



The Hamaspik Gazette

News of NYSHA
Member Agencies
and General Health

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GAZETTE SURVEY

The GAZETTE asks YOU:

DO YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER SUFFER FROM SINUS INFECTIONS?

A: OFTEN; B: SOMETIMES; C: NEVER

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



HEALTH STAT

U.S. SINUS INFLAMMATION INFORMATION

No. adults with diagnosed sinusitis	28.9 million
No. doctor visits for chronic sinusitis	2.7 million

National Center for Health Statistics, CDC



HEALTH TIP

STOP SINUSITIS: GO "ANTI"! (ANTIOXIDANT-ANTIBACTERIAL, THAT IS)

Antioxidants—of which vitamin C is the best example—ease your immune system's anti-invader battles, so eat high-antioxidant fruits and veggies like oranges and leafy greens. Fruits and veggies like apples and celery also inhibit growth of bacteria, so get those in your diet, too.

Sources: VeryWell Health

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BALLOONING IS FAR MORE THAN ENTERTAINMENT—IT'S CROWD PARTICIPATION, INDIVIDUAL INTERACTION, BUILDING OF FINE MOTOR SKILLS, AND EVEN SOME EDUCATION, ALL IN KEEPING WITH HAMASPIK MISSION OF MAXIMIZING LIFE-IMPROVEMENT

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Services Provided by NYSHA MEMBER 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.

RESPIRE:

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

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

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

Sundays: Respite program provided every Sunday.

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

Summer Break: 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. Made possible by Orange county OFA/ NYS OFA.

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.

NYSSED 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 Hamaspik 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

A Listing for a Different Kind of House

Care Manager Gets Individual on New York State “CRO” Residential List

A hardworking (and anonymity-requesting) Care Manager with Tri-County Care’s office in Monroe is no stranger to disability advocacy work.

He’s been working at Tri-County Care for almost three years now, boasting an extensive background in special needs both personally and professionally. Previously, he worked for the Village of Kiryas Joel Union Free School District, which caters to the community’s students with special needs, as well as at the Men’s Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program at Hamaspik of Orange County.

And, as is the case with so many agency employees, the Care Manager has biological family affected by intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD).

“I’m in the field for years,” he tells the *Gazette*. “If you feel it yourself, you know it best.”

So when the caregivers of one of his beneficiaries on his caseload could no longer care for that beneficiary, the Care Manager sought out a viable long-term alternative for the young

man—specifically, the Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) that is the backbone of New York State’s disability housing program.

But to get into such a home, one needs to be on New York State’s Certified Residential Opportunity (CRO) list. The CRO is comprised of three levels of application: Standard Need, Substantial Need and Emergency Need. *Standard*, a longtime Hamaspik employee explains to the *Gazette*, is self-explanatory—but the wait for placement can take months or years. *Substantial*, the next level up, only secures spots when an individual’s advocates can demonstrate a substantial need.

The CRO list is maintained by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Tri-County’s public-sector partner. It’s a database used and maintained by the OPWDD to record and track individuals statewide whose caregivers are actively looking for housing for them.

Now the gentleman in question

had long been a beneficiary of the Family Care program, a long-running OPWDD initiative that places people with disabilities in loving homes, surrounded by parents and siblings. While age is just a number for many, Family Care providers tend to be on the chronologically junior side, and with typically-growing family along for the ride to the complete the picture.

Fast-forward that a good two decades or so, and you’ve got two middle-aged parents presiding over a largely empty nest, and levels of stamina not what they used to be, either.

Against that background, the Family Care providers of the individual in question had served with valor in the program, putting in their years of selfless duty as they weathered the highs and lows of parenting, special and otherwise, with heart and patience.

But life happens, the clock advances and times—and people—change. Put simply, the aging couple simply couldn’t give their precious Family Care son the

love and care he needed. It was time for a change.

So the Care Manager got right to work, throwing in herculean effort to secure the individual’s justifiable place on the CRO.

He accomplished that by demonstrating—via extensive documentation, among other things—that the Family Care providers, by dint of aging, were no longer physically, financially and emotionally capable to adequately provide for their beloved charge.

After a period of six weeks of frenetic, mission-focused work by the Care Manager, the gentleman was placed on the CRO’s Substantial list.

It may read like little more than an exercise in bureaucracy.

But given the decades of compassion put into the care and upkeep of one special soul, two equally-special souls are at ease now, knowing that it’s only a matter of time before their beloved child will move on to a place his heart can equally call home. ★

● ▶ HEALTH NEWS

Scientists Crack Genetic Code of Rare Kidney Cancer

Research Reveals Drivers of Condition and Provides a Possible Alternative Solution to Surgery

London, England — Joint research by England’s Wellcome Sanger Institute, Great Ormond Street Hospital and The Royal Free Hospital has discovered the genetic code of a rare form of kidney cancer known as reninoma.

The research, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, also revealed a new drug target that could serve as an alternative treatment if surgery is not recommended.

With only about 100 known cases of reported to date worldwide, reninoma is among the rarest of tumors in humans.

While it can usually be cured with surgery, it can cause severe hypertension or can spread and develop into metastases. No medical treatments other than surgery currently exist.

Until now, it had been unknown what genetic error causes reninoma.

But in the new research, a specific error in the genetic code of a known cancer gene, NOTCH1, was found to be behind the cancer’s development.



DECODE THIS: BRITISH RESEARCHERS GENETICALLY UNRAVEL MYSTERY OF VERY RARE KIDNEY CANCER, FINDING THE CODE NEEDED TO TREAT IT WITHOUT RESORTING TO NORMAL SURGERY

The team examined two samples, one from a young adult and the other from a child, with advanced

whole genome and single nuclear sequencing techniques. The findings suggest that the use of existing drugs

targeting that specific gene may possibly treating reninoma where surgery is not a viable option.

“Our study shows that, actually, there is a specific and well-studied gene that drives this rare cancer,” said study co-author Dr. Tanzina Chowdhury. “If we use already known drugs that affect this gene, we might be able to treat it without the need for an invasive technique such as surgery.”

“Here we have a powerful example of cutting-edge science rewriting our understanding of an ultra-rare tumor type, reninoma,” added co-author Dr. Sam Behjati, “whilst delivering a finding that potentially has immediate clinical benefits for patients.” ★

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Happening in Health Today

RADIATION, A MAINSTAY OF CANCER TREATMENT, BEGINS A FADE-OUT

Boston, Massachusetts — A sea change in the mainstream treatment of cancer is underway, says a recent report in health-news outlet *Stat News*: the notable fading of radiation as a treatment tool as more effective and precise treatments enter the field and become increasingly mainstream.

According to the report, more engineered cancer-killing cells, immunotherapies and targeted drugs, and better biomarkers and imaging as cancer treatment means less resorting to radiation, a longtime pillar of cancer treatment. In fact, treatments for cancer today are magnitudes beyond what they were even just two decades ago. “In some cases,” the report states, “they are even keeping certain patients with low-risk tumors off radiation entirely.”

The report also points out that the phasing out of radiation—and the stepping down of cancer treatment in general—is piecemeal by nature, with oncology moving forward specific to certain cancer subtypes.

EXPERIMENTAL LYME DISEASE PREVENTATIVE TESTED BY PENN MEDICINE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — A treatment that modifies a patient’s messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) could potentially protect future recipients against Lyme disease, it was recently reported.

The modified mRNA mimics one of the proteins of *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. The experimental treatment was created at Penn Medicine.

The development, described in the *Cell Press* journal, identified and targeted one of the proteins in *B. burgdorferi* that elicits a potent immune response.

In animal models, the treatment induced a strong antigen-specific antibody and T-cell response as well as a strong memory B cell response after a single administration.

The mRNA technology shows

great promise for use in developing a treatment that may prevent Lyme disease and subsequent development of the debilitating symptoms of post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, according to the researchers.

U.S. DEPT. OF DEFENSE, GOOGLE, BUILD VISUALLY-ENHANCED CANCER-SPOTTING MICROSCOPE

Mountain View, California — Put a high-tech, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven software system that tells

you what you’re looking at into a classic laboratory tool, and the Augmented Reality Microscope is what you might get.

While only some 13 prototypes of the high-tech, computer-driven device have been reportedly developed, what has been reported is fairly exciting for medical-news hounds and techies alike.

According to a recent report, looking through the microscope’s eyepieces will show a computer-generated bright green line that tells doctors where any cancer in the sample at hand is located. What’s more, according to reports,

the microscope’s AI software can also identify the severity of the cancer.

To purchase it, healthcare providers will have to shell out between \$90,000 and \$100,000. Researchers at Google and the Defense Department, who have jointly been working on the system for years now, aim for the AI assistant to help clinicians deal with larger caseloads and workforce shortages.

HEART FAILURE PATIENTS HELPED BY YOGA, FINDS STUDY

Manipal, India — Yoga, the age-old Eastern system of stretching and relaxing, might be a beneficial add-on to standard care for heart-failure patients. A new study from India finds this ancient practice improves quality of life and cardio functioning.

For the study, the researchers enrolled 75 heart-failure patients between the ages of 30 and 70 at a care center in South India. They had received recommended therapy for the previous six months to one year.

Patients were divided into two groups. One received yoga therapy and guideline-directed medical therapy. The other group continued with standard medical therapy without yoga.

Those in the yoga group showed improvement in endurance, strength, balance, symptom stability and quality of life. Patients improved physically and psychologically, but did not show improvement in social and environmental health.

RESEARCH FINDS MORE AMERICANS DRIVEN TO BUILD FAMILIES

New Brunswick, New Jersey — Sometimes guilt is a good thing—in other words, there is such a thing as healthy guilt.

Known otherwise as “fear of missing out,” or FOMO for short, the fear of later feeling guilty for not doing something good comes strongly into play in new research out of Rutgers University.

In an effort to better understand what motivated parents to start a family in the first place, Rutgers researchers first searched through and collected narratives posted to an online parenting community. They found that more Americans are now having children because they don’t later want to feel having missed a quality opportunity. Their report indicates FOMO is motivating many to become moms and dads.

In fact, their estimates show that about 13 in every 14 U.S. parents say they would *not* have turned back the clock on their decision to become parents. ★

INFLAMMATION DUE TO AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE? TRY GINGER



A GINGER APPROACH TO HEALTH: ANOTHER BENEFIT FOUND FOR THE NATURAL ROOT

Aurora, Colorado — Ginger supplements could become part of a treatment plan for autoimmune diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis, researchers at Aurora, Colorado’s University of Colorado School of Medicine now find.

Their research has added evidence to support the impact of ginger on white blood cell function, particularly a type of cell called a neutrophil.

The researchers were particularly interested in neutrophil extracellular trap (NET) formation, also called NETosis, and its role in

controlling inflammation. NETs, microscopic spider web-like structures, propel inflammation and clotting, which contribute to many autoimmune diseases, including lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. When healthy people take ginger, the study found, their neutrophils are more resistant to NETosis.

A clinical trial with healthy volunteers showed that a week of daily intake of 20 mg of gingerols boosted a chemical inside the neutrophil called cAMP. These high levels of cAMP then inhibited NETosis’ response to the disease. ★

בס"ד

☎️ Caller @ 7:30 PM

“
No one knows my secret. People think we run a smooth ship. If only they knew. I am sure no one in my קהילה is experiencing as much hopelessness and pain as I do. No one will understand me.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

**INTEGRATED
 HEALTH
 IS THE ANSWER.**

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

FREE FOR ELIGIBLE MEDICAID MEMBERS.



INTEGRATED
 HEALTH

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

MEDICAL BEHAVIORAL PSYCHIATRIC ADDICTIONS

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

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

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Under Newly-Tapped Director, New Energy, Standards Coming for Camp Mamtakim

Hamaspik Mainstay Shloime Kornbluh, With Agency for Decade-Plus, Taking on Mamtakim's Reins

Camp Mamtakim is the summer overnight camp for girls and young women run every summer by the New York State Hamaspik Association (NYSHA). Located on the premises of the Hamaspik Resort in upstate Rock Hill, New York, it offers campers eight fun-filled weeks of laughing, playing, stimulation and inspiration—all under professional 24/7 supervision and care.

And now, it has a new Director: Hamaspik agency veteran Shloime Kornbluh.

Mr. Kornbluh, to say the least, is no stranger to Hamaspik.

At his hiring some 12 years ago, he first served as a Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC)—one of an elite team of advocates who oversaw all services and supports provided by Hamaspik to community members with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).

After some time, thanks to proven pluck, hard work and reliability, he moved up the ladder to become Hamaspik of Rockland County's Director of Supported Employment (SEMP) programs, which help higher-function people with disabilities find and keep quality jobs. He later became Hamaspik Rockland's Director of At-Home Services, which oversees its Community Habilitation and At-Home Respite programs, and then the agency's Director of Day Services, which oversees all site-based programs like Day Habilitation (Day Hab) and After-School Respite (ASR).

For the past several years, he's served as Hamaspik of Rockland County's Director of Operations: a position, as he describes it, which ensures everything is running smoothly on a daily basis—effectively a right-hand man to agency Executive Director Joel Freund.

In addition to that wealth of invaluable experience, Mr. Kornbluh shares that—like so many Hamaspik employees—he has a close family member with a disability, making his work, like that of those employees, a personal labor of love and conviction.

All combined, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better candidate to serve as Mamtakim's new Director.



With its dynamic new Director, NYSHA's Camp Mamtakim upstate overnight program is set for another historic season—with a sweet, spectacular summer forecast for the community's girls and young women



GROUNDS FOR GROWTH: AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE HAMASPIK RESORT'S SPRAWLING GROUNDS, SUMMERTIME HOME OF THE POPULAR AND STILL-GROWING MAMTAKIM OVERNIGHT CAMPING PROGRAM FOR HUNDREDS OF GIRLS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACROSS THE COMMUNITY



ON A SLIDING SCALE: A PARTIAL VIEW OF THE FUN-FURTHERING PLAYGROUND ON SITE



A PICNIC IN THE PARK: OUTDOOR DINING HARDWARE AT THE READY FOR CAMPERS



ACCESS TO SEASONAL SPIRIT: A ROMP ON THE CHAIR-FRIENDLY RAMP LEADS TO FUN

with disabilities.

Camp Mamtakim (translating colloquially to “Sweeties”) is full-fledged summer camp program designed to give deserving parents the seasonal break they need—and their precious daughters the summertime experience they deserve.

In years past, non-profit agencies like the individual county-based Hamaspiks organized their own summer camp programs in their own localities. With its inception, however, Mamtakim took the concept to the next level: A fully-kosher summer overnight camp held to the community's highest and most sensitive kosher standards, both of food and overall spirit—and such a camp serving and catering to the overall Chasidic community from every stripe and denomination throughout the entire greater New York region. Now, under the auspices of NYSHA, there was a proper

summer overnight camp for the entire universal community.

Camp Mamtakim consists of several dozen talented young counselors presiding over another a good few dozen beautiful little girls with special needs, all ages ten and up. It is as “regular” an overnight camp program as you can imagine, except for the fact that its sweet little campers, truly *mamtakim* one and all, are all girls with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The young adult counselors and other direct-care staff are all handpicked and trained by Hamaspik's discerning management. Drawn from the ranks of Chasidic community girls' high schools, the counselors—who worked one-on-one with many campers—exhibited exemplary compassion and attentiveness as they vindicated a rigorous vetting process that left Camp Mamtakim at the end of the day with superlative staff

members.

New for this year will be a large new outdoor swimming pool, which will complement the existing and not-small indoor pool. Additionally, the property will be boasting a large indoor activity space consisting of several independently-operable rooms (which during the rest of the year serves as a huge onsite beis medrash, or combination synagogue/study hall).

Also, divulges Mr. Kornbluh, is the well-known Rabbi Lazer Yonah Zilberman. As Camp Mamtakim's new *menahel ruchni* (spiritual supervisor), he will insure that the entire program passes muster from top to bottom under the respected and authoritative Satmar community standard.

“It's cultural competence” in a world of highly nuanced customs, notes Mr. Kornbluh. “What can be better than that?” ★

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Happenings around Hamaspik

Ballooning Operations



INFLATED HYPE: THE HAMASPIK CROWD LOOKS ON EXCITEDLY AS THE AIR FILLS WITH JOY



JUGGLING FLYING PRIORITIES: RABBI SEREBRYANSKI AND AN INDIVIDUAL TRY A CLASSIC CIRCUS ACT (L), WHILE ANOTHER YOUNG MAN TAKES A HELICOPTER FLIGHT OF FANCY (R)



Building a Rewarding Social Life for Adults with Disabilities, One Shabbos at a Time

Hamaspik Orange's new weekend respite residence outside Kiryas Joel helps people build the family of friendship

If you're a typical adult, your typical weekend consists of socializing with peers. But if you're a high-functioning individual with disabilities living at home with parents, chances are your weekend confines you to the house, with little stimulation to get you out of your routine.

Which is exactly why Hamaspik of Orange County now runs its Yom Shabboson respite residence, located in rural Chester, New York just outside of the Village of Kiryas Joel.

But Yom Shabbason, which translates simply to "Shabbos Day," is much more than just another weekend or overnight Respite program.

While Hamaspik has been offering the State OPWDD's Respite program for years now, in which parents get a break at home while children are supervised and stimulated elsewhere, the Yom Shabboson program is geared for the individuals it hosts as much for their parents—if not more.

Its purpose is to create a space in

which high-functioning individuals with disabilities can build friendships and relationships with each other.

For high-functioning young women spending their Shabbos at the home, social life-building consists of cooking and baking Friday afternoon, and fun Shabbos games over the weekend itself. For gentlemen, it's studying the Torah, enjoying a fine Shabbos meal, and singing and noshing after the meal together.

The program is managed by Hamaspik of Orange County's capable Mr. Abraham Scher, who also serves as the agency's Quality Improvement (QI) Specialist.

What does he like the most about it?

"The feedback," he quickly replies. "From after Shabbos, they're already asking"—about coming again, that is.

In fact, according to a voice mail left for Hamaspik of Orange County Executive Director Moses Wertheimer by one guest, a recent Shabbos stay "was yummy—really yummy!" ★

Blown All Into Proportion

Hamaspik Orange Boys After-School Respite and Men's Day Hab Program Enjoy Entertaining Visit by Balloon Artist

As everyone knows, giraffes, rainbows, candlesticks and cupcakes have plenty in common: if they're made of the stretchy, air-inflated latex sacs known as balloons, that is.

There were quite a few of all of those in the room recently at Hamaspik of Orange County, where professional children's entertainer and balloon artist Yossi Serebryanski put on a show recently—in which the excited participants got to receive, or even assist in the making of, balloon giraffes, rainbows, candlesticks, and cupcakes.

They also got to make, and/or get, balloon helicopters, cows and challahs, too, of course.

Rabbi Serebryanski, who is also a certified and practicing sofer (Jewish scribe), appeared at Hamaspik to do a joint show for the agency's Boys After-School Respite (ASR) program led by Manager Moshe Ber Schwartz and staff, along with the Men's Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program led by Manager

Yidel Kleinman and staff.

For a good hour, the veteran children's entertainer got all the individuals involved and excited as he produced one colorful creation, or creature, after another—turning and twisting pre-inflated cylindrical balloons into cows, flowers, wristwatches and hats, or inflating fresh balloons with human air power alone.

One highlight consisted of his signature balloon: a backpack-mounted helicopter! Another young man was shortly outfitted with a balloon motorcycle, with him "riding" it and chasing the "helicopter" around the room! A third young man was called up to join Rabbi Serebryanski in juggling rings made of balloons.

"They're called 'individuals' for a reason," Rabbi Serebryanski says, commenting on the individual expressiveness of his Hamaspik crowd members. "You go there, you know you're going to have fun!" ★

● ► HAMASPIK NEWS | HAPPENINGS AROUND HAMASPIK

Gluten-Free Gung-Ho

Hamaspik Rockland Men's Day Hab Goes All Out to Support the Long-Term Health of One Individual on Gluten-Free Diet

“All for one and one for all” might be another one of the several unofficial themes or mission statements at Hamaspik of Rockland County’s Men’s Day Habilitation (Day Hab) Program.

That’s because the Day Hab, long under the leadership of veritable pillar Pinchos Knopfler, also sees to it that all of its beneficiaries lend a hand when one has a special need of his own. Conversely, when a need presents itself to the group as a whole, each individual is eager to contribute his part.

So when one individual needed to segue into a gluten-free diet, Manager Knopfler, staff and individuals alike immediately went gluten-free gung-ho.

With their beloved brother now needing to avoid anything in his diet containing gluten, the “Day Habbers” became gluten cops overnight—meticulously inspecting ingredient lists of any store-bought food

products to check for wheat or wheat-based contents (never mind that all-important “gluten free” declaration on the packaging).

To further enhance the gentlemen’s appreciation for the celiac-free life, not only are all the “Day Habbers” (staff and individuals alike) on the constant lookout for gluten but they even took a trip recently to tour the Katz Gluten Free Bakery corporate headquarters and primary manufacturing facility in upstate Mountainville, New York.

During their visit, Katz executive Moshe Mintz was all too happy to walk the gentlemen through the entire complex, showing them how their food products are manufactured and the extra precautions taken to keep items free of anything containing gluten.

So, why a visit to a bakery?

To teach the individuals, Mr. Knopfler succinctly states, that “there’s a whole world out there of people making food for them.” ★

Illuminate the Night

The fun and festivities of Chanukah in the homes and programs of Hamaspik of King’s County created glowing memories.

One group home celebrated Chanukah by celebrating every individual. For weeks in advance, staff supported individuals in preparing their special themed party — each with a color scheme, centerpieces, menu, and program.

They brainstormed, prepared, shopped, and planned, each girl flying high when it was her night to host her friends.

In another home, there was airbrushing on knapsacks, a themed party, a Chanukah concert in which each girl had a turn on the mic, a fruit-and-vegetable decorating activity, special entertainment, an instant print photo booth, and the opportunity for the girls to design nightlights for their bedrooms.

The day programs also had Chanukah excitement.

Fit with Friends enjoyed a trip to Area 53, an adventure park with roller skating, rock climbing, zip-lining, ropes course, and ball pits.

They also enjoyed a grand Chanukah party. The girls were excited to find a photo booth with a twist: Everyone’s picture was printed on wood, creating beautiful mementos. There was a delicious buffet supper and a cooking competition led by Elizabeth Kurtz.

Haktanim enjoyed a fabulous Chanukah party with adventure courses that transformed the premises and gave the children an unforgettable experience.

Playhouse families had an event for the children and their siblings. They enjoyed a balloon show by Yossi Balloons, doughnut decorating, wooden doughnut crafts, bumper cars, musical mats, and more.

The girls of Ahavas Golda painted wooden dreidels, decorated fancy doughnuts, and watched a monkey show. They played a fun quiz game, then banged a dreidel piñata until prizes tumbled out.

Eight days of joy and glowing smiles! ★

Baking in That Compassion



TAKING A HEALTHY STANCE: WITH A MEMBER NOW GLUTEN-FREE, THE GENTLEMEN OF HAMASPIK ROCKLAND’S DAY HAB PROGRAM VISITED A GLUTEN-FREE REGIONAL BAKERY

Keeping Things Light



TINY TOUCHES, BIG EXCITEMENT: PERFECTLY-CURATED SETTINGS TOP THE TABLE AT THE EXHILARATING PARTY HOSTED BY HAMASPIK OF KINGS COUNTY’S HAKTANIM PROGRAM



THE MANY BRANCHES OF HAMASPIK KINGS: A HOLIDAY-THEMED PROJECT ADORNS A WALL AT ONE LOCATION, WHILE A CARVED WATERMELON CROWNS A TABLE AT ANOTHER

The Autism Update

News and developments from the world of research and advocacy

LANDMARK AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) BACK BEFORE SUPREME COURT



JUDGING THOSE WHO TEST OTHERS: A CASE NOW BEFORE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT WILL SET A LASTING PRECEDENT ON “ADA TESTERS”

Washington, D.C. — A case that could dramatically alter the rights of people with disabilities to sue under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recently went before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The high court took on *Acheson Hotels, LLC v. Laufer*, debating whether individuals with

disabilities can sue a business under the ADA if they don't actually intend to visit.

At issue is whether “testers,” or people with disabilities who actively seek ADA violations in hospitality facilities in order to bring legal action, can claim said violations without actual intent to

visit said facilities. For example, Deborah Laufer, the *Laufer* plaintiff who uses a cane or wheelchair, has filed over 600 federal lawsuits since 2018 making allegations against hotel owners and operators.

The case comes as more and more serial testers have emerged in recent years. ★

about \$10 million each for their projects, reported outlet *Disability Scoop*.

MASSACHUSETTS' TOP COURT RULES FOR CORRECTIVE SHOCK TREATMENT FOR SEVERE BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

Canton, Massachusetts — The Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC) in Canton, Massachusetts is the only facility in the country using corrective electric-shock devices on young adults with extremely aggressive, self-injurious or other behavioral issues that have failed to respond to any other treatment. The JRC has long been subjected to numerous lawsuits.

Most recently, however, the Supreme Judicial Court—Massachusetts' top court of law—ruled that the JRC may continue to deploy the life-changing last-ditch method when all else fails.

“The ruling ensures that the lifesaving, court approved electrical stimulation device (ESD) treatment remains available to those for whom all other treatment options have been tried and failed,” JRC and the JRC Parents Association wrote in a statement.

According to the statement, clients have had behaviors that, prior to the devices, had resulted in “profound physical injuries including blindness and mutilation.”

SCIENTISTS REVEAL TWO PATHS TO AUTISM IN THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

New Haven, Connecticut — In a study led by Yale University, two distinct neurodevelopmental abnormalities have been found to arise just weeks after start of brain development, and have been associated with the emergence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

In the study, Yale researchers developed brain organoids from the stem cells of boys diagnosed with the disorder.

Specific abnormalities were found to be seemingly dictated by the size of the child's brain, a finding that could help doctors and researchers to diagnosis and treat autism in the future.

Using stem cells collected from 13 boys diagnosed with autism—including eight with *macrocephaly*, in which the head is enlarged—the team created brain organoids in a lab dish that mimic fetal neuronal growth. They then compared brain development of these affected children with their fathers. Researchers found that children with autism and macrocephaly exhibited excessive growth of excitatory neurons compared with their fathers

while organoids of other children with autism showed a deficit of the same type of neurons.

The findings were published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

DEVELOPMENTAL-DISABILITIES TRAINING FOR DOCTORS PRIORITIZED BY HHS

Washington, D.C. — Training for future doctors on how to better care for individuals with developmental disabilities is now a priority at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a subdivision of the federal U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Some \$8 million in HRSA is now going to 18 different medical training programs across the U.S. The monies are intended to improve care for those with physical or intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD), as well as individuals with limited English proficiency.

More specifically, funding will help train primary-care medical students, physician assistant (PA) students and medical residents in direct care for people with disabilities, according to the HRSA.

Among the 18 awardees are New

York's very own Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, and Manhattan's Columbia University.

FEDERAL DEPT. OF EDUCATION OFFERS MILLIONS TO IMPROVE DISABILITY STUDENT OUTCOMES

Washington, D.C. — Good news for schools trying to ensure more students with disabilities graduate and move on: The U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration recently announced that it will spend nearly \$199 million to fund model demonstration projects in 20 states designed to prepare young people with disabilities for independent living, competitive integrated employment and community integration.

The projects, all part of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Pathways to Partnerships initiative, will involve collaboration between state vocational rehabilitation agencies, educational agencies and centers for independent living, officials said.

Grant recipients will have five years to pilot, refine and implement their ideas and collect and analyze data on their results.

Most of the selected states will get

OVER 37 PERCENT OF AUTISM-DIAGNOSED TODDLERS LOSE DIAGNOSIS BY AGE SIX

Boston, Massachusetts — Testing on 213 children ages five to seven who'd been diagnosed with autism at ages one to three found that 79 of them no longer met the diagnostic criteria for autism.

The findings would suggest autism is over-diagnosed, with children with other conditions—or no conditions at all—scoring “passing grades” on clinical diagnostic tests despite being autism-free.

However, most of the children who had been tested again for autism at ages five to seven—94 percent, in fact—had also received autism-specific interventions, like applied behavior analysis (ABA). That fact prompted the question among researchers whether such interventions can actually effectively remove autism, or at least mitigate its most blatant symptoms with learned life skills.

The study, published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, was conducted at Boston Children's Hospital. ★

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► HAMASPIK NEWS

Celebrating with Family in Canada, Concord Briderheim Resident Surprised by Tosher Rebbe

Popping in to Chasidic Village of Tosh in Suburban Quebec Province to Attend Wedding of Nephew, Joel Warmly Greeted by Revered Spiritual Leader

In the upscale Concord neighborhood of central Monsey, New York, Joel “Yoily” B. is a long-time, high-function and much-beloved resident of Hamaspik of Rockland County’s Concord Briderheim Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA). Yoily is well-known around Hamaspik and the community at large for his earnestness, friendliness and sociability, and eagerness to both learn new things and make new friends.

He has likewise been a fixture at the Hamaspik of Rockland County Men’s Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program, under the leadership of longtime director Pinchos Knopfler, for years now, where he engages in the daily study of Mishnayos and even Gemara (Talmud), among other subjects.

He’s also been a resident of Concord since its inception, where he has become



AN ENCOUNTER WITH HOLINESS: GRAND RABBI LOWY IS HAPPY TO WARMLY GREET JOEL B.

one of the faces of the group home—as well as a face of Day Hab and even of Hamaspik as a whole, or at least that of

Hamaspik of Rockland County.

Like many or even most individuals in the Hamaspik system, Yoily proudly hails from a large and extended family—which is also vital to the mission shared by Hamaspik and the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) of integrating and mainstreaming individuals with disabilities into the mainstream as much as possible. After all, what’s more mainstream and inclusive than joining your parents, siblings, aunts and uncles and other relatives at a family lifecycle celebration?

So when the good news came down the pike that a nephew of Yoily was now engaged and slated to get married in Canada, of course Yoily had to be there.

In keeping with the Hamaspik/OPWDD credo of “putting people first” and “person-centered choices,” Yoily made the decision and the request to travel up north to attend in person—Hamaspik, of course, readily and happily complied and supported his personal choices.

Concord Briderheim Manager Zalman Kepetch swung into action, arranging for all the logistics involved in a 24-hour jaunt up New York’s 87 highway to the Quebec border, and then into the Canadian interior for a visit to rural Boisbriand. The latter is a Montreal suburb in the Thérèse-De Blainville Regional County Municipality that is also home to Kiryas Tosh, a rapidly-growing

Chasidic community that comprises over ten percent of the suburb’s total population.

Mr. Kepetch tapped Mr. Pinchos Mordechai Teitelbaum, one of Concord’s several highly-trained Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), to accompany Yoily on his happy journey. As an extra hand, experienced Day Hab DSP Mr. Yitzchok Cziment, who regularly works with Yoily at Day Hab, also came along.

And so, one fine morning, Mr. Kepetch waved off the three travelers from Concord’s driveway, double-checking that Yoily’s passport was included in their stuff, thus demonstrating that extra measure of care that is always there at Hamaspik even though Mr. Kepetch knew that his excellent staff had already stored it in a safe place with them. (You don’t want trouble at the border!)

The party departed Monsey around 2:00 in the afternoon, arriving—after several self-care stops along the way—in Tosh around 9:00 p.m. The Hamaspik party pulled into their hotel’s parking lot, where the Hamaspik Transport Van deployed its wheelchair ramp to safely lower Yoily (who uses a wheelchair) to the ground and then roll him through lobby (and check-in) and spacious hallways into his comfortable ground-floor room.

Later that evening, after having eaten, showered and dressed for the occasion, Yoily was accompanied by his staff to the gala wedding. There, he was given the hero’s welcome that he deserves as he was warmly embraced by his appreciative relatives.

“They were really, really happy” that Yoily came, Mr. Kepetch later reported to the *Gazette*, relaying the comments he heard back from staff that they in turn had heard from the family—specifically, Yoily’s brother, whose daughter was the bride (and thus Yoily’s beloved niece).

But the highlight of the trip for Yoily, and a totally unplanned and spontaneous one at that, was the young man’s glad and fortuitous encounter with none other than the revered Tosher Rebbe himself. Rabbi Elimelech Lowy is the son and successor of the Tosh dynasty following his holy father.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 >>

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● ► HAMASPIK NEWS

Celebrating with Family in Canada

<< CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

It was just after the chupah and the Rebbe, who traditionally presides over said formal wedding ceremonies in his community, was departing the wedding hall facility with his regal entourage. Standing in the parking lot about to enter his vehicle to return home, Yoily and his own staff approached the Rebbe for a precious greeting and a few special moments together.

The Tosher Rebbe reacted with palpable, palatable warmth and charm towards the earnest young man, who was only too happy to reciprocate. With face shining, the Rebbe took Yoily's hand warmly in both of his, lovingly inquiring as to his welfare and that of his family and otherwise spending valuable time with Yoily.

The special moments, while short in quantity, were rich and infinite in quality—silently conveying the message that here before me, and indeed, before everyone, is a holy special soul most worthy of attention. By virtue of the very special spiritual journey that soul has been given for its current human lifetime, nothing but compassion is warranted.

In the photographs taken spontaneously by Hamaspiik staff, the sincere



HAPPINESS HALL: JOEL GETTING TO HIS ACCESSIBLE HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS

love and concern of the Tosher Rebbe for Yoily is amply evident.

After that awe-inspiring encounter, Yoily joyfully returned to the wedding hall, having just received the ultimate spiritual and emotional super-charge.

Inside, as dancing ensued, a thoroughly thrilled Yoily joined the circles of men, taking his rightful place in the lines of celebrants as the respected member of the mainstream and family that he is—as just confirmed by none other than the Tosher Rebbe himself.

Yoily and staff remained at the wedding all the way until its conclusion, which was around 1:00 a.m., says Mr. Kepetch. They then returned to their hotel.



PAYING SPIRITUAL TRIBUTE: AT THE REVERED RESTING PLACE OF RABBI MORDECHAI LOWY, THE LATE SON OF THE PREVIOUS TOSHER REBBE AND BROTHER OF THE CURRENT REBBE

After a good night's sleep, the Hamaspiik party visited the central synagogue in the Tosh community to participate in Shacharis, the daily morning prayer service. As he davened (prayed) with the men, Yoily felt he belonged, as he indeed, does.

Before departing Canada, the group paid their respects the next at the solemn and revered resting places of the previous Tosher Rebbe, Rabbi Meshulem Feish Lowy, of righteous memory (1921-2015), and that of Grand Rabbi Lowy's saintly son Mordechai, who had predeceased his own father in 1998. Yoily spent a good few minutes by both gravesides, offering a few personal prayers of his own.

Later, after having returned to New York and gotten back into his daily routine at Concord, Yoily exhibited a changed countenance.

For days on end, he was ebullient and beaming—brimming with happiness and energy. He was so happy that he had attended the wedding—and, on top of that, had met none other than the Tosher Rebbe himself! A Concord staff member later told Mr. Kepetch that he'd "never seen him with so much energy—he's so excited!"

Mr. Kepetch reports, in fact, that Yoily is so enthused from the trip that he wants to go again.

Given that warm handshake by the Tosher Rebbe, we're not surprised. ★

● ► HEALTH NEWS

Heart Disease Death Rates in the U.S. Fall Sharply Over Last Three Decades: Report

"Heartening" News for Public Health Beset by Obesity Drinking and Smoking

New Brunswick, New Jersey — While Americans still need to quit smoking, drinking and overeating, new research still finds something positive that strikes at the heart of U.S. public health—pun most definitely intended.

That's because, according to research by Rutgers University-New Brunswick, fatal heart disease in the United States dropped about four percent a year from 1990 to 2019.

Four may not sound like a particularly large number. But when considering that each four-percent drop is a reduction of the previous year's figure, itself a drop from its preceding year, the numbers—meaning, far fewer Americans dying of heart disease—add up.

Yearly deaths from heart disease across the U.S in people ages 25 to 84

dropped from over 397,000 deaths in 1990 to about 237,000 in 2019, even while Americans' average median age rose from 33 to 38, researchers found—and even while the U.S. population grew.

The ongoing drop is at least partially due to increased use of cholesterol-lowering drugs called *statins*, better diagnostics, and reduced use of tobacco products, according to researchers.

Of special note is the fact, during the years studied, U.S. population obesity rates rose from 12 to 43 percent.

However, "The overall numbers are good. We saw a substantial decline in deaths from all types of coronary heart disease for both females and males," said study lead author Prof. Cande Ananth of the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.



DECLINE OF A GOOD KIND: U.S. HEART ATTACKS ARE DROPPING BY 4% A YEAR, SAYS REPORT

Future advances in treatment could continue reducing fatal heart disease, but lifestyle modifications are also important: Eliminating smoking,

drinking and obesity would have prevented half of the deaths observed during the study period, the authors said. ★

Public Health and Policy News

HEALTH INDUSTRY GROUPS SPAR OVER RAPID-FILL CANCER-DRUG PRESCRIPTION LAW

Washington, D.C. — One of the several issues being debated on Capitol Hill is *prior authorization*: the requirement that a third party review and approve a doctor's drug prescription before it's filled. Prior authorization can take anywhere from days to weeks.

The Community Oncology Alliance (COA), based in Washington, D.C. and which represents independent oncologists, has been pushing Congress to set a 72-hour deadline for pharmacies to fill cancer drugs for patients, the latest on a growing list of calls for prior authorization reform.

The legislation would specify that after the 72 hours are up, patients can get their prescriptions filled at any pharmacy they want or at their oncologist's practice.

On the other hand, the Washington, D.C.-based Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA) and trade group America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), both say that prior authorization is vital to keeping treatments affordable.

CANCER-FIGHTING "PERSISTENT POVERTY INITIATIVE" LAUNCHED BY WHITE HOUSE

Washington, D.C. — A \$50 million federal program that targets the cumulative effects of persistent poverty on cancer outcomes was launched recently by the Biden administration.

Coordinated by the federal National Cancer Institute (NCI), the initiative will build research capacity, foster cancer prevention research, and promote the implementation of community-based programs to address the structural and institutional factors of persistent poverty in the context of cancer.

The program will create five new Centers for Cancer Control Research in designated "Persistent Poverty Areas" nationwide that will advance key priorities of the administration's existing Cancer Moonshot program.

Persistent poverty areas are defined as those where, for the past 30 years, at least 20 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line. Residents of such areas have higher incidences of cancer.

CHICAGO-BASED STARTUP JOINS NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS TO TACKLE CITY FOOD, HOUSING INSECURITY

New York, New York — Chicago-based tech startup NowPow has forged a relationship with NYC Health + Hospitals, the largest public health care system in the nation, to address food and housing insecurities among millions of patients.

That partnership also includes



THE WINDY CITY MEETS THE BIG APPLE: CHICAGO'S NOWPOW TECH STARTUP AND NEW YORK'S NYC HEALTH+HOSPITALS ARE COLLABORATING ON A NEW SOCIAL-JUSTICE PROGRAM



SMOKED: A NEW AGENCY TO REGULATE E-CIGS IS IN THE CURRENT PLANNED FEDERAL BUDGET

OneCity Health, which is the NYC Health + Hospitals Performing Provider System under New York state's Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program, the state's Medicaid reform initiative. OneCity Health awarded three community-based organizations \$4.3 million to help connect patients to available services that are traditionally fragmented and difficult to navigate, the organizations said in a statement.

NowPow is built around the concept of prescribing social services the same way doctors prescribe medications.

LESS ADULTS WITH INSURANCE GETTING PRIMARY-CARE VISITS; RESEARCHERS SUSPECT COSTS

Boston, Massachusetts — A study of records from insurance companies finds that visits to primary care doctors by insured adults have dropped by nearly 25 percent.

The research looked at an available database from an insurance company on about 20 million Americans. Regardless of all age groups and income levels, it found a drop in primary-caregiver visits.

While researchers are unsure as to why people are seeing their personal physicians less, they suspect it's connected to rising out-of-pocket costs. Average out-of-pocket costs for doctor visits rose from about \$30 to nearly \$40 during the study period. At the same time, the share of primary care visits subject to a deductible jumped, too—while less than ten percent of such visits required a co-pay in the millennium's first decade, over 25 percent did so by the mid-2010s.

NEW TOBACCO-PRODUCT REGULATORY BODY IN PROPOSED FEDERAL BUDGET

Washington, D.C. — A brand-new federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to be created exclusively to regulate tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes (e-cigs) is tucked within the most recent federal budget.

According to the text of the documentation, the new federal agency would "increase direct accountability and more effectively respond to this critical area of public health concern."

"A new agency with the singular mission on tobacco and its impact on public health would have greater capacity to respond strategically to the growing complexity of new tobacco products," the budget states. "This reorganization would allow the FDA Commissioner to focus on its traditional mission of ensuring the safety of the Nation's food and medical products supply."

U.S. HEALTHCARE COSTS TO STABILIZE, GROW THROUGH 2031: REPORT

Washington, D.C. — Despite Covid, the U.S. healthcare economy is stable and strong—and is only poised to grow yet further in immediate years to come.

That's the gist of a report by the *Health Affairs* public-policy publication, which found that "national health expenditures are projected to grow 5.4 percent, on average, over the course of 2022-31 and to account for roughly 20 percent of the economy by the end of that period."

As for those Medicare naysayers, the federal healthcare program for seniors will remain intact, strong and robust, Health Affairs reports—projecting the program to grow an average of 7.5 percent per year between today and 2031. That growth in Medicare enrollment, according to the outlet's research, "is partly attributable to the last of the Baby Boomers," or Americans born in the years immediately following WWII, "enrolling in the program through 2029." ★

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In the Know

ALL ABOUT...

GALL-STONES

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, MedlinePlus, Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“You’ve got some gall!”

That statement is meant to indicate that the person being addressed has what is commonly called chutzpah.

But gall also means *bile*: a natural substance produced by the bodies of both humans and animals and used in ancient times for medicine. For reasons beyond this article, the word *gall* over the centuries took on the additional meaning of distasteful behavior, probably because medical gall is a distasteful substance.

So back to our subject: Bile (gall), as you may have guessed, is stored in the body’s *gallbladder*. It’s an important part of the digestive process. Gallstones, by extension, occur when the bile in the gall bladder hardens into tiny “stones”—which can lead to several medical problems from minor to emergency.

Here’s everything you’ll need to know about gallstones.

DEFINITION

Here’s how the Mayo Clinic defines gallstones:

“Gallstones are hardened deposits of digestive fluid that can form in your gallbladder. Your gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ on the right side of your abdomen, just beneath your liver. The gallbladder holds a digestive fluid called bile that’s released into your small intestine. Gallstones range in size from as small as a grain of sand to as large as a golf ball. Some people develop just one gallstone, while others develop many gallstones at the same time.”

But let’s briefly digress to discuss the function of the gallbladder—as well as that of bile, the substance that it stores—as part of something called the body’s *biliary system*.

The biliary system consists of the organs and ducts (bile ducts, gallbladder, and associated structures) that are involved in the production and transportation of *bile*.

Bile is the greenish-yellow fluid (consisting of waste products, cholesterol, and bile salts) that is secreted by the liver cells to perform two primary functions: To carry away waste, and to break down fats during digestion. *Bile salt* is the actual component that helps break down and absorb fats.

Next, the transportation of bile follows this order:

- First, the liver produces bile
- The bile is then collected by a system of ducts that flow from the liver through the right and left hepatic ducts. These ducts ultimately drain into the common hepatic duct
- The common hepatic duct then joins with the *cystic duct* from the



gallbladder to form the *common bile duct*. This runs from the liver to the *duodenum* (the first part of the small intestine).

But not all bile runs directly into the duodenum. About 50 percent of bile produced by the liver is first stored in the gallbladder. So here’s what then happens once bile is stored in the gallbladder: When food is eaten, the gallbladder contracts (squeezes) and releases stored bile into the duodenum to help break down the fats.

Types of gallstones

- **Cholesterol gallstones.** The most common type of gallstone, called a cholesterol gallstone, often appears yellow in color. These gallstones are composed mainly of undissolved cholesterol, but may contain other components.
- **Pigment gallstones.** These dark brown or black stones form when your bile contains too much bilirubin.

Risk factors

Factors that may increase risk of gallstones include:

- Being female
- Being age 40 or older
- Being overweight or obese
- Being sedentary
- Being pregnant
- Eating a high-fat diet

- Eating a high-cholesterol diet
- Eating a low-fiber diet
- Having a family history of gallstones
- Having diabetes
- Having certain blood disorders, such as sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- Losing weight very quickly
- Having liver disease

SYMPTOMS

At first, most gallstones do not cause symptoms. However, when gallstones become larger, or when they begin obstructing bile ducts, symptoms or “attacks” begin to occur. Attacks of gallstones usually occur after a fatty meal and at night.

People who experience symptoms from their gallstones usually require gallbladder removal surgery. Gallstones that don’t cause any signs and symptoms typically don’t need treatment. But if a gallstone lodges in a duct and causes a blockage, the resulting signs and symptoms may include:

- Sudden and rapidly intensifying pain in the upper right portion of the abdomen, commonly lasting from 30 minutes to several hours
- Sudden and rapidly intensifying pain in the center of the abdomen, just below the breastbone



GALLSTONES OCCUR WHEN THE BILE IN THE GALLBLADDER HARDENS INTO TINY “STONES”—WHICH CAN LEAD TO SEVERAL MEDICAL PROBLEMS FROM MINOR TO EMERGENCY.



- Back pain between the shoulder blades
- Pain in the right shoulder
- Nausea or vomiting

Gallstone pain may last several minutes to a few hours. In that sense, gallstones are not unlike kidney stones.

[When urgent care is needed](#)

Seek immediate care in case of the following symptoms:

- Abdominal pain so intense that you can't sit still or find a comfortable position
- Yellowing of the skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice)
- High fever with chills

DIAGNOSIS

In some cases, asymptomatic gallstones are discovered by accident—during testing for another diagnosis. But if you're experiencing the above urgent (and quite painful) symptoms, or even if you're thankfully not there yet, the diagnosis of gallstones—whether at a calm, quiet medical office or the frenetic, busy emergency room—will usually consist of any of the following:

[Abdominal ultrasound](#)

This test is the one most commonly used to look for signs of gallstones. Abdominal ultrasound involves moving a device (transducer) back and forth across the stomach area. The transducer sends signals to a computer, which creates images that show the structures in the abdomen.

[Endoscopic ultrasound \(EUS\)](#)

This procedure can help identify smaller stones that may be missed on an abdominal ultrasound. During EUS your doctor passes a thin, flexible tube (endoscope) through your mouth and through your digestive tract. A small ultrasound device (transducer) in the tube produces sound waves that create a precise image of surrounding tissue.

[Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography \(ERCP\)](#)

This procedure involves inserting an endoscope (viewing tube) through the stomach and into the small intestine. A special dye injected during this procedure shows the ducts in the biliary system. Gallstones discovered using ERCP can be removed during that same procedure

[Other imaging tests](#)

- Oral cholecystography
- Hepatobiliary iminodiacetic acid (HIDA) scan
- Computerized tomography (CT)
- Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP)

- Blood tests. Blood tests may reveal infection, jaundice, pancreatitis or other complications caused by gallstones

TREATMENT

As with kidney stones, in many cases, gallstones can be treated under relatively calm and non-emergency scenarios—especially when symptoms are enough to get the patient's attention but not enough to be causing the severe and unbearable pain of a medical emergency.

So for starters, most people with gallstones that don't cause symptoms will never need treatment in the first place. The doctor will determine if any treatment for gallstones is indicated based on symptoms, as well as the results of all diagnostic testing done.

However, the doctor may recommend that one be alert for symptoms of gallstone complications, such as intensifying pain in the upper right abdomen. If such gallstone signs and symptoms occur in the future, further treatment may be warranted.

Meanwhile, treatment options for gallstones include:

[Gallbladder removal surgery \(cholecystectomy\)](#)

In cases where gallstones frequently recur, your doctor may recommend surgery to remove the gallbladder. Once the gallbladder is removed, bile will flow directly from the liver into the small intestine, rather than being stored in

will likely form again if treatment is stopped. Additionally, such medications sometimes don't work, Mayo notes. That's why medications for gallstones aren't commonly used and are reserved for people who can't undergo surgery.

[Sphincterotomy](#)

This surgical procedure involves opening the muscle *sphincter*, a ring of muscle around a natural opening that acts like a valve, wide enough so stones can pass into the intestine.

[Methyl-tert-butyl ether \(MTBE\)](#)

This consists of a chemical solution injected into the gallbladder that dissolves gallstones.

[Extracorporeal shockwave lithotripsy \(ESWL\)](#)

The lithotripsy procedure, which is also commonly used to treat kidney stones, uses shock waves to break stones up into tiny pieces that can pass through the bile ducts without causing blockages.

CAUSES

According to the Mayo Clinic, it's not clear what causes gallstones to form. Doctors think gallstones may result due to:

[Too much bile cholesterol](#)

Normally, the bile contains enough chemicals to dissolve the cholesterol excreted by the liver. But if the liver excretes more cholesterol than the bile

[Incorrect gallbladder emptying](#)

If/when the gallbladder doesn't empty completely or often enough, bile may become very concentrated. With that chronic buildup not being naturally voided, it will inevitably contribute to the formation of gallstones.

[Complications](#)

Complications of gallstones may include:

- Inflammation of the gallbladder. A gallstone that becomes lodged in the neck of the gallbladder can cause inflammation of the gallbladder (cholecystitis). Cholecystitis can cause severe pain and fever.
- Blockage of the common bile duct. Gallstones can block the tubes (ducts) through which bile flows from the gallbladder or liver to the small intestine. Severe pain, jaundice and bile duct infection can result.
- Blockage of the pancreatic duct. The pancreatic duct is a tube that runs from the pancreas and connects to the common bile duct just before entering the duodenum. Pancreatic juices, which aid in digestion, flow through the pancreatic duct. A gallstone can cause a blockage in the pancreatic duct, which can lead to inflammation of the pancreas, known medically as pancreatitis. Pancreatitis causes intense, constant abdominal pain and usually requires hospitalization.
- Gallbladder cancer. People with a history of gallstones have an increased risk of gallbladder cancer. But gallbladder cancer is very rare, so even though the risk of cancer is elevated, the likelihood of gallbladder cancer is still very small.

PREVENTION

Risk of gallstones can be reduced with the following:

- Don't skip meals. Try to stick to your usual mealtimes each day.
- Lose weight slowly. If you need to lose weight, go slow. Rapid weight loss can increase the risk of gallstones. Aim to lose one or two pounds a week.
- Eat more high-fiber foods. Include more fiber-rich foods in your diet, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity and being overweight increase the risk of gallstones. Work to achieve a healthy weight by reducing the number of calories you eat and increasing the amount of physical activity you get. Once you achieve a healthy weight, work to maintain that weight by continuing your healthy diet and continuing to exercise. ★



GALLSTONES CAN BE TREATED IN SCENARIOS WHERE THEY ARE NOT CAUSING THE SEVERE PAIN OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.



the gallbladder.

"You don't need your gallbladder to live," says the Mayo Clinic, "and gallbladder removal doesn't affect your ability to digest food, but it can cause diarrhea, which is usually temporary."

[Gallstone-dissolving medications](#)

Medications taken by mouth (orally) may help dissolve gallstones. However, it may take months or even years of this pill-based treatment to dissolve gallstones. What's more, gallstones

can dissolve, the excess cholesterol may form into crystals and eventually into stones.

[Too much bile bilirubin](#)

Bilirubin is a chemical that's produced when the body breaks down red blood cells. Certain conditions cause the liver to produce too much bilirubin, including liver cirrhosis, biliary tract infections and certain blood disorders. The excess bilirubin contributes to gallstone formation.



Status Report

Happening In Hospitals Today

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO BUILDING NEW \$815 MILLION CANCER CENTER

Chicago, Illinois — The University of Chicago (UChicago) Medicine hospital system is now constructing an \$815 million new complex—which, when completed, will be the State of Illinois' first standalone building dedicated to cancer care and research.

The planned seven-story building, to comprise 575,000 square feet, will include 80 inpatient beds, 90 outpatient exam rooms and dedicated imaging, infusion and clinical trial spaces. It's expected to open in spring of 2027.

According to UChicago Medicine, the new building will help reduce health disparities in underserved communities and accelerate scientific discoveries as it allows clinicians, physician-scientists and researchers to better collaborate with colleagues across the university.

The new cancer center will also have the capacity for 200,000 outpatient visits and 5,000 inpatient admissions a year.

U.S. NURSING SHORTAGE SMALLEST IN CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles, California — Well, here's one reason people are not only *not* leaving the Golden State—but even flocking to it: Great nursing jobs.

According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*, California saw about 30,000 more registered nurses (RNs) move in than out during the first two



PAST, MEET YOUR FUTURE: AN ORIGINAL BUILDING AT UCHICAGO NOW GETTING A NEIGHBOR

years of the pandemic.

The *Times* reported that two primary factors are pulling qualified RNs to the West Coast, where the national nursing shortage seems to be far less problematic than anywhere else: Nationally-best pay, plus unmatched state-level workplace protections and high pay. California RNs earn an annual average of \$133,000—a good 50-percent higher than the national average—and California is also the only state to mandate specific minimum nurse staffing levels across different hospital units, which nurses credit with managing workloads and preventing burnout.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS: RESEARCHERS JOIN FORCES WITH MOGUL TO PROBE HOSPITAL PRICES

Houston, Texas — Lending a unique air of authority to recent

research is none other than well-known U.S. business mogul Mark Cuban, who recently turned his business acumen to the business of running hospitals to secretly survey 60 U.S. hospitals.

Joining researchers from the Houston, Texas-based Baylor College of Medicine and Rice University, Cuban produced a research paper, recently published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, finding widely-differing prices for the same things—depending whether online or solicited via phone call.

The study surveyed 20 top-ranked hospitals, 20 safety-net hospitals and 20 others. “Secret shoppers” called each for their lowest cash prices for standard childbirths or brain MRIs—then comparing those quotes to hospital website prices. Phone prices were found to be largely lower than online prices—but sometimes even the opposite.

NORTHWELL HEALTH WELL UNDER WAY ON \$468 MILLION EXPANSION

Bay Shore, New York — As the well-meaning witticism goes, hospitals and those who practice in them are at times blessed with, “may you go out of business!” (Translation: Let illness vanish!)

But as long as that's yet to happen, New York's South Shore University Hospital, part of the Northwell Health conglomerate, is doing the opposite, with the construction now started on a new \$468 million pavilion in Bay Shore.

The 190,000-square-foot pavilion

will have up to 90 private patient rooms, ten operating rooms and three procedure rooms, according to reports. Hospital officials expect the project to be done by mid-2025.

“We see this as an investment in Suffolk County,” said Steve Bello, regional executive director of the Eastern Region for Northwell Health. “We've been making investments every year... to expand the programs to meet the needs of the broader community.”

BUG ISN'T ACTUALLY SPREAD PRIMARILY IN HOSPITALS, FINDS STUDY

Ann Arbor, Michigan — The notorious *Clostridioides difficile* (C. Diff) bacterial infection is one of several healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) that have been plaguing hospitals for years now.

But is it?

A study of a number of patients with the difficult-to-treat bug has now found that most had different genetic “fingerprints.” Researchers at the Ann Arbor-based Michigan Medicine found that the C. Diff bugs infecting their C. Diff patients were for the most part unique—meaning, that the patients had already had the bugs in their digestive systems *before* coming to the hospital.

The study, published in *Nature Medicine*, analyzed samples from over 1,100 patients at Chicago-based Rush University Medical Center over a nine-month period. While around 100 were found to be carrying C. Diff, only six were genetically identical—suggesting that most were not acquired in-hospital.

REPORT: BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER MOST RACIALLY- INCLUSIVE U.S. HOSPITAL

Needham, Massachusetts — Sure, today's hospitals—especially those most advanced—are bastions of cutting-edge medicine. But how are they doing on the social-justice front? Do they treat a diverse representation of multicultural modern-day America?

A report from the Needham, Massachusetts-based Lown Institute, measures how well over 3,100 U.S. hospitals serve people of color. Using data Medicare and Medicare Advantage claims and the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey, the report found that Boston Medical Center took that ranking's No. 1 U.S. spot.

Chicago's John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital and UChicago Medicine respectively collected the #2 and #3 spots, with the equally-urban Grady Memorial Hospital and Emory University Hospital Midtown of Atlanta, Georgia taking the No. 9 and 10 places.

The NYC Health + Hospitals' Manhattan location came in 18th. ★



NURSING A CAREER MOVE: DESPITE BAD ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, CALIFORNIA REMAINS THE GOLDEN STATE FOR REGISTERED NURSES MOVING TO THE WEST COAST IN GROWING NUMBERS



The Senior Care Gazette

News from
the World of
Hamaspik
HomeCare and
Senior Health

A Place to Healthily Age

Hamaspik HomeCare's Aides and Services Support New York's Planned Models for Senior Independence

When you've got a governor and mayor both highly supportive of the concept, you know that New York has got its seniors' backs.

We're talking about "aging in place"—the philosophy informing a growing movement in modern healthcare, in large part led by New York State, home to a rapidly-growing senior population.

Aging in place dictates that as one grows older, one stays in one's comfort zone: the private residence. Because home is where the heart is, it's also where one's sense of independence and self-worth is, with both being critical for physical health and wellbeing. As the federal U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines it, aging in place means "the ability to live in one's home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income or ability level."

And with New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, and New York City Mayor Eric Adams backing aging-in-place initiatives in recent years at the state and city levels, the Empire State—and the Big Apple—are increasingly-friendly places for seniors to live ever-longer and healthier lives.

Aging in place begins—and, maddeningly, can end—with physical health and wellbeing. So the first step towards healthy aging in place is to take that first morning step out the front door—on a health walk, that is. Walking remains one of the healthiest and simplest exercises aging people can undertake—especially when that walk takes you around your neighborhood, giving you the added and critical social health benefit of seeing and being seen by neighborhood relatives and friends. It's good for your heart—literally, emotionally and spiritually—and all the more so when your neighborhood is "walkable," which refers to friends, family, stores, schools and houses of worship being within walking distance.

Besides walking, or any physical exercise, social capital is vital to successful aging in place, explains Hamaspik HomeCare Field Nurse Leah Lichstein, RN. Living "in the middle of nowhere," she says, all-too-often can go hand-in-hand with isolation from family and friends, leading in turn to depression, and then, non-compliance with medical advice and prescriptions—as in, "I don't need that blood pressure

medication!"

For optimal aging in place, Field Nurse Adina Bodlander adds preemptive home prep—eliminating hazards like throw rugs and installing restroom and staircase grab bars—before any harm occurs. She also highlights the importance of a ground-level bedroom and bathroom, which eliminate those dangerous stairs and ease in-and-out home access—including doing home remodeling should none exist. "Children should try and get involved before it's needed," she says. "Because construction is a stressful project, it's better when this is done as an 'in-the-future' type of thing before you need it."

Under the state's Medicare plan, many New York seniors qualify for home-care services, with which intake specialists at Hamaspik HomeCare can help. "Home care is an important preventative measure" that can get an aging New Yorker the help at home needed before injuries or falls occur, Mrs. Bodlander notes. "Even a few hours a week can be the difference between aging in place happily and safely," she says, or going to a nursing home.

Still-growing clusters of senior

populations in New York's storied neighborhoods are part and parcel of the state's Master Plan for Aging (MPA), a multi-year effort rolled out in Gov. Hochul's 2023 budget and slated for full adoption by early 2025. With the Empire State boasting some 4.6 million individuals aged 60 and up, ranking fourth in the nation, its senior population is projected to hit 5.3 million by 2030. By that same year, according to Albany, one of every four residents in at least 51 of the state's 62 counties will be 60 and older.

For its part, New York City is deploying its Community Care Plan across its five boroughs. With a focus on underserved communities and communities of color, the Plan—originally launched by former mayor Bill de Blasio and spearheaded by current mayor Eric Adams—seeks to increase the city's Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), or places not originally specified for senior housing but which became so due to their still-growing numbers of seniors aging in place.

In communities heavily serviced by Hamaspik HomeCare, sidewalks trafficked by seniors heading home from local shopping as they chat with bouncy grandkids are the norm. With Hamaspik HomeCare aides providing minimal help at home as needed, those Bubbies and Zaidies can stay on their feet and on top of their lives. ★

Stem-Cell Transplants Reduces Alzheimer's Symptoms in Lab Mice, Finds Calif. Study

San Diego, California — In experiments on lab mice with Alzheimer's symptoms, scientists at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) have found that implanted healthy stem cells counteracted Alzheimer's symptoms in the brains of those mice.

The research revolved around *hematopoietic stem cells* (HSCs), or stem cells that can develop into all types of blood cells, as well as *progenitor* cells, which are descendants of stem cells that then further differentiate to create specialized types of cells.

In the experiment, mice with Alzheimer's symptoms in their brains and behaviors showed measureable improvements after transplantation of the healthy cells. Those improvements included better memory, better cognitive function, and less inflammation of brain cells, as measured by the mice displaying better object recognition,

risk perception, anxiety levels, and locomotor activity compared to mice with Alzheimer's symptoms in their brains and behaviors that did not receive transplantation of the healthy cells.

Most significantly, the mice receiving the transplanted cells were also found to have reduced brain levels of *amyloid beta*, a peptide (protein "building block") whose buildup in the brain is long associated with Alzheimer's.

According to UC San Diego researcher Dr. Stephanie Cherqui, "Our work shows that hematopoietic stem and progenitor cell transplantation has the potential to prevent complications from Alzheimer's and could be a promising therapeutic avenue for this disease."

More specifically, the transplanted stem cells are believed to reduce Alzheimer's symptoms in the brains of the lab mice because they produce *microglia* in the brains of the mice.

Microglia are a type of immune cell. Healthy microglia help clear brains of beta amyloid. Inflamed microglia help produce more beta amyloid.

By supplementing inflamed microglia with healthy microglia in the lab mice brains, the researchers observed reduced beta amyloid in the mouse brains, and

reduced symptoms of Alzheimer's in the mice.

Future research will explore the possibility of translating their findings to humans suffering from Alzheimer's, according to the researchers

The study was published in the journal *Cell Reports*. ★

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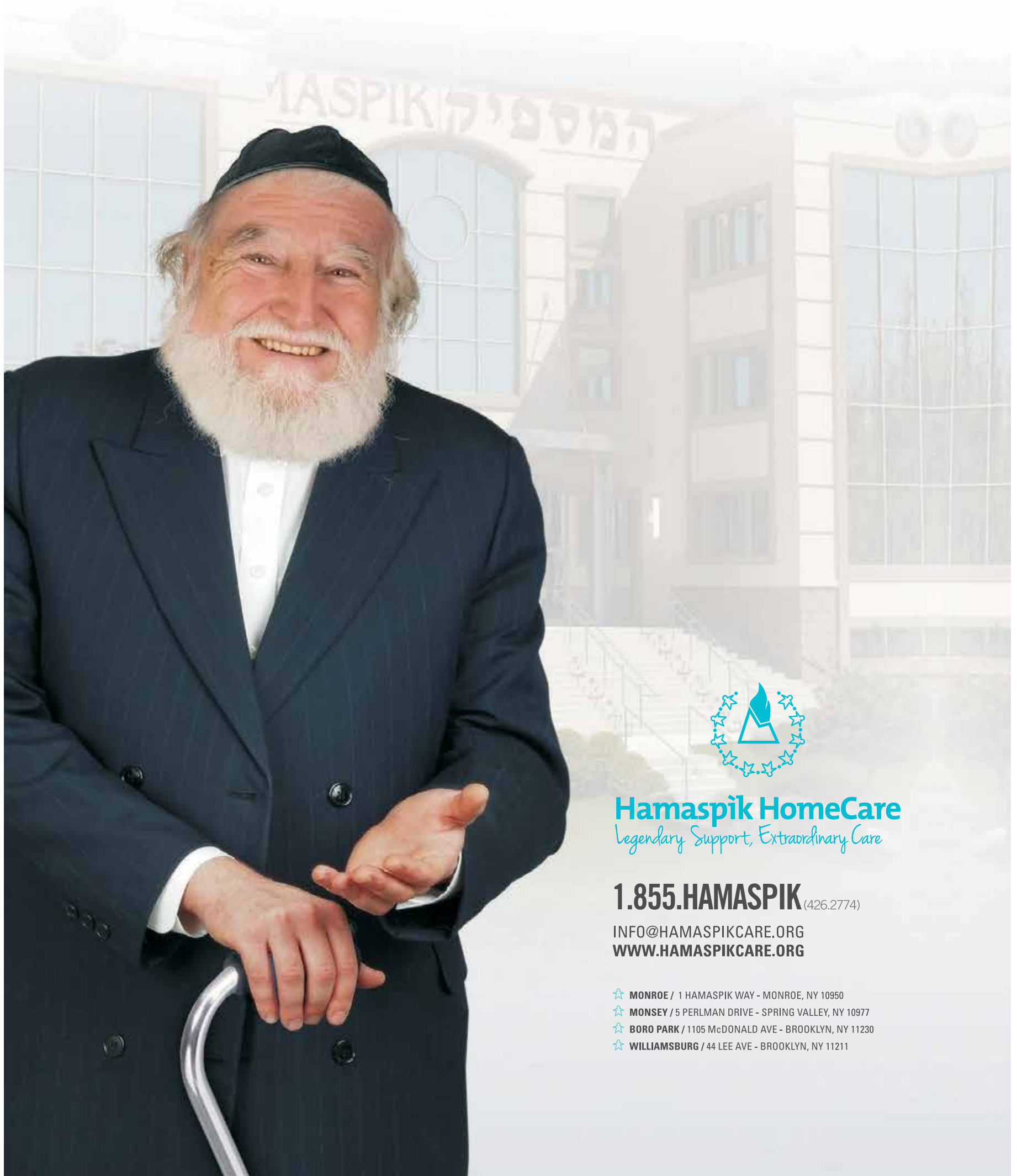
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