrenia diagnosis.

If an audit identifies that a facility has a pattern of inaccurately coding residents as having schizophrenia, its Five-Star Quality Measure Rating will be downgraded to one star.

"No nursing home resident should be improperly diagnosed with schizophrenia or given an inappropriate antipsychotic," read a statement by HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra.

The new policy "will help prevent these errors and give families peace of mind." ★

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In the Know

ALL ABOUT...

EYE FLOATERS

Sources: Mayo Clinic, National Eye Institute (NEI), American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), Penn Medicine, WebMD, Wilmington Eye, Drug Discovery News

Eye floaters are spots in your vision. Most eye floaters are caused by age-related changes that occur as the *vitreous*, a jelly-like substance inside your eyes, liquifies and contracts. Scattered clumps of *collagen fibers* form within the vitreous and can cast tiny shadows on the retina, the light-sensitive layer of tissue at the back of the eye.

These shadows that you see are called *floaters*—because, obviously, they appear to float on the surface of the eye. (They actually don't—but more on that later.)

If you notice a sudden increase in eye floaters, contact an eye specialist immediately—especially if you also see light flashes or lose your vision. These can be symptoms of an emergency that requires prompt attention.

DEFINITION

Floaters are small dark shapes that float across your vision. They may look to you like black or gray spots or specks, strings or threads, squiggly lines, or even cobwebs.

Floaters move as your eyes move—so when you try to look at them directly, they seem to move or dart away. When your eyes stop moving, floaters keep drifting across your vision.

Most people have floaters that come and go, and they often don't need treatment. Floaters can develop at any age, but they usually occur in people ages 50 to 75.

Contrary to common misconception, these floating specks are not on the surface of your eyes but rather, inside them. In fact, most adults have at least a few floaters. There are times when they may be more visible than at other times, such as when you are reading. You may especially notice floaters more when you look at something bright, like white paper or a blue sky.

But sometimes floaters can be a sign of a more serious eye condition. So if you notice new floaters that appear suddenly and don't go away, it's important to tell your eye doctor.

More medically speaking, floaters

“

THESE FLOATING SPECKS ARE NOT ON THE SURFACES OF THE EYES BUT RATHER, DEEP INSIDE OF THEM.

”

can be defined and broken down as follows:

Cobweb/Fibrous Strand Floater

This thin, dense floater is most common in young people. It can appear as multiple dots and/or string-like cobwebs. These floaters are the result of clumping of the collagen fibers of the eye's vitreous. Depending on the size and location, these may be treatable with laser floater removal.

Diffuse, Cloud-Like Floater

This cloud-like floater is caused by the natural aging process. Sometimes this floater can be treated with laser floater removal, but it often requires more overall treatment to obtain satisfactory results.

Weiss Ring Floater

A Weiss Ring Floater is a large, ring-shaped floater that forms as a result of peripheral vascular disease (PVD), which is a slow and progressive circulation disorder. Narrowing, blockage, or spasms in a blood vessel can cause PVD. When it occurs in blood vessels servicing the eye, it can cause the vitreous cortex to pull off of the eye's posterior wall. When that happens, it takes with it some of the fibrous vitreous cortex that surrounds the head of the optic nerve. This floater is usually located safely away from the crystalline lens and the retina of the eye, and is fibrous. Because of this, a Weiss Ring Floater can be treated safely and effectively with laser floater removal.

Risk of developing floaters

According to the National Eye

Institute (NEI), a division of the federal National Institutes of Health (NIH), almost everyone develops floaters as they get older. However, some people are at higher risk. You're at higher risk if you:

- Are very nearsighted
- Have diabetes
- Have had surgery to treat cataracts

Migraine overlap

Something that might resemble a floater is the visual aura that can come with a migraine headache. It could look like what you see when you put your eye to a kaleidoscope. It might even move. It's different from the floaters and flashbulb-type “flashes” that come with other eye problems. This usually lasts about 30 minutes or less, and may involve the vision in both eyes. But then it completely resolves unless you have another episode of migraine.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of eye floaters may include:

- Small shapes in your vision that appear as dark specks or knobby, transparent strings of floating material
- Spots that move when you move your eyes, so when you try to look at them, they move quickly out of your line of vision
- Spots that are most noticeable when you look at a plain bright background, such as a blue sky or a white wall
- Small shapes or strings that eventually settle down and drift out of the line of vision



When to see a doctor

Contact an eye specialist immediately if you notice:

- Many more eye floaters than usual
- A sudden onset of new floaters
- Flashes of light in the same eye as the floaters
- A gray curtain or blurry area that blocks part of your vision
- Darkness on a side or sides of your vision (peripheral vision loss)
- Changes that come on quickly and get worse over time
- Floaters after eye surgery or eye trauma
- Eye pain

These symptoms could be caused by a retinal tear, with or without a retinal detachment. This is a sight-threatening condition that requires immediate attention.

CAUSES

Floaters usually happen because of normal changes to the eyes. As you age, tiny strands of the vitreous stick together and cast shadows on the retina. Those shadows appear as floaters.

More specifically, elaborates the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), “as we age, our vitreous starts to thicken or shrink,” forming clumps or strands.

To further explain the cause of eye floaters, here’s a more detailed “tour” of the human eye—from the outside, through the front and straight to the back:

- The eye sits in a bony socket called the *orbit*. Six *extraocular* muscles in the orbit are attached to the eye. They move the eye up and down, side to side, and rotate the eye.
- The extraocular muscles are attached to the white part of the eye called the *sclera*. This is a strong layer of tissue that covers nearly the entire surface of the eyeball.
- The surface of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelids are covered with a clear film called the *conjunctiva*. The conjunctiva in turn is covered by the *tear film*, three layers of moisture known commonly as tears. The tears keep the eyes constantly moist and lubricated.
- Light is focused into the eye through the clear, dome-shaped front of the eye—the *cornea*.
- Behind the cornea is fluid called the *aqueous*.
- Behind the aqueous is the *iris*. The iris is the part of the eye that gives it its color. (The dark hole in the middle of the iris is called the *pupil*.)
- Directly behind the pupil sits the *lens*, which focuses light toward the back of the eye. The lens is surrounded by the *lens capsule*.
- Behind the lens and its capsule lies

the *vitreous cavity*, which is filled with the jellylike *vitreous humor*, commonly just called the vitreous.

- Light passes through the vitreous onto the *retina*, the light-sensitive tissue lining the back of the eye. The retina gives us vision as we know it.

So in short, with eye floaters, the liquid vitreous in the back of the eye gets crusty or clumpy enough to block the light hitting the retina, creating the shadows we see as floaters.

Posterior vitreous detachment

If the vitreous pulls away from the back of the eye, it is called *posterior vitreous detachment* (PVD). Floaters more often happen with posterior vitreous detachment, but you can also get them without one. They are not serious, and they tend to fade and become less noticeable over time. Severe floaters can be removed by surgery, but this has risks and is seldom necessary or recommended.

The NEI notes that sometimes floaters can have more serious causes. These include:

- Eye infections
- Eye injuries
- Uveitis (inflammation in the eye)
- Bleeding in the eye
- Retinal tear (when vitreous detachment tears a hole in the retina)
- Retinal detachment (when the retina gets pulled away from the back of the eye)

If they annoy you, try to get them out of your field of vision. Move your eyes—this shifts the fluid around. Look up and down—that usually works better than looking side to side.

However, any medical condition that is the cause of eye floaters, such as bleeding from diabetes or inflammation, should be treated.

Eye floaters can be frustrating and adjusting to them can take time. Once you know the floaters will not cause any more problems, over time you may be able to ignore them or notice them less often.

If your eye floaters get in the way of your vision, which happens rarely, you and your eye care specialist may consider treatment. Options may include surgery to remove the vitreous or a laser to disrupt the floaters, although both procedures are rarely done.

Surgery

An *ophthalmologist* who is a specialist in retina and vitreous surgery removes the vitreous through a small incision (vitrectomy). The vitreous is replaced with a salt solution to help your eye maintain its shape. Surgery may not remove all the floaters, and new floaters can develop after surgery.

Risks of a vitrectomy include infection, bleeding and retinal tears. The risk is low, but if these problems

only inside your eye.

“Most floaters and flashes are not a problem,” reads the AAO’s official literature. “However, there are times when they can be signs of a serious condition.”

According to the AAO, you should call an ophthalmologist right away when:

- you notice a lot of new floaters
- you have a lot of flashes
- a shadow appears in your peripheral (side) vision
- a gray curtain covers part of your vision

Such floaters and flashes could be symptoms of a torn or detached retina. This is when the retina pulls away from the back of your eye. This is a serious condition that needs to be treated.

Again, these treatments do come with some level of risk. Vitrectomy, the surgical removal of the part of the eye containing those collagen clumps, and vitreolysis, the shining of high-energy light pulses (lasers) at the fibers to break them apart, have both been known to cause retinal tears, detached retinas, and vitreous hemorrhage in some patients. Speak to your eye doctor about which option is best for you.

If you (or, more importantly, your doctor) feel you need a different option, a more recent treatment has been developed that is known medically as *nanobubble ablation*.

In a study published in the May 2022 edition of the journal *Nature Nanotechnology*, researchers first note that “vitreous opacities,” or floaters, “can cause notable impairment in vision-related quality of life—and then “introduce ‘nanobubble ablation’ for safe destruction of vitreous opacities.”

As lead researcher Prof. Felix Sauvage, of Belgium’s Ghent University, and colleagues explained, the new procedure first injects the eye(s) with tiny gold particles (nanoparticles) that have been coated in hyaluronic acid, a natural lubricant normally found in the eyes, joints and skin. The nanoparticles are then subjected to bursts of laser light lasting nanoseconds (billionths of a second). When the nanoparticles are subjected to lasers, they turn into vapor (vaporize), which creates tiny bubbles of gas inside the eye.

In turn, these so-called *nanobubbles* of vapor “mechanically destroy the opacities,” the research found. “Nanobubble ablation might offer a safe and efficient treatment to millions of patients suffering from debilitating vitreous opacities and paves the way for a highly safe use of pulsed lasers in the posterior segment of the eye,” the study concluded. ★

IF YOUR EYE FLOATERS GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR VISION, WHICH HAPPENS RARELY, YOU AND YOUR EYE CARE SPECIALIST MAY CONSIDER TREATMENT.

DIAGNOSIS

Your eye care specialist conducts a complete eye exam to determine the cause of your eye floaters. Your exam usually includes *eye dilation*. Eye drops widen (dilate) the dark center of your eye. This allows your specialist to better see the back of your eyes and the vitreous.

TREATMENT

Most eye floaters don’t require treatment.

happen, they can permanently damage your vision.

Laser disruption

An ophthalmologist aims a special laser at the floaters in the vitreous (laser vitreolysis). This may break up the floaters and make them less noticeable. Some people who have this treatment report improved vision; others notice little or no difference. Risks of laser therapy include damage to your retina if the laser is aimed incorrectly.

The AAO includes floaters in the same category as flashes, or sudden bursts of bright light that seem to be

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS



Expanded Space, Expanded Hearts

Hamaspiik's New ASR Location

Expanded Space, Expanded Hearts

Hamaspiik's new building at 1575 46th street allows ASR programs to grow their services... and give more support



Mr. Yehuda Spangelet, director of day services



Mr. Ari Klar, designer and director of maintenance for the day services



Mr. Nathan Steinmetz, IT manager, directed the planning and installation of all technical aspects of the new premises



Haktanim: Haktanim, one of the two after-school respite programs housed in the new building, is directed by Mrs. Yocheved Lerner and Mrs. Shaindy Wolf.



Ahavas Golda: Ahavas Golda, also in the new building, and directed by Mrs. Surie Moskowitz and Miss Tzivi Gruenwald, is a haven for high-functioning girls and women with special needs.

From Concept to Completion

How the creation of a new building happens at Hamaspiik

Mr. Spangelet

From every point of view, this building was a dream project: from lease to move-in took around six months in total, and the final result is a “wow” of a building!

The construction was extremely successful, and a model we want to emulate.

What makes it even more amazing is that we were constructing premises in other locations at the same time — each person involved in the process was juggling several projects, yet they were fully dedicated to making this

Multiple Gains

It's easy to understand the benefits the ASR programs offer to families of children with special needs. Without after-school activities, parents face the ongoing challenge of giving 110% of their time and attention to the child with special needs, while trying to provide their other children with everything they need, too.

Often, the child with special needs has behavioral challenges that impact the entire family — whether they disturb siblings, necessitate a very specific structure or routine, or simply require the lion's share of their parents' attention.

This is where the Twilights ASR programs,

including Haktanim and Ahavas Golda, step in. But they're far from being a babysitting service. Each program is designed to help the children expand their skill set, develop hobbies, cultivate talent, and unwind from and process their day at school so they can return home calm and happy.

There are short-term benefits to respite programs, and studies show that there are also numerous long-term benefits to extracurricular programs, specifically for children with special needs or other disabilities. Here are just a few:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 >>

**IN
NUM
BERS**

3
cordless phones

8
8 regular office phones

18
classroom phones

2
announcement intercoms

8
doorbells

big printers

2

29
speakers

2
camera computers
55
cameras

22
closet magnet locks

29
door keycard readers

8
OFFICE COMPUTERS

2
music controllers

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS



Expanded Space, Expanded Hearts

Hamaspiik's New ASR Location

Mr. Spangelet

process as smooth and seamless as possible.

Today, the ASR programs have beautiful new premises, airy and bright, with separate rooms for different age groups and activities. We're able to accept more people, and are continuing to expand, not just in the number of people served, but also in the hours we offer services. There are ASR programs seven days a week, including on legal holidays. Whenever it's possible to be open, we're open, continuing to provide stellar services and support to families and children in need.

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18



Life skills, social skills, emotional regulation, and more, can be smoothly imparted and absorbed in an informal setting. At Hamaspiik's ASR programs, counselors work one-on-one with the children, setting goals and cheering them on as they achieve those goals — because it's never just about the day's activity, it's about skills for life itself.



Developing talents or skills gives these children a **huge boost in self-confidence.** Success breeds success, and this can be the start of a positive cycle that helps the child continue to scale new heights, both at home and in school.



It offers the **chance to make friends.** Whichever school environment the children are in, at an after-school program, they have a social niche all of their own, and the opportunity to develop treasured relationships with peers and counselors in a relaxed environment.



Settings like Hamaspiik's ASR programs give children with special needs the chance to develop those talents. Sometimes, these programs enable a child to discover a hidden talent, which can lead to a new interest and passion that may last a lifetime.

Enjoying the Space

Ahavas Golda

Ahavas Golda and its sister program, Lev Chaya, were born out of a desperate need — and because they fill a unique void, we keep on growing! We have around 70 girls in the program, and without our own location, it was a real struggle. People kept calling, asking to join. We wanted to help them, but in order to do so, we needed space.

Now, not only do we have space, it's absolutely stunning! Brand new, all-inclusive — we even have our own custom-built sensory room and large kitchen. It's so gratifying to be able to expand our services, both in quality and in quantity, thanks to the large, beautiful, custom-designed premises.

We moved in the summer, so it wouldn't disrupt the regular program, and we got to start the new school year in a new building. It was an exciting time — we decorated the bulletin boards and put up special Ahavas Golda banners and notices. The girls were super excited to be in the new, enhanced premises!

One more bonus: since we're not sharing premises with any other programs, we can put on our own music, such as the Ahavas Golda theme song, with girls and women singing. The girls enjoy that so much!

Ahavas Golda is truly grateful to Hamaspiik, and in particular Mr. Klar and Mr. Steinmetz and their teams, for their efforts to make everything, from the size of the rooms to the setup of the sound system, absolutely customized for us and for the girls we service. We're all greatly enjoying the fruits of your labor.

The smile on each child's face speaks for itself... They feel, more than ever, that Haktanim is an enjoyable and safe haven for them

Haktanim

Haktanim provides after-school respite for children ages two through eight, and runs throughout the school year — weekdays, Shabbos, Sundays, legal holidays, Yomim Tovim — we're always on! But our goal isn't simply to "give the parents a break" (although that's important, too!). It's to provide a safe and calm haven, while reinforcing key skills that the children learn during the day. We'll also introduce new concepts, helping the children develop fine motor skills, improve their social interactions, and gain important life skills.

Of course, we did all of this in the previous location as well, but now, with premises designed exactly in accordance with our needs, Haktanim is soaring to new heights. We're able to accommodate more children, providing services to countless more families in need. The building's layout — a small detail that's not really so

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 >>



● ► HAMASPIK NEWS



Expanded Space, Expanded Hearts

Hamaspiik's New ASR Location

Enjoying the Space

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

small! — has been another huge and welcome change, from the easy access to the bathrooms, to the spacious and perfectlyplaced closets.

Since we moved over the summer, we were able to start the year on a high — and the excitement hasn't faded. The smile on each child's face speaks for itself... They feel, more than ever, that Haktanim is an enjoyable and safe haven for them. Every one of their needs is met, and each detail taken into account to create the ideal environment for growth. Thank you, Hamaspiik!



Worth a Thousand Words

A walk-through 1575 46th Street, Hamaspiik's new building for two after-school respite programs



The classrooms have a unique design on the floors, in a different color in every room.

The beautiful Ahavas Golda kitchen is ready for the production of goodies, enabling an enjoyable activity while the girls learn valuable culinary and life skills.



Enter the premises of Ahavas Golda or Haktanim, and stop for a moment to enjoy the state-of-the-art interior and sleek design. The effect is easy on the eye, every element of the decor coordinated and tasteful.

As you walk down the hallway, you could be forgiven for thinking this is a typical school building. There's purpose behind the layout and design: every child should feel like they're in a regular, mainstream environment. It looks a school building like any other — with signature Hamaspiik quality, of course.



Large windows flood the spacious rooms with light and air...



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Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today

REVIEW OF 2018 HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS FINDS 27.5-PERCENT RATE OF ADVERSE EVENTS

Boston, Massachusetts — A review of hospitalizations at 11 hospitals in Massachusetts over Year 2018 finds that just over one of every four patients experienced an adverse event.

The data review, published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, defined *adverse event* as “unintended physical injury resulting from or contributed to by medical care that requires additional monitoring, treatment or hospitalization, or that results in death.”

Of the 2,809 random hospitalizations reviewed, 978 were found to have involved an adverse event. Some 39 percent of those were drug events like medication errors or reactions. Just over 30 percent were surgical or procedural, followed by 15 percent nursing care-associated (like falls) and 11.9 percent involving the notorious healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). Some 25 percent of all were deemed preventable.

BUSIER ORTHOPEDIC SURGEONS, BETTER (AND CHEAPER) PATIENT RESULTS, FINDS RESEARCH

San Francisco, California — Experience is better in a lot of things

in life. And now, apparently, one of those things include orthopedic surgery—at least if new research by the Calif.-based Clarify Health Institute (CHI) is correct.

Although one might think that less-busy, more-deliberate surgeons (and surgical wards) would produce higher-quality patient outcomes, Clarify’s research indicates quite the opposite. It highlights the relationship between the number of orthopedic surgeries a doctor has performed and patient outcomes.

According to CHI, when considering orthopedic surgery like hip or knee replacement, a patient should know a prospective surgeon’s record and try to find the busiest surgeon for best results.

Over 15 million Americans undergo elective surgery each year, at an estimated cost of \$147.2 billion.

LABOR DEPT. SENDS FINAL COVID-19 HEALTHCARE WORKER RULE TO WHITE HOUSE

Washington, D.C. — The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a division of the federal U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL), sets national rules for the physical safety of workers in all industries and labor settings—including those of healthcare facilities like nursing homes and hospitals.

Now, after about a year of industry

feedback and deliberations, OSHA has submitted its final recommended rules to the White House for review on how healthcare facilities should protect workers against COVID-19. Until now, such policies have been set by a mix of public and private rules from the CDC and outside experts.

The actual text of the rule hasn’t yet been released. But insiders say it will require vaccines, infected-worker tracking, monitoring and limiting entry points in direct patient care areas, and transmission-limiting procedures like N95 masks.

HEALTHCARE RANKED LOWEST FOR EMPLOYEE (AND CUSTOMER) SATISFACTION, QUALTRICS SURVEY FINDS

Provo, Utah — Here’s another ingredient in the “bubbling pot” of change, and debate about that change, that is the modern hospital industry: employee satisfaction (or lack thereof).

According to a recent global survey by the Utah-based Qualtrics company, healthcare ranked last for employee satisfaction compared to 27 other industries.

The 2023 *Healthcare Experience Trends Report* queried some 3,000 healthcare employees across 27 countries—finding that only half believe they are paid fairly, to start with. Thirty-eight percent reported being at risk of burnout, while 39 percent considered leaving their organizations.

Qualtrics also surveyed 9,000 consumers, finding that hospitals ranked among the lowest across industries for satisfaction. The survey also found that patients appreciated the human touch more than modern medical technology.

WHOLE BLOOD PLUS RED-BLOOD-CELL TRANSFUSIONS SAVE MORE ER PATIENTS

Boston, Massachusetts — Hospitals may use *massive transfusion protocol* (MTP), or the rapid replace-

ment of large amounts of lost blood, to counteract cases of severe bleeding in emergency patients.

But MTP generally uses PBRC, the *packed red blood cells* that comprise 45 percent of blood. The other 55 percent consists of plasma, the yellowish liquid in which the red blood cells float.

When donated blood is not split into PBRC and plasma and stored separately, it is called *whole blood* (WB).

Now, a study suggests that using WB and MTP in the emergency room for severe bleeding instead of just MTP gives patients higher survival rates.

Among nearly 2,800 patients, WB and MTP was associated with a lower risk of death after 24 hours



RICHER BLOOD, BETTER OUTCOME: STUDY

or 30 days, finds Boston University research. An improvement for WB-MTP patients over just-MTP was also found within five hours of treatment.

MORE NURSING STUDENTS FAILING RN TESTS, INDUSTRY DEBATES REASONS

Little Falls, New Jersey — According to healthcare news outlet *MedPageToday*, the percentage of U.S.-educated candidates taking and passing the National Council Licensure Examination for registered nurses (NCLEX-RN) for the first time fell from 88.2 percent in 2019 to 82.5 percent in 2021. “Pass rates continued to decline in 2022,” it reported, “with an average pass rate of 80.9 percent for all first-time U.S.-educated candidates.”

According to most sources, lack of real-life practice with actual hospitals and patients (clinical rotations) due to the pandemic impacted would-be nurses’ exam scores.

Lack of good nursing teachers in low-population U.S. states was another cited factor. Fall of hospital-based nursing schools and rise of for-profit schools, students’ economic (not moral) motivations, and lower school entry standards were also fingered. ★



THE BUSIER, THE BETTER: HIGHER-VOLUME SURGEONS HAVE BETTER RESULTS, SAYS A STUDY



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

A Hot Senior Topic: Beating Summer Heat

With the Sunny Season Here, Hamaspik HomeCare Looks at Preventing Dehydration or Heat Conditions in Older Adults

The sun is shining. The skies are blue. The visiting grandkids are in the yard. It's summer—the perfect season for quality family time and anything but medical emergencies for our beloved Bubbies and Zaidies. Here's how to keep our revered seniors safe in the warm weather.

We'll look at two issues here: Dehydration (too little water in the body), and various bodily conditions induced by too much heat, like heat exhaustion or worse, heatstroke. While both can become highly dangerous, they can also be easily prevented. Here's how.

Dehydration

Hydration, or maintenance of water level, is critical for the body's proper function, especially in seniors. Water helps the body regulate temperature, flush waste and lubricate joints.

Dehydration means that the body doesn't have enough water to work best. Dehydration can cause constipation, electrolyte imbalances, kidney problems, and loss of balance. Severe dehydration can lead to hospitalization or worse.

Drinking enough water regularly is vitally important for everyone, but especially for seniors. This is because seniors have: 1. smaller water reserves; 2. weaker thirst responses; 3. less-functioning kidneys; 4. side effects due to any medication(s).

Common dehydration symptoms include dry mouth, fatigue, muscle cramping, and feeling dizzy or lightheaded. Treatment is just drinking water or other fluids to replace lost fluids.

Serious dehydration requires immediate attention. Symptoms include rapid heart rate, trouble moving or

walking, confusion or disorientation, fainting and/or vomit-ing. Anyone with such symptoms must go to the ER right away for intravenous fluids and electrolytes.

Dehydration can be best prevented by drinking water all day. Keep water within easy reach, and take frequent small sips.

Coffee and tea actually have a drying effect, so avoid those.

Finally, seniors should speak to their doctors about any existing health condition(s) and how much daily water people with those conditions require.

Heat conditions

Hot summer days are especially unsafe for seniors, because heat makes it harder for their bodies to regulate temperature—especially with medication(s) and/or existing conditions.

Being overheated for too long can cause the following heat-related conditions:

- *Heat cramps*, or painful muscle tightening or spasms
- *Heat exhaustion*, or the body's warning it can't stay cool
- *Heatstroke*, a medical crisis in which body temperature hits 104°-plus.

All the above must be treated with *immediate* rest, shade, and lots of water. In addition, heatstroke also requires emergency treatment.

To prevent heat conditions from becoming dangerous come summer, seniors should:

- Limit outdoor "sun time"
 - Drink fluids regularly
 - Shower, bathe, or sponge off with cool water
 - Lie down and rest
- Have a cool summer! ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

Another Reason for Robust Regular Vitamin D Intake: Senior Muscle

Study Associates Maintenance of Strong 'Sunshine Vitamin' Levels with Muscle Strength in Aging Adults

Sao Carlos, Brazil — Another study on vitamin D has emerged, this one from Brazil. It finds that seniors who regularly take vitamin D have stronger muscle, as measured by their grip strength compared to that of seniors who do not regularly take vitamin D.

The joint study was conducted by researchers at Brazil's Federal University of São Carlos and England's University College London. It found that older people with measurable vitamin D deficiencies had a 78-percent greater risk of losing muscle strength over those with healthy levels.

Specifically, participants with vitamin D deficiency, as defined by vitamin D blood levels of 30 nanomoles per liter or less, had a 70-percent higher risk of developing muscle loss by the survey's end than those with normal levels of vitamin D (defined as 50 nmol/L and up).

Researchers explained that low levels of vitamin D in seniors can affect strength of muscle tissue because one of vitamin D's many functions is helping the body repair muscle tissue and release calcium needed for muscle contractions. Besides reduction in muscle mass, strength and function, researchers added, vitamin D deficiency can lead to loss of bone mineral density.

To arrive at their conclusions, researchers analyzed public-health data from a four-year survey of over 3,200 people in England aged 50 and up who did not yet have age-related muscle loss.

That muscle loss, known medically as *dynapenia*, is a major risk factor for physical incapacity later in life. It can lead to falls, hospitalization, premature institutionalization and death.

Select study participants were regularly evaluated for grip strength

throughout the ongoing survey. Grip strength is considered a representative of overall body muscle strength.

After excluding participants who

had osteoporosis or were already taking vitamin D, the risk of developing muscle weakness by survey's end was 77-percent higher for older people with vitamin D deficiency at the start than for those whose levels were normal.

Vitamin D is known as the "sunshine vitamin" because it is naturally produced by the body when the skin is exposed to direct sunlight.

It may also be obtained by over-the-counter (OTC) supplements. ★

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