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48

# HEALTIA WELLNESS

moving into spring page 8

54

A Special Section of the Sullivan County Democrat MARCH 2023

14

# Identifying and managing pain in dogs

#### BY JOSEPH D'ABBRACCIO, DVM, CATSKILL VETERINARY SERVICES

Pain in dogs is a common issue that can cause discomfort, distress, and even disability. The right pain management plan can make a world of difference for canine companions.

To ensure the best result, it is important to understand not only the causes of pain but also the types of treatments available, as well as how to identify signs of pain in dogs.

With this knowledge, pet owners can work with their veterinarians to create an effective canine pain management plan.

#### Signs of Pain in Dogs -What are the Common Symptoms?

Pain is an unavoidable part of life for both humans and animals, and dogs are no exception. While it can be difficult to detect signs and symptoms of pain in our canine companions, recognizing these signs is important for the health of your dog.

Keeping an eye out for common signs of acute or chronic pain can help you identify when your pup needs medical attention. From changes in behavior to physical indicators such as limping or vocalizing, understanding the warning signs of pain can make all the difference for your dog's well-being.

Here are some of the things you should look for to help detect the signs of pain your dog is experiencing. Lack of interest in food and water: Dogs normally become more interested in their meals when they're feeling pain, so if your pet suddenly loses its appetite or won't try new foods, be on the lookout for a pain-related cause.

Other indicators are changes in eating patterns and refusal to drink water. In addition to eating less, dogs may also show other symptoms like vomiting or excessive panting. Changes in behav-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

It's always difficult to watch our furry friends in pain. Here are some tips on getting them the help they need.

ior: Low levels of pain can sometimes cause a change in behavior.

#### Diagnosing Pain in Dogs -How to Assess Their Health

It can be quite tough to accurately identify the cause of pain in a dog, often requiring a combination of physical exams and imaging techniques. By using both, veterinarians are better able to locate the primary source of the canine's discomfort.

Physical exams can help determine the location and severity of the pain. Your veterinarian will observe your dog's behavior and use palpation to assess muscle tone, joint function, and other physical characteristics. Blood tests may also be used to check for inflammation, infection, or other underlying conditions that could be causing the pain.

Imaging techniques such as X-rays, ultrasounds, CT Scans, and even MRIs allow your veterinari-an to gain valuable information about bones, tendons, and other associated orthopedic structures.

Managing Pain in Dogs -Treatments & Medication Options Analgesic drugs are an important part of canine medical care. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and opioid med-

ications are commonly prescribed for pain relief in dogs.

Gabapentin, CBD, and nutraceuticals can also be used to treat canine pain. All of these drugs have advantages and disadvantages that should be considered before use. Knowing the appropriate drug for each situation can help ensure a successful outcome for treating your pet's pain. The term NSAID refers to any medication that blocks the production of enzymes called prostaglandins, which cause inflammation.

The most common NSAIDs in use today are meloxicam and carprofen to name a few. Opioids are generally reserved for severe pain such as with surgery or advanced end-stage disease or even bone cancer pain.

Due to their high propensity to human abuse, we try to avoid dispensing them to be used in the home.



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#### Alternative Treatments & Home Remedies for Dog's Pain Management

Natural remedies for dogs with arthritis and joint problems can provide an effective way to help manage chronic illnesses. In particular, acupuncture for dogs has been proven to reduce inflammation, improve mobility, and ease pain in animals suffering from arthritis and joint issues. With the help of a qualified veterinary acupuncturist, this age-old technique can be used to relieve symptoms associated with chronic diseases in dogs.

Other groundbreaking areas of managing chronic pain and arthritic conditions include platelet-rich plasma (PRP).

PRP involved collecting and processing a patient's blood sample and purveying platelets and other rich anti-inflammatory cells and injecting those cells into an area of pain or injury. We can then concentrate these natural healing cells to a specific location that needs the help the most. Cold laser therapy is also an extremely helpful and beneficial option for managing arthritis pain.

#### Conclusion – Keeping Your Dog Comfortable

Keeping your dog comfortable is important for their overall well-being. Taking the time to understand their needs and provide them with the right environment, food, and exercise can help them stay healthy and happy.

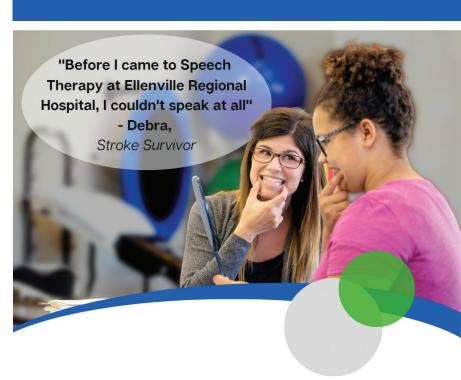
Additionally, providing them with regular check-ups from the vet and grooming sessions can help keep them in tip-top shape.

With a little bit of effort, you can ensure that your dog is living the comfortable life that they deserve. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian about the various options available.

It is very important to understand that there is not one perfect option or a one size fits all method.







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# The holes in Medicare and how to mend them

Understanding the added benefits of a Medicare Advantage Plan

#### BY MEIR HOROWITZ

hen most people hear about a "hole" in Medicare- especially those who have been beneficiaries for many years- the immediate association is the infamous "Donut Hole' -now known as the Coverage Gap. When you enter the Coverage Gap, you are responsible for a certain percentage of your prescription costs.

This article will deal with some lesser known holes — or potential shortcomings — in Traditional Medicare (Part A&B) and how a Medicare Advantage plan can provide an effective solution.

#### Deductibles & Co-insurance

One of the hallmarks of traditional Medicare is that you – the beneficiary- are responsible for 20% of any Part B charges (doctor visits, outpatient treatment). Medicare pays 80% and leaves the rest of the bill to you.

#### This applies after you have met your annual deductible -\$226 for 2023.

There is no limit to this 20 percent that you may have to pay. A potential pitfall for someone with limited resources.

The solution: A Medicare Advantage plan eliminates the deductibles and co-insurance of traditional Medicare and re-



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places them with 'copays.' These are fixed charges for every procedure. And many of the plans available offer a '\$0 copay' for your primary care physician. So, if your medical care is limited to annual check-ups and an occasional wellness visit, you could have little or no out of pocket expenses.

#### **Dental Care**

Traditional Medicare doesn't cover most dental procedures. Period! For most seniors, this represents a serious dilemma. There is an 80/20 rule in the dental world. By age 80 you should still have 20 of your original teeth. Without dental care that is a very tall order for most people.

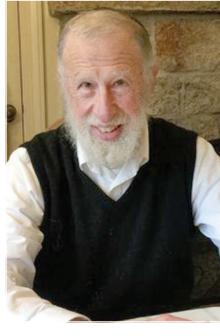
The solution: Among the many added features that Medicare Advantage plans offer is some form of dental coverage. Most require that you utilize a network of participating dentists. A few offer 100% reimbursement up to a specified dollar limit – without the restriction of a network. It is also possible to purchase a 'stand-alone' dental rider from many of the Medicare companies.

#### Hearing

Hearing loss is another all too common occurrence with seniors. Again, traditional Medicare (Part A&B) does not provide coverage- other than an exam by a qualified professional. The actual cost of a hearing aid is left up to the beneficiary.

The solution: Most of the Medicare Advantage plans provide for a generous allowance for hearing aids- particularly those in the "Dual Eligible" population- i.e. members who have both Medicare and Medicaid.

A few other areas in which



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Medicare Advantage plans can provide a boost that is not available to those with only Part A&B:

• Fitness - Most plans offer free membership to Silver Sneakers. You can attend a local gym and participate in classes as often as you like.

• Over the Counter benefits -There is an increasing trend to offer this benefit to all Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. The member has a special monthly allowance that enables him or her to order a host of non-prescription items from a catalog or purchase them directly from a participating retailer. At no outof-pocket cost to you!

• Wellness rewards - Medicare Advantage companies are increasingly seeing the importance of focusing on wellness. With that in mind, they are offering gift cards and other incentives for members who keep up with their annual exams and fitness regimes.

Medicare Advantage plans may not be for everyone. But if you are in reasonably good health and could benefit from the added benefits that many of the plans offer, it may present an excellent alternative.

For more information on this or any other medicare related topic, please contact us: Meir Horowitz, MEH ASSOCIATES LLC, 845-428-5101, mhinsures@ gmail.com.

# Open-Heart Surgery Program launched at Garnet Health

#### SUBMITTED BY GARNET HEALTH

Whear that over one-third of adults in Sullivan County have high blood pressure? What about the fact that Sullivan County is above the state and national averages for adults diagnosed with coronary heart disease, or that heart disease is the second leading cause of death?

If these statistics made your eyes widen, they should. But we aren't sharing this to raise your blood pressure. Rather, it's to highlight a specific need right here in Sullivan County and how one health system – Garnet Health – is committed to improving these statistics and outcomes for our community.

Your heart is the hardest working muscle in your body. And when it's not working effectively, you should be surrounded by a team working just as hard to diagnose and treat the problem.

Garnet Health Medical Center's Peter Frommer, MD Heart Center has experienced cardiologists, specialists and advanced technologies to help diagnose, treat and rehabilitate residents of Sullivan and Orange counties who are in need of advanced heart care.

Until recently, residents in need of open-heart surgery were forced to travel a good distance for the lifesaving procedure. And for one resident, it truly was a life-altering decision.

Patrick Spencer has lived in Orange County with his wife for 30 years. On his 71st birthday, he was told he needed bypass surgery to remove blockages in his heart but that the lifesaving surgery he needed would have to be done in New York City.

The stress of traveling and being so far from home was overwhelm-

ing for Patrick and his wife. So much so, he considered not having the surgery at all.

But at the same time Patrick was facing this decision, Garnet Health was launching its open-heart surgery program, led by one of New York Magazine's Top Doctors, Medical Director Michael Argenziano, MD, FACS, who also serves as associate chief of the Division of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery at New York-Presbyterian/ Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

"I was the first open-heart surgery patient in Orange County at Garnet Health," Patrick says. "The nightmares that I had about going into New York City, the worry of my wife getting to and from the hospital safely – it was too much. But at Garnet Health, it was so much easier. My wife was 15 minutes away. I could focus on me, on my surgery and getting well."

Garnet Health is proud to fill a vital need in Sullivan County and provide world-class care so close to home. "We need this," Patrick adds. "Garnet Health has brought expertise up here to serve the people in this area. Believe me, I did my homework, and there's nowhere else I would've gone but to Dr. Argenziano and Garnet Health. They strive for excellence and went above and beyond to take care of me and my heart."

If you are having issues with your heart, please see your cardiologist right away. If you don't have a cardiologist, Garnet Health can help you find one. Call Garnet Health Doctors at (845) 333-8909.

You can view Patrick's story, and learn more about cardiac care, Dr. Argenziano and the open-heart surgery program at Garnet Health by visiting garnethealth.org/ heartsurgery.



#### CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Michael Argenziano, MD, left, Medical Director for Cardiothoracic Surgery and lead heart surgeon at Garnet Health is pictured with Patrick Spencer, the first openheart surgery patient at Garnet Health.

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# The health benefits of Kale

#### STORY AND PHOTO BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM AND CLAIRE STABBERT

In our last Health and Wellness issue, we took a look at the benefits of incorporating honey into the diet. This month, we're going to take a look at one of my new favorite vegetables, kale.

For years I actively avoided it at first glance, as there was little that looked appealing. I also made the mistake of generating an opinion on it based off of the frozen microwaveable brands. Yuck!

But recently, after sauteing fresh kale with some olive oil and garlic, tossing with pasta and other veggies, or simply enjoying some homemade kale chips, I've realized what I'd been missing all these years. This isn't only in terms of taste but also all the associated health benefits that come with the dark leafy green. According to the Mayo Clinic Health System, kale is a "nutrition superstar due to the amounts of vitamins A, K, B6 and C, calcium, potassium, copper and manganese it contains." They further explain that one cup of it raw only has 33 calories and seven grams of carbohydrate, making it a good choice for those watching their weight or who have diabetes.

Kale is considered a cruciferous vegetable, meaning that its veg-

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gie siblings include cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, collard greens, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnips and bok choy.

The cruciferous vegetable family is also believed to potentially reduce the risk of various cancers.

Healthline.com outlines other benefits of kale, including that it provides the body with powerful antioxidants, may lower cholesterol numbers, and can also support eye health.



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Farro Salad with crispy chickpeas and kale.

So definitely consider adding a few bunches of kale into your diet. Speaking of which, let's turn things over to **Sullivan County Democrat** Cooking in the Country columnist Claire Stabbert, who has an interesting recipe and story to share.

#### Claire's Farro salad with crispy chickpeas and kale

This dish is one of my favorites. You can eat a ton of it and won't feel heavy and weighed down afterwards. In addition to being extremely versatile, it is packed full of fiber, nutrients: one of my favorite grains (farrow), crispy chickpeas, kale, zucchini, tomatoes, and peppers. You can sauté the kale or leave it raw, and add whatever additional vegetables or proteins you'd like! I gave this dish a Greek twist and topped with tzatsiki and crumbled feta. Yum!

You will need: 2 cups semi-pearled farro 1 bunch kale 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas 2 garlic cloves 2 bell peppers 2 zucchini 1 bunch parsley 8 oz grape tomatoes 3 oz feta cheese 1 cup tzatskiki 2 tbsp sherry vinegar To begin, prep your veggies. Cut the kale into bite sized pieces, slice the zucchini into half-inch thick rounds, roughly chop the parsley leaves and stems, halve the tomatoes, and dice the peppers into bite sized pieces. Peel two cloves of garlic and grate into a paste using a small box grater.

Combine the halved tomatoes, sliced pepper, sherry vinegar, garlic paste, and a drizzle of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and set aside to marinate (there is nothing I love more than veggies marinated in vinegar!).

Begin cooking the grain next. Farrow takes about 20 minutes to cook uncovered in boiling water, and its al-dente nature offers a delightful textural contrast to the chickpeas and crunchy peppers. Don't want to use farro? No problem! Substitute for quinoa or brown rice! Like I said, this dish really lends itself to creativity and substitution.

Next, dry and roast the chickpeas. If you've never had crispy chickpeas, you don't know what you're missing! This is going to add so much texture to your dish. Rinse them off, then dry with paper towels and place on a baking sheet; try to get them as dry as possible before roasting or they won't crisp up properly. They'll take about 20 minutes in the oven or 12 minutes in an air fryer at 380F.

Next, prepare the zucchini by heating a drizzle of olive oil on medium high until hot, then adding the zucchini rounds in an even layer. Season with salt and pepper and cook about 4 minutes per side. If you enjoy warm sauteed kale, you can add it in at this point with the zucchini with another dash of oil.

To assemble your dish, add everything to the pot of cooked farro and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper, if needed. Garnish each plate with a dollop of tzatziki, and chopped parsley!

Enjoy my spin on a healthy Greek-inspired lunch!

The authors of this piece are not nutritional or medical experts, just two members of the staff who enjoy food.





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# A Marathon, not a sprint

**STORY AND PHOTOS** BY SHANNON CILENTO AND SAM DORN

HEALTH

**8H** 

n April 30, we're running the Big Sur International Marathon in Monterey, California with the Allyson Whitney Foundation (AWF) Squad. Each year, AWF uses marathons as a fundraising vehicle to support their work and mission to shine a spotlight on an underserved demographic of young adults with rare cancers and to place an emphasis on the need for rare cancer research.

AWF was founded in loving memory of Sullivan County resident, Allyson Whitney Strong, who was ready to take on the world as a young adult but was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of cancer, Small Cell Cervical Cancer (SCCC).

Ally passed away 14 months later. The work of the Allyson Whitney Foundation continues as a tribute in honor of her memory.

#### Sam's Story

After graduating from SUNY Geneseo, I knew I wanted to do something big before jumping off into the next chapter of my life. I was supposed to run across the country as a way to raise awareness for young adults with cancer but unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic hit and my plans were derailed.



# Medical Group. She grew up in Rock Hill and

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## Spreading the word about the Allyson Whitney Foundation

Still I felt the need to doing something to help others impacted by cancer. I had heard about the Allyson Whitney Foundation through family friends and on social media. After doing some research on my own, I was able to hear Ally's story and the reason behind AWF. I was so moved and excited that I was able to be a part of something so great.

I applied to run the NYC Marathon through AWF as a way to check a marathon off my bucket list but there was the added incentive of knowing I was able to help others impacted by cancer something I became passionate about in college.

Running the NYC Marathon truly was a life changing experience. After reflecting back on it, I thought there would be no better way to continue to support the AWF but than to run the Big Sur International Marathon through them with Shannon Cilento - a good friend who is just crazy enough to do it all over again with me!

#### Shannon's Story

For most of my 20's, I told myself I'd run a marathon before I turned 30. When I turned 29 in 2022, I realized the clock was quickly running out on the personal promise I made. I met Sam through work and heard that she had recently run the NYC Marathon with a local charity. We met up for lunch one day and she gushed about how powerful and surreal the experience was... and I was convinced. I emailed Barbara and Melissa at AWF later that afternoon and began what might have been the craziest journey I've been on yet.

I had previously run several half marathons, but I wasn't yet convinced I was capable of a full marathon, despite making the commitment to AWF. I immediately started a training program and quickly realized I was making my goal a reality.

During the training, I had been assigned to read James Clear's Atomic Habits as part of a staff development exercise at work. In part of the book on changing your mindset, Clear says to not set a goal of running a marathon, but

HEALTH **9H** 



rather strive to become a runner. The timing of that passage could not have been more appropriate, and it powered me through the rest of training and still sticks with me today.

When I crossed the finish line of the NYC Marathon late that Saturday afternoon, I knew I had to do it again. I called Sam and said "Okay, I'm in. Let's take our tired legs to the Pacific Coast Highway."

#### **Preparing for Big Sur**

The best part about training for Big Sur is that we're doing it together. We've shown up for each

other on our long runs each Sunday; we've fundraised together; and we pick the other one up when we're feeling tired, discouraged, or just downright lazy.

As two young adults in Sullivan County, we feel it's important to support our local peers dealing with the unthinkable-a rare cancer diagnosis. At the end of the day, that's what it's about-running to raise awareness and funds. And we're so excited to take that mission to the west coast this spring. Hopefully the next time you hear from us, we'll be Big Sur-vivors.

# Are you ready for Medicare?

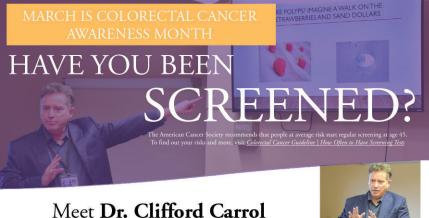
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\*ERCP—Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography—is a procedure to diagnose and treat problems in the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts, and pancreas. It combines X-ray and the use of an endoscope—a long, flexible, lighted tube.

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# Understanding 'harm reduction'

BY DEBORAH WORDEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

any people ask about the funding sources of nonprofit agencies. At Action Toward Independence (ATI), we are very fortunate to have several different entities providing resources that allow us to help our community. One of those organizations is the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS).

For ATI, OASAS provides funding to conduct a new program regarding "harm reduction." It's an approach that emphasizes connecting directly with people who have addictions to prevent overdose and infectious disease transmission, improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of those served, and offer low-threshold options for accessing substance use disorder treatment and other health care services.

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with addiction. Our goal is to increase awareness and the use of local and regional harm reduction resources and strategies. ATI will provide outreach to the local communities including everyone from libraries, civic organizations, senior groups and first responders. We will provide research-based information and resources to help in the education regarding this disease.

Another goal is to support healthcare providers in recogniz-

ing and addressing the effects of stigma, which can pose a barrier to individuals seeking substance use treatment and harm reduction services. We at ATI understand the stigma associated with many

Stigma can pose a barrier to individuals seeking substance use treatment and harm reduction services.

types of disabilities. Being a peerrun organization, we deal with it personally on a regular basis. We will share the importance of treating people with dignity regardless of their disability.

An important point is that OASAS addresses and supports services for all aspects of addiction. This March in New York, OASAS and partners will mark the 20th Anniversary of National Problem Gambling Awareness Month – a grassroots advocacy campaign dedicated to raising awareness of problem gambling as a preventable and treatable public health issue.

Gambling addiction is an impulse-control disorder. Gambling problems can happen to anyone and manifests itself when the person can't control the impulse to gam-ble, regardless of the consequences. Gambling then crosses the line from being fun and harmless to an unhealthy and painful obsession. When a person can't stop, the result has a negative impact on their life, job and more importantly, their loved ones.

The good news is there is help in New York State for individuals and families struggling with gambling problems. Prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery support are available 24/7 at 1-877-8-HOPENY. All you have to do is call, reach out and get help. There is no judgement, only the opportunity for recovery.



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NEWS

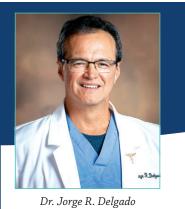
# Honesdale Rotary "places bet" on future scientists

HONESDALE, PA — "These kids will go far, and we're happy to help them on their journey!" said Sherry Grandinetti, copresident of Honesdale Rotary about Wayne Highlands Middle School students in the school's Science Olympiad club. Honesdale Rotary donated approximately \$700 to the club for a new laptop, something one of their advisors, Kelly O'Neill said was desperately needed if the students were to compete with other schools. Honesdale Rotary raises funds from various events, including the annual Wine Garden during Honesdale's Roots & Rhythm Music & Arts Festival in June, the Pet Paw-rade and the upcoming first-ever Beer & Wine Festival at the Wayne County Fairgrounds on September 23, 2023. Part of Rotary International, a service club which counts more than a million members globally, Honesdale Rotary has close to 40 members. Other local projects include painting the Fred Miller Pavilion on Honesdale's Main Street and funding new shelves for the Wayne County Food Pantry. New members welcome. Visit Honesdale Rotary on Facebook.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Back row, I. to r.: Olympiad advisors Karen Martin and Kelly O'Neill; **Honesdale Rotary Co-Presidents Bonny Cousins** and Sherry Grandinetti. Front: Garret Quigley, Katie Legg, and Leah Klinciewicz.



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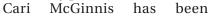
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# Garnet Health announces leadership promotions

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

MIDDLETOWN — Garnet Health, which includes Garnet Health Medical Center, Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills, Garnet Health Doctors, Garnet Health Urgent Care, Garnet Health Foundation and Garnet Health Foundation – Catskills, recently announced the promotion of the following individuals.

Moira Mencher has been promoted to director of planning and community relations. Mencher will oversee all certificate of need preparation, strategic planning, data collection and analysis, special projects, government relations and regulatory compliance. She will continue to grow Garnet Health's community health program and drive health equity and physician relations. Mencher joined Garnet Health in 2019 as a physician liaison and shortly thereafter began to lead, grow and expand Garnet Health's community presence.





Moira Mencher

promoted to IT manager, Revenue Cycle and Health Information Management (HIM). McGinnis has been with the organization 24 years, most recently as a financial analyst in IT. Prior to that, she was an IT liaison to patient accounting at Arden Hill Hospital. In her new role, McGinnis will oversee both



NEWS 🥢 NOTES IN HEALTHCARE

Cari McGinnis

the IT revenue cycle and HIM analysts for Garnet Health.

Shawn Springer has been promoted to administrator of technical services. Springer has been with the organization for eight years. He started as a senior network engineer before taking the position of director of technical



Shawn Springer

services. In his new role, Springer has systemwide oversight of the IT network, security, help desk and infrastructure teams, as well as the telecommunications department.

For more information about career opportunities at Garnet Health, visit garnethealth.org/ careers.

## Dr. Maria M. Pesquera appointed associate medical director

NEWBURGH — Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties announces Dr. Maria M. Pesquera has been appointed Associate Medical Director full-time. Dr. Pesquera received her medical degree from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus; completed her internship and residency in Internal Medicine at New York Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center; and completed her Fellowship in Geriatrics at Albany Medical Center. She is board certified in Internal Medicine and Geriatrics Medicine.

In addition to her medical degree, Dr. Pesquera holds a master's degree in Science, Physiology, and Biophysics from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus. She is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Janet M. Glasgow Memorial Achievement Citation from the American Medical Women's Association.

Dr. Pesquera has extensive experience in primary care and palliative care, having worked as a physicianatvariousmedicalcenters and private practices throughout her career. She is currently enrolled in the Narrative Medicine Program at Columbia University School of Professional Studies and has received certifications in pain management, symptom management, communication skills, and as an end-of-life doula. She is bilingual, proficient in Medical Spanish, and is looking forward to getting out into the community to help educate Orange and Sullivan County residents about Hospice care.

"We are honored to have Dr. Pesquera join our team as Associate Medical Director", says Sandra Cassese, RN, MSN, CNS, President & CEO of Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties. "Her extensive experience in primary and palliative care, as well as her numerous awards and certifications, make her an invaluable asset to Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties. We look forward to working with her to provide the highest quality of care to our patients."

In her expanded role at Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties, Dr. Pesquerajoins Dr. Robert Dinsmore, Medical Director, in overseeing the medical care of patients receiving hospice services. They will work closely with an interdisciplinary team to ensure patients and their families receive compassionate physical, emotional, and spiritual end-of-life care, with comfort, dignity, and respect.

"I am extremely excited to join the team at Hospice of Orange & Sullivan Counties as Associate Medical Director",



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO Dr. Maria M. Pesquera

says Dr. Pesquera. "Providing compassionate, comprehensive care to patients is a passion of mine, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the community in this new role. I look forward to working with Dr. Dinsmore and the interdisciplinary team on creating an individualized plan of care for each unique patient and their family, to ensure that their goals are being met."

#### **NOTES IN HEALTHCARE** NEWS

# Universal masking no longer required at United Health Services

WALTON — As the community's healthcare leader, we have been on the forefront of taking action in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure everyone's safety and quality of care. While you no longer have to wear a mask at most United Health Services locations, our policy will be reviewed on a weekly basis, and could change.

This new guidance has allowed us to implement several aspects of greater flexibility around masking, and we have decided to adjust our masking policies for certain situations and scenarios. Currently this applies across the UHS System, with certain exceptions. These include UHS Senior Living at Ideal and UHS Senior Living at Chenango Memorial Hospital, as these locations have more specific guidance from the CDC and NYSDOH.

"At UHS, we are well prepared to use our team's vast knowledge, expertise and experience to make masking decisions that are in the best safety interests of everyone in our facilities and communities," said John M. Carrigg, President and Chief Executive Officer of UHS. "We will make those decisions weekly, based on a variety of factors, including community transmission rates.

"COVID is treatable, а preventable disease," said James McDonald, MD, MPH, Acting New York State Health Commissioner, when announcing the news about the masking change. "It allows us to shift from blanket mandates to an approach in which we provide people with the information and tools they need to protect themselves. We've given healthcare facilities and the general public the information

they need to protect themselves." On Feb. 10, health officials announced that New York State was ending its mask-related requirements inside healthcare settings, from hospitals to nursing homes to providers' offices, in line with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All institutions are allowed to come up with their own rules.

While we are mask-free now in most settings, please continue to take the pandemic seriously. Please stay home if you are sick or have any upper respiratory symptoms. If so, you should call your provider or do a virtual visit.

You can continue to wear a mask if you so choose when coming to one of our facilities. And you should mask if you have had a recent direct exposure to COVID, RSV or the flu.

Visitors will continue to be screened on arrival at any point of entry to our facilities, and masks will continue to be available if needed. We are currently in the season during which respiratory illnesses are often present. Patients, visitors, staff members, volunteers or vendors who present with respiratory symptoms at any point of service will be asked to wear a mask.

As a visitor, you may be requested mask and/or wear other to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on the clinical condition of the patient you are visiting. For areas where patients' conditions require them to be in isolation, all appropriate PPE will continue to be worn.

We appreciate your patience, understanding and cooperation as we all work together to maintain the health of our community.



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# New Hope Community selected for grant

LOCH SHELDRAKE — New Hope Community, a not-for-profit organization providing personcentered services and supports for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD), was selected for a grant program from the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) and the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

The \$10 million partnership between NADSP and OPWDD will expand opportunities for professional credentialing for direct support professionals and frontline supervisors in New York State who are in the developmental disabilities field. Throughout the nearly three-year grant period, employees of organizations, including New Hope Community, will reap the benefits of the NADSP certification training program's NADSP E-Badge Academy without having to pay associated costs.

Direct support professionals have historically had limited opportunities to progress in their careers, but NADSP aims to change that with comprehensive training on how to provide highquality human services. With many organizations experiencing workforce shortages, the grant comes as a welcome approach to offering continuing education that will fuel growth, support greater job satisfaction, and result in higher retention levels.

"People who feel confident in their roles and who are given opportunities to advance often stay in their jobs longer and provide better service," said Debra McGinness, New Hope Community CEO. "We are thrilled to offer this opportunity to our staff and know it will ultimately, positively impact the people who receive supports and services from New Hope Community."

The NADSP E-Badge Academy allows DSPs and frontline supervisors to demonstrate and quantify the knowledge, skills, and values that these professionals employ every day in their roles. The ability to earn DSP-I, DSP-II, DSP-III, and frontline supervisor (FLS) certifications allow for the recognition of professional development that is so important to a meaningful career path.

"In so many different ways, staff have indicated that they are looking for ways to develop and sharpen their skills and this credentialing program will do just that," said New Hope Community's Director of Staff Training and Development Amy LeRoy. "Through our selection process, we took a very close look at each staff person, and we selected people who have a passion for their job along with an eagerness to learn."

New Hope Community selected 15 staff members to participate in the program during the first grant year. Select Human Services (SHS), its Westchester-based division, selected five staff members to participate in the program.

Milady Pagan, a DSP who has been employed at New Hope Community for nearly two decades, has been in the program for a little more than a month. "I am enjoying the training and finding it fun and interesting. It's giving me new ways of looking at the work I do and renewed motivation after 18 years in the field," Pagan said.

SHS Waiver Service Manager Melissa Schoenenberger was also chosen to participate in the program. "It's been a valuable learning experience that has given me a different perspective as a supervisor and helped improve my managerial skills."

Recipients of the grant were chosen through a rigorous review process using a scoring rubric evaluated by a committee of field experts. The 17 recipients, including New Hope Community, represent all regions of New York State.

# Hospice volunteer training at Wayne Memorial

**NOTES IN HEALTHCARE** 

HONESDALE, PA — Wayne Memorial Hospital's Hospice team, part of its Home Health Department, is looking for volunteers and offering training on April 22nd and April 29th from 9am to 4pm and one evening in May, date to be determined.

When a patient's life expectancy is limited, Wayne Memorial offers comfort just a phone call away. The Hospice team provides a full range of compassionate care for the dying so they may live their lives to the fullest. Volunteers can help both the patient and the team in many ways.

Hospice care neither hastens nor postpones death; instead, it eases symptoms of discomfort and offers scientifically advanced pain control, supporting a patient's desire to die with dignity and with as much control as possible in the comfort of their own home. The hospital's multi-disciplinary team of professionals and trained volunteers understand how unique the dying process is for everyone involved.

Wayne Memorial offers services in Wayne, Pike, Lackawanna and Susquehanna Counties, and volunteers from each of these areas are welcome. Those interested must attend all three sessions at the hospital in Honesdale, as well as the hospital's General Volunteer Orientation. If you have time and compassion to share, please call 570-253-8737 or email \_malicky@ wmh.org\_ to enroll by April 10, 2023. There is no cost for the training.



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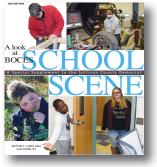
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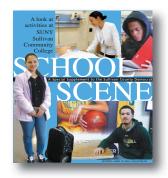
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