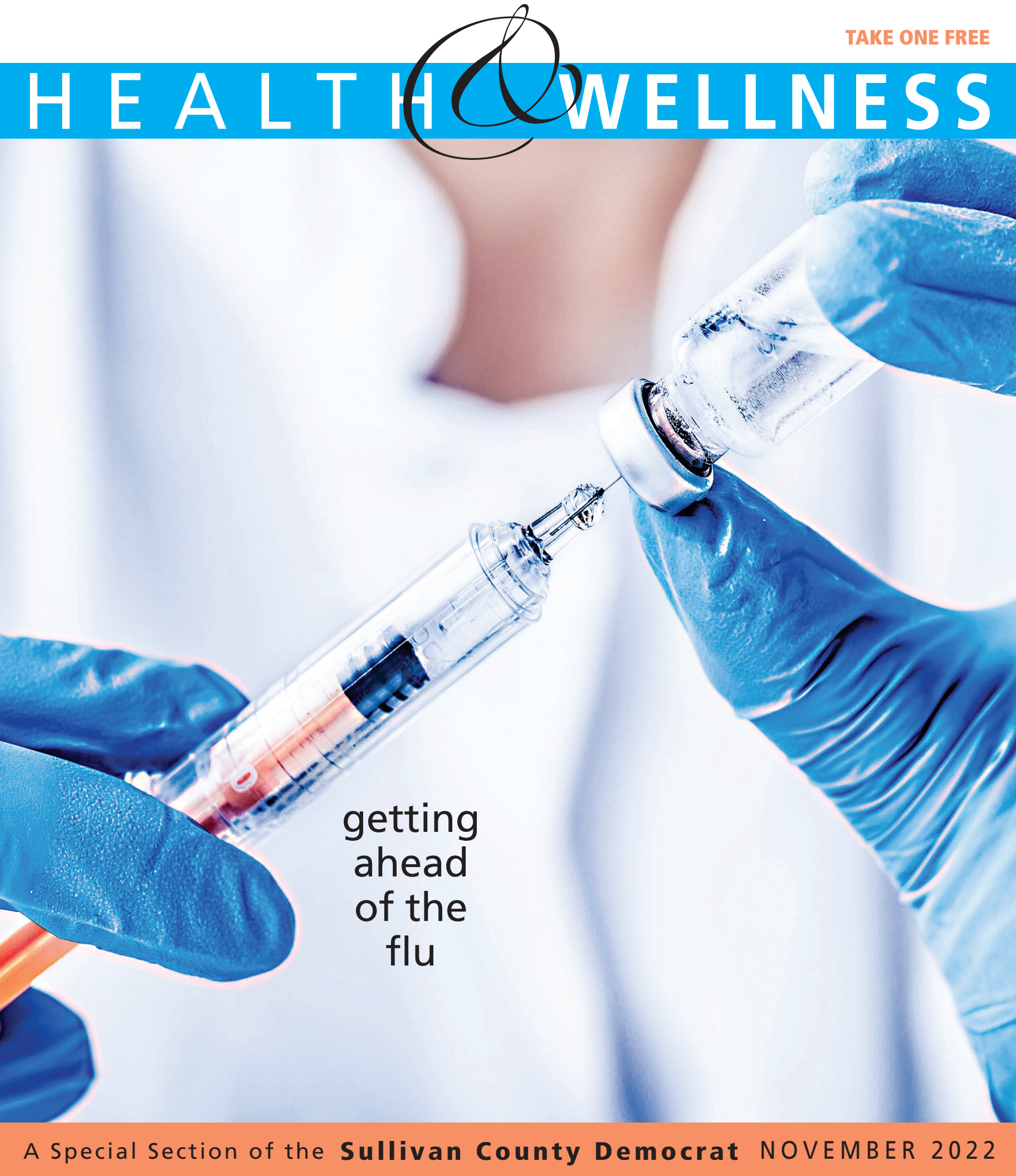


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Imran Ahmed, MD, FAAFP, MPH obtained his medical degree from Dow Medical College, University of Karachi, in Pakistan. He completed his internship in surgery at Stony Brook University Hospital in Stony Brook, NY and finished his Family Practice Residency at St. Joseph Medical Center in Stamford, CT.

Additionally, he received a Master's degree in Public Health from New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY. Dr.

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Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter: Who we are and what we do

The Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter serves seven counties in New York, including Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan counties.

They offer a variety of services to support families living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia while also raising dementia awareness in the community. During National Family Caregivers Month and National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, they would like to remind people of the programs and services we provide.

24/7 Helpline: Their 24/7 Helpline is available at 800.272.3900 where people can call anytime for information and support.

Care Consultations: They offer care consultations with masters-level clinicians, who can

help families living with dementia access community resources and get advice on care and future planning. Call the helpline to schedule an appointment.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

The Alzheimer's Association believes that engaging diverse perspectives is critical to achieving health equity — so all communities have a fair and just opportunity for early diagnosis and access to risk reduction and quality care. They are developing strategic partnerships with trusted national and local organizations to create pathways to greater health equity, mission engagement and inclusion for everyone.

Educational programs: Programs for the general public include **Healthy Living for your Brain and Body**, which offers information from the latest research to help plan for healthy aging;

Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia, which explains the basics about dementia and Alzheimer's, as well as resources available from the Alzheimer's Association.

Other educational programs are specifically designed to help caregivers in their role. These include **Dementia Conversations**, which offers tips for handling difficult conversations with someone who may be showing signs of dementia, such as when to seek a diagnosis, stop driving or plan for future care. **Effective Communication Strategies** provides guidance for loved ones on how to best communicate with their loved one as the disease progresses.

Managing Money: A Caregiver's Guide to Finance, provides information on important financial issues to consider when helping a loved one manage their affairs.

Social programs: They also offer a variety of virtual social programs for people with dementia and their loved ones, including the **AlzWell Social Club**, an ongoing series of virtual interactive activities and support sessions; **Virtual Memory Cafes**, social activities for people with early-stage dementia and their family caregivers involving musical entertainment and lunch in a safe and understanding environment ...

Something for Alz, a series of online interactive sessions to include art, music, movement and other creative activities and **Virtual Visits with New York Therapy Animals**, which are a fun way to meet new friends.

In addition, they offer in-person Sunday Socials and Memory Cafes in Westchester County, which include musical entertainment with lunch and offer a chance to

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socialize in a safe environment.

For specific dates and times when these and other programs are being offered, visit alz.org/hudsonvalley and look under Helping You for Upcoming Events. You can also register and search for live educational and social programs by zip code at alz.org/crf or call the Alzheimer's Association's hotline at 800.272.3900.

Pre-recorded educational programs are also available anytime at: alz.org/help-support/resources/care-training-resources.

Safety Services: A variety of safety services are available to help with issues such as wandering depending on the needs of the family.

Support Groups: Support Groups are available throughout our seven-county region both in-person and by telephone/Zoom. Special groups are available for people with dementia, spouses, adult children, young adults under 40 and people with loved ones in residential care.



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Advocacy: The Alzheimer's Association, through its sister organization the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) lobbies for legislation to help caregivers and people living with dementia and

improve care, while also funding research to find treatments and a cure.

Research: The Alzheimer's Association is the largest non-profit funder of Alzheimer's re-

search in the world, and the third largest funder after the U.S. and Chinese governments. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

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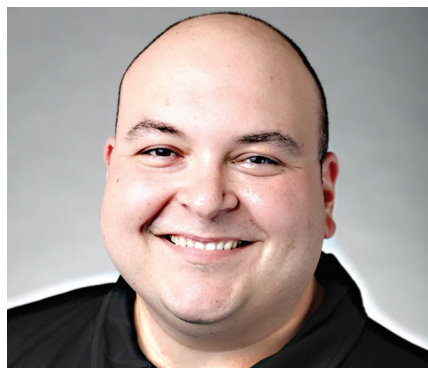
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Be ready in case of pet emergencies

BY JOSEPH A. D'ABBRACCIO, D.V.M.



With the holidays around the corner, area veterinary hospitals may have adjusted business hours. With that in mind I would strongly encourage all pet parents be aware of a nearby veterinarian prepared to handle emergencies and their hours of operation.

A serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate attention defines what an emergency is. When a pet becomes ill it is often something that pet owners rarely prepare for but certainly something that we need to think about before there is a time of need. The days when the family veterinarian would answer phone calls in the middle of the night or the morning of a holiday are few and far between.

Today, many veterinarians do not even rotate on-call services with other area veterinarians. Instead, many refer all after-hours or urgent patients to area emer-

gency or specialty practices. Unfortunately, in our area these after-hours services may be 60-to-90 minutes away and in an emergency situation that may seem like an eternity.

When emergencies occur, we only have a handful of minutes to engage an emergency plan.

Below is a list of some questions you should think about:

- Does my family veterinarian provide afterhours/weekend services?
- If my family veterinarian does

not provide emergency services, who do they recommend?

- What is the travel time to your veterinarian's office or their designated emergency service?

- Do you have a pet first aid kit available and stocked?

- Does your veterinarian have the ability to process laboratory samples urgently?

- Is your veterinarian comfortable with surgery?

Emergencies can happen at any time and, of course, the types of emergencies vary between dogs and cats and even more so based on a patient's age and lifestyle.

For dogs, the most common emergencies that arise are toxin exposures, hit by cars (or other automotive vehicle), altercation with a porcupine, heat stroke, lacerations, internal bleeding, and the worst emergency of them all, GDV (gastric dilatation and volvulus).

For cats, the most common emergencies are hit by car, attacked/injured by dog, cat fights

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that result in abscesses, kidney failure, heart failure, and pancreatitis.

If your pet is ever sick or injured it is always better to seek veterinary care as soon as possible. Delaying care can be detrimental to a patient's outcome as well as become costlier for overall care. Depending on the condition, the most someone should wait to have a patient seen by a veterinarian is 24 hrs.

Of course, there are conditions that may resolve or start to improve after 48 hours but there is absolutely no way to predict a response. It is advised to always walk on the side of caution and have a patient evaluated sooner rather than later. Peace of mind is often priceless.

Emergencies always seem to occur during the night, holidays, and weekends. Services during these times cost more money in addition to a veterinarian having access to more advanced equipment.

To provide thorough and appropriate emergency care additional equipment items are required



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Members of the Catskill Veterinary Services team, hard at work.

such as IV fluid pumps, on-sight laboratory equipment, ultrasound machines, x-ray machines, oxygen therapy, and cardiac monitoring equipment. Not every veterinary hospital has these items and they come with additional expense to acquire and maintain.

We do not know when an emergency will occur but it is very

important to plan for when, and if one occurs. We hope that we never must follow that plan but knowing ahead is very important.

Again, not all veterinarians see after hours emergencies so the first step is to check with your family veterinarian as to who they recommend.

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Better health for the holidays

BY SHELLY DEHAAN,
MPA, RD, CDCES, CDN, CDTIC

It starts with Halloween. The candy bowls that linger until replaced with Thanksgiving goodies that result in leftovers until you clean out that fridge to make room for the myriad winter holiday celebrations. This festive time of year centers on family, friends, fun and plenty of FOOD.

For some, posting the shrugging emoji and saying, "I'll start my diet in the new year" isn't a big deal. But for millions of people in the U.S., staying, or getting, on a healthy path over the holidays can be extremely important.

It's a staggering statistic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 96 million adult Americans—more than one in three—are living with prediabetes, a condition where blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

You can be prediabetic and not even know it, because there are no symptoms. However, there are clues to help you recognize potential issues. For example, look at your eating habits.

According to the CDC, fewer than one in 10 children and adults eat the recommended servings of vegetables each day, while three in five Americans age 2 and older get more than 10 percent of their total daily calories from added sugars—far exceeding recommended limits. If you fall into one or both of these categories, you could be on the road to Type 2 diabetes.

While having prediabetes doesn't necessarily mean you'll develop

Type 2 diabetes, experts suggest that up to 70 percent of prediabetic individuals will eventually develop Type 2 diabetes within five years—if they don't take steps now to improve health and reduce risk factors.

In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month, Garnet Health encourages everyone to take these three steps that can begin your journey to better health.

1. Know the risk factors

- **Weight**—Being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing diabetes. Losing just 5–10 percent of your body weight can significantly reduce that risk, as long as it's paired with other recommendations.

- **Age**—It's never too early to make healthy changes, but Type 2 diabetes generally occurs in middle-aged adults (after age 40).

- **Genetics/family history**—If you have a blood relative with diabetes, your risk is higher. Make sure your doctor knows your family history so you know how it may impact you.

- **Ethnicity**—Those of African American, Asian American, Latinx, Native American or Pacific Islander descent are all at greater risk of developing diabetes.

2. Make healthy changes, starting with small steps

No matter our risk for prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes, we can all make small changes that lead to big results. Sometimes just the idea of change stops us in our tracks, but if we break things down into small bites (no pun intended!), it may be easier to get started.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



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Consider the following:

- Increase physical activity. Starting a fitness regimen can seem daunting. But even walking briskly for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, can result in improved health and reduce the risk of diabetes.

- Create a meal plan, not a "diet." This is a lifelong commitment to better health. Food is the fuel we need to be at our very best, and no one can diet forever. But you can maintain a meal plan that allows you choices and variety.

- Get five servings of fruits and vegetables each day and eat the rainbow! Allowing ourselves the opportunity to try new fruits and veggies opens our palate to new tastes that prevent boredom and make mealtime more enjoyable.

- Fill half your plate with fruits and veggies. Think about that. It still leaves room for your protein and starch and is an easy visual to enjoying a healthier meal.

- Understand food labels and



Shelly DeHaan

what you are eating. This can be tricky, even for the savviest consumer. Which brings us to step No. 3.

3. Step up to the plate and join a self-care forum on nutrition from Garnet Health

If you've been diagnosed as prediabetic or worry you may be at risk, make an appointment now to talk to your health-care provider, and put yourself in control!

You can make changes and possibly prevent or slow the onset of Type 2 diabetes. This free virtual event from Garnet Health can help.

Together we will talk about diabetes, nutrition labels, artificial sweeteners and much more. Register at garnethealth.org/events. Then join us at 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 17.

DeHaan is the Director of Garnet Health's Dunkelman Diabetes Center and of Nutrition Counseling Services. Garnet Health has diabetes programs in both Sullivan and Orange counties. Their Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialists are ready to help. Call 845-333-2711.

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'Every Brilliant Thing' raises awareness & funds for NAMI Sullivan

BY M. LORI SCHNEIDER

The topics of Suicide and Depression are not often discussed – and they should be. Because they affect so many people, increased awareness can only shed light on these important subjects, leading to better understanding and better outcomes.

With my own, unique background as an ardent Mental Health Advocate since 1988 and a Community Theatre Actor and Director since 1983, and having lost my first cousin to Suicide twenty six years ago, a gift was handed to me in late 2017 when I learned about a show called *Every Brilliant Thing* by British playwright, Duncan MacMillan with Jonny Donahoe.

I devoured the script and felt it was placed in my path for a reason. I had to mount a production locally of this show that had been done all over the world, and use it as a vehicle to raise awareness and funds for NAMI Sullivan County, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. My passions for mental health advocacy and for theatre combine in bringing this important work to audiences.

The show is a powerful piece of theatre about Depression and the lengths we will go to for those we love. After being told that her Mum can't think of anything worth living for, a little girl begins a list of everything brilliant about the world; everything worth living for.

At seven years old, her list includes ice cream, being allowed to stay up past your bed time and things with stripes. As the little girl grows up, the entries mature along with her and as the list grows, she learns the deep significance it has on her own life.

I have been performing *Every Brilliant Thing* in various venues in and around New York State from the Spring of 2018 through the Fall of 2019 and started back up again post-COVID this past Summer in with a perfor-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

M. Lori Schneider has been performing *Every Brilliant Thing* since 2018.

mance co-sponsored by the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce.

The show shines hilarious and compassionate light in some of the darker corners of the human condition. It's a reminder that hope is never truly lost and a testament to the healing power of storytelling. While it is a one character show, audience members are given snippets of the list to help tell the story. There are no bright lights with the audience sitting in the dark – it's an immersive experience with lights up all the way through. The audience shares in something meaningful as a room full of people becoming a community.

The Times Herald Record says, "everything about this production...is indeed brilliant..."

funny and poignant, heartbreaking, joy-filled and genuinely wonderful."

The River Reporter calls it a "tour-de-force performance, thought provoking and powerful."

The Sullivan County Democrat says, "Schneider's portrayal explodes from the heart."

Originally, the NAMI Sullivan Board of Directors approved a trial of three performances. NAMI isn't a theatre group - would there be an audience? Before we had finished the initial three performances at SUNY Sullivan, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts and the Sullivan County Museum, we had been requested to do a fourth and fifth, one with NAMI Orange County and one at the NAMI-NYS Educational Conference.

The show was chosen to be performed at the Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) Festival in 2018, where Festival audience members voted and I received a Best Actor award. Since then, we have brought the message to colleges, corporations, human service organizations, the New York State Office of Mental Health's Chief Nursing Officers Educational Conference, other NAMI affiliates and more. Early next year, there is a performance in the works with local Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

This important, funny, heartwarming and heart-wrenching performance is a must-see.

Meant to be performed ideally for intimate groups of 70-100 or so, if you know of a group, organization, college, or other venue that would like to sponsor a production of *Every Brilliant Thing*, we would love to bring the production to you.

For information about sponsoring a production, or about any of the services provided by NAMI Sullivan, phone (845) 794-1029.

M. Lori Schneider is the Executive Director of NAMI of Sullivan County, located at 20 Crystal St. in Monticello.

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What flu season means for you

BY KAREN HOLDEN

It seems in the last few years that we have been bombarded with information about new or changing diseases. Unfortunately, ones that we have been hearing about for years, such as flu, are still illnesses that we do need to be concerned about.

Definitions

Influenza (flu): Flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs, which are part of the respiratory system. Influenza is commonly called the flu, but it's not the same as stomach "flu" viruses that cause diarrhea and vomiting. Most people with the flu get better on their own.

Epidemic: a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

Pandemic: (disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.

A Brief history

In 1557, the first reliably recorded flu spread from Asia to the Ottoman Empire, then Europe, the Americas, and Africa. This flu pandemic is the first to be documented as spreading worldwide; prior to 1500 reports lack reliability.

The 18th and 19th century saw several recorded flu pandemics, with the first recorded Avian flu.

20th century-Four pandemics are recorded, starting with the 1918 Spanish Flu or Great Influenza.

The flu is first documented as appearing in the United States of America in Spring 1918, and that year saw one third of the world's population infected-nearly 500 million people-with 20 million deaths. The 20th century also saw the development of vaccines.

1945-21st century: Worldwide health organizations collaborate to provide education and vaccination.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES PHOTO

Getting a current flu vaccine could go a long way towards preventing this scenario.

Common questions

• **Who is most likely to get sick with flu?** Our youngest community members are the most vulnerable to flu, with children much more likely to get sick.

• **What are its symptoms?** Fever or feeling feverish/chills (but not everyone has a fever); Cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; Muscle or body aches; headaches; being extremely tired/fatigued;

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Also, some people may have vomiting or diarrhea, although this is more likely in children than adults.

•When is someone contagious? People with flu are most contagious one day before they have symptoms, to 3-4 days after they become sick.

•Where can I get a flu test? Your provider, urgent care, or emergency department can test for the flu.

• How does Flu spread? The flu virus is spread by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, sing, or talk. Think about a time you saw someone sneeze and they produced a shower of tiny droplets; each of these would be carrying the flu virus if that person was sick.

Those tiny droplets carrying the virus can land in the mouth or nose of those nearby and make you sick; less often, if you touch the surface where those droplets landed and then touch your mouth or nose, they can also make you sick.

• How can I protect myself and others? If you are feeling sick, stay home and away from others. Also, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water often.

When you sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue and throw it away. If you don't have a tissue available, sneeze or cough into the bend of your elbow instead of your hands; that is an area of your body that you won't be touching surfaces with and won't spread the virus.

The single best protection is vaccination.

Contact your provider, your local pharmacy, or Sullivan County Public Health for information about flu vaccines and the importance of vaccination.



Karen Holden is Sullivan County's Deputy Director of Public Health and Acting Director of Patient Services.

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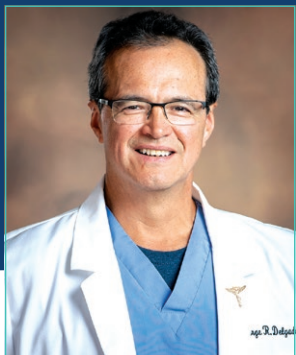
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HEALTH ADVISORY: Pertussis confirmed in Sullivan County

The Sullivan County Public Health Department has confirmed three unrelated cases of pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, among children less than 2 years of age in different geographic regions of the County.

Public Health Director Nancy McGraw stated, "In 2016, the County had an outbreak of 36 confirmed cases but only 6 cases in 2017. Pertussis has not been an issue of concern for several years, but we are now seeing the potential for another large increase of cases due to Statewide concerns about a lack of immunizations or delayed immunizations among children."

"The confirmed patients and their close contacts are being treated," she continued. "We are working to identify exposures and any other cases to try to limit further spread."

What Is Pertussis?

Pertussis (whooping cough) is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Whooping cough spreads through the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*, and anyone exposed to it can get sick. It is known for the whooping sound people make when gasping for air after a coughing fit.

It begins with cold symptoms and coughs. The bacteria that cause whooping cough spread easily through coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others. People are most infectious during the first two weeks after the cough begins. Whooping cough is known to spread within households. Babies often catch it from siblings, parents, grandparents, and other members of their extended family.

Pertussis is highly communicable, with a secondary attack rate of 80% among susceptible household contacts. Complications of pertussis in infants (under a year old) can include pneumonia, seizures, encephalopathy or death.

The average incubation period is 4-21 days (average 7-10 days) but, rarely, can be as long as 42 days. The bacteria *Bordetella pertussis* is commonly transmitted by respiratory routes

through contact with respiratory droplets, or by direct contact with airborne droplets of respiratory secretions. Transmission occurs less frequently by contact with freshly contaminated articles of an infected person.

Signs and Symptoms of Pertussis

- Acute cough illness of any duration, with isolation of *B. pertussis* from a clinical specimen (culture); OR
- Cough illness lasting at least two (2) weeks, with at least one sign or symptom of pertussis AND PCR test positive for pertussis; OR
- Cough illness lasting at least two (2) weeks, with at least one sign or symptom of pertussis AND contact with a laboratory-confirmed case of pertussis
 - Paroxysms (fits of coughing)
 - "Whoop" sound when trying to catch breath after coughing
 - Vomiting as a result of coughing so hard
 - Apnea (pauses in breathing with or without turning blue – infants aged less than a year old)

If your child develops any severe signs or symptoms listed above, call your doctor right away, go to an urgent care center or local emergency room, or call 911.

Preventive Actions

Children in a prekindergarten setting should be age-appropriately immunized. The DTaP vaccine is required for children entering school in New York State. Children starting the series on time should

receive a 5-dose series of DTaP vaccine at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 through 18 months and at 4 years or older. The fourth dose may be received as early as age 12 months, provided at least 6 months have elapsed since the third dose.

Sullivan County Public Health provides a monthly immunization clinic on the second Tuesday of

every month from 3-6 p.m. at the Gladys Olmsted Building, 50 Community Lane, Liberty. Appointments are required for the immunization clinic. For those who are uninsured or under-insured, Public Health provides a sliding fee scale.

Please call (845) 292-5910, ext. 0 for more information.

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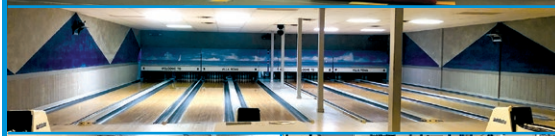
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