

# VALLEY

health & life

NEW WAY  
TO MANAGE  
**PAIN**

**HEARING**  
HELP

CELEBRATING  
**ACE AWARD**  
**FINALISTS**

THE FUTURE OF  
**PRIMARY**  
**CARE**



# 125 YEARS OF CARE

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Every New Year provides an opportunity to reflect on the past and to anticipate the future. For Holyoke Medical Center, 2017 was an eventful year with the opening of the new Emergency Department and Medical Office Building. What a fantastic addition this has been for our hospital and community. Patients have commented on the bright, comfortable waiting room and staff is pleased with the efficiencies of the design. This expansion, coupled with growth in new services, has resulted in increased patient volume and new jobs for the region.

As we look forward to 2018, Holyoke Medical Center will be celebrating 125 years. At a time when Wrigley's Juicy Fruit gum, the KitchenAid dishwasher and the Ferris Wheel were introduced at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, William Whiting, president of Whiting Paper Company in Holyoke, was also thinking about the future. Mr. Whiting had a friend who became ill in a local hotel and the experience made him recognize the need for a hospital in Holyoke. He called a meeting of local businessmen in his home and the idea for Holyoke City Hospital was born. What started as a facility to accommodate 45 patients in May of 1893 is now an independent community hospital treating more than 283,000 inpatients and outpatients each year. We are planning to celebrate our 125th anniversary in 2018 and hope that you will celebrate with us in recognizing this milestone.

In closing, I'd like to thank you, our patients, for choosing Holyoke Medical Center and Valley Health Systems as your healthcare provider. Our amazing team of employees, physicians, volunteers and supporters are privileged to care for you and your family. It is because of this team that we are able to provide high-quality and consistent award-winning services for you close to home. From our family to yours, I wish you a healthy and prosperous New Year!



Best Regards,

**SPIROS HATIRAS**

President and  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Holyoke Medical Center &  
Valley Health Systems, Inc.



**13**  
ACE Award Finalists

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**Valley Health  
Systems, Inc.**

■ HOLYOKE MEDICAL  
CENTER  
575 Beech Street, Holyoke  
413.534.2500

■ HOLYOKE VNA  
HOSPICE LIFE CARE  
575 Beech Street, Holyoke  
413.534.5691

■ RIVER VALLEY  
COUNSELING CENTER  
319 Beech Street, Holyoke  
413.540.1100

■ WESTERN MASS  
PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES  
10 Hospital Drive,  
Suite 301, Holyoke  
413.535.4714

# HEALTHY HABITS

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



**42**

**Percentage that the breast-cancer-mortality rate has dropped in the U.S. since the late 1980s.**

—International Prevention Research Institute



## PROTECTING THE PROSTATE

Men who eat at least 6 ounces of legumes per week have half the prostate cancer risk of those who eat less. Researchers posit that digesting the fiber in beans decreases inflammation, which plays a role in the development of tumors.

—British Journal of Nutrition



**STAND UP!**


**People who alternated sitting and standing every 15 minutes over eight hours burned more calories than those who stayed seated.**

—Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise

**50**

**The percentage preschoolers reduce their risk of obesity as teens by going to bed before 8 p.m. rather than after 9 p.m.**

—National Institute of Child Health and Human Development



## GAMES AND GOOD CHOICES

Glued to the screen playing strategy video games? If so, you're more likely to make healthy long-term choices. The reason, a recent study suggests, is that the games require players to analyze actions and consequences while visualizing future outcomes.

—Personality and Individual Differences



FOR THE RECORD

## WELLNESS EVENTS

### LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN

Chronic pain can impact both your personal and professional lives. Join Dr. Joseph Strebel, Director of the Pain Management Center, as he discusses the comprehensive, multidisciplinary treatment approach that the Center offers, and what that can mean for you and your quality of life.

**DATE:** Thursday, February 22, 2018

**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.

### COLON HEALTH: PROBLEMS AND PREVENTION

As we age, our risk of developing colon-related health problems increases overall. Colon cancer and common colon disorders such as celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome can have an impact on your everyday life. Join Dr. Francis Martinez as he explores common colon health problems, symptoms and key approaches to prevention.

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018

**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY CARE

Join Kristin O'Connor and John Glogowski, nurse practitioners, as they discuss why having a primary care provider is vital to leading a long and healthy life. They also will cover the essential role that nurse practitioners and physician assistants play in the current health-care environment.

**DATE:** Thursday, March 22, 2018

**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.

### WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Topics will include non-surgical and surgical options for weight loss available at Holyoke Medical Center. Members of the Weight Management team will discuss this comprehensive and multidisciplinary weight-loss program. The program will be presented regularly in both English and Spanish.

*All programs will take place at 5:30 p.m. in the HMC Auxiliary Conference Center. Please register online at [holyokehealth.com/events](http://holyokehealth.com/events) or by phone at 413.534.2789.*



# INSPIRED TO GIVE

READ WHY THESE DONORS DECIDED TO GIVE BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL THROUGH **CARE. COMMUNITY. COMMITMENT.** THE CAMPAIGN FOR HOLYOKE MEDICAL CENTER.



LEFT: Sarah Stone, Regional Admissions Manager, Michael Spearin, Vice President of Business Development, Stacey Rebelo, Vice President of Operations, and David Gontaruk, Executive Director at Mont Marie Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. RIGHT: Richard Towne, Jr.

**GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS** from individuals, families and area companies have allowed Holyoke Medical Center to make investments in state-of-the-art facilities and new technologies, including the new Emergency Department. The many reasons people have chosen to support our community hospital can best be expressed in their own words.

## ■ TRYKO PARTNERS/MARQUIS HEALTH SERVICES

"Strong partnerships with local medical providers are integral to a skilled nursing facility's ability to provide the best possible care, programs and customer service for residents. We value the close working relationship we have developed with Holyoke Medical Center in the three years we have owned and operated Mont Marie Health Care Center. HMC is incredibly well respected and clearly holds the highest standards for quality. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the hospital and its team as we develop specialized programming that meets the needs of the Holyoke community. We are proud to support the hospital's mission as a capital campaign donor." —*Norman Rokeach, Chief Executive Officer, Marquis Health Services*

## ■ RICHARD TOWNE, JR.

The Towne family has a long history with Holyoke Medical Center. Since 1921, various family members have served as President of the Board of Directors for a total of 28 years collectively. However, Richard Towne, Jr., will tell you that his recent contribution to the Care. Community. Commitment. Campaign for Holyoke Medical Center has little to do with his family's legacy in Holyoke.

"I have had a lot of experience coming to the Holyoke Hospital Emergency Room: with my parents, my wife, my children and myself. One of the things I always remember is that it is never fun being in the emergency room, and it is not easy to be a caregiver in an emergency room either," said Towne. "I think back on those experiences with family members, especially with my wife. I think of how difficult it was in the old emergency room. The new facility has resolved what has been a long and significant concern of patients who have been treated by the medical center. For me, making a contribution was not about giving to the hospital; it was about giving to the patients and caregivers the space both need to provide much improved treatment for very sick patients. I think the administration and the leadership of the medical center deserve a pat on the back for what they have done for the community." —*Richard Towne, Jr.*



## THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NEEDS YOU!

The Holyoke Medical Center capital campaign for your new Emergency Department is still short of its goal of \$3 million. Please help us reach our goal today by calling the hospital's Development Department at **413.534.2579**, or by making a secure donation online at **HolyokeHealth.com/Support-HMC**.



# 8 Symptoms to Act on Now

Being busy is a fact of life in our fast-paced world. So the last thing any of us wants to do is make a doctor's appointment for a seemingly manageable problem. But for these eight symptoms, that appointment could save your life. See your physician if you experience any of these problems.

## 1 Unexpected weight loss

While sudden, unexpected weight loss may sound like the stuff of infomercial dreams, it can signal serious health problems, including endocrine-system disorders, diabetes and cancer. Losing 10 pounds or more without trying is cause for concern.

## 2 Blood in the stool

Changes to bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation lasting more than two days, accompanied by blood in the stool can be a symptom of hemorrhoids, inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome or colorectal cancer.

## 3 Skin changes

Any mole or freckle that changes color, shape, texture or size could be a natural part of aging or it could be skin cancer. There are many types of skin cancer and luckily, if caught early, most are easily treated by removing the offending mole.

## 4 Sudden confusion

A sudden bout of confusion, inability to concentrate or a change in personality could be caused by any of the following: dehydration, low blood sugar, an infection, a stroke, a brain tumor or bleeding in the brain.

## 5 Shortness of breath

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath is called dyspnea. Many people suffer from dyspnea occasionally, but if it is sudden, severe and limits your activities, you should seek medical attention. Breathing problems could indicate asthma, lung infection, blood clot, stroke or heart attack.

## 6 Seeing flashes of light

Flashes, bright spots or other unexplained oddities in your vision may indicate the onset of a migraine or a detached retina, which can quickly lead to permanent blindness without swift medical intervention.

## 7 Swollen legs

Hot, red and swollen legs or pain in the back of your calf can be symptoms of vein problems, thyroid issues or heart failure. Pain in the back of your legs also can indicate a blood clot that could be fatal if not treated promptly.

## 8 Constant fatigue

Being tired all day, every day despite an early bedtime should be addressed by a medical professional. Persistent fatigue could indicate depression, sleep apnea, anemia, hypothyroidism or cancer.



# GETTING HELP WITH YOUR HEARING

HEARING CHALLENGES CAN CAUSE WITHDRAWAL AND DEPRESSION AND MAY EVEN BE SYMPTOMS OF OTHER HEALTH ISSUES. THE EXPERTS AT HOLYOKE MEDICAL CENTER CAN HELP.

KATHRYN GIRARDIN, Au.D., manager of the Speech & Hearing Clinic at Holyoke Medical Center, is passionate about the importance of human communication to overall health and quality of life.

“The main focus of what we’re doing is making sure people’s communication is healthy and appropriate, so their quality of life is as good as can be,” explains Girardin.

Audiologists are experts in hearing. They can diagnose hearing disability, consult with patients regarding hearing aids and reduce the effects of tinnitus (ringing sound in the ears). They also can help determine the best treatment for patients with balance disorders.

Starting at age 50, hearing tests should be part of your yearly health screening. “It ties into so much and helps your doctor treat you as a whole person,” says Girardin. “The ear can be a window into other pieces of health. The ear is an end organ, meaning it’s a last stop for oxygenated blood. If blood flow is restricted for some reason, such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes, it can reduce or cut off the blood supply to the ear. This results in

ear damage that can be detected in a hearing test.”

Hearing loss can greatly affect a person’s quality of life. People may stop participating in their usual activities because they can’t hear. This withdrawal impacts relationships and can lead to depression. “Research shows that people who have dementia and untreated hearing loss progress more rapidly through the disease process than people who either don’t have hearing loss or have hearing loss and wear hearing aids,” says Girardin.

People wait an average of seven years after learning they have hearing loss before doing anything about it. Girardin wants people to know that the Speech & Hearing Clinic can help in ways that may not even involve a hearing aid. “If we can catch the hearing loss early,” she says, “we can talk about strategies, such as environmental controls—things we can do ahead of time before the hearing loss impacts your quality of life.”

**To make an appointment at the Speech & Hearing Clinic, please call 413.534.2508.**

## Join Us

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 45 million Americans suffer from ringing in the ears, or tinnitus. Join the Audiologists of the HMC Speech & Hearing Center to learn more.

**Date:** Wednesday, January 17, 2018

**Time:** 5:30 p.m.

**Place:** HMC Auxiliary Conference Center

**Register:** online at [HolyokeHealth.com/events](http://HolyokeHealth.com/events) or call 413.534.2789.



Kathryn Girardin, Au.D.



# A NEW WAY TO MANAGE PAIN

HOLYOKE MEDICAL CENTER'S NEW PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OFFERS A HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT PULLS ALL AVAILABLE MEDICAL SERVICES TOGETHER TO HELP PATIENTS ACHIEVE TANGIBLE GOALS.

AS OF OCTOBER 2017, THE HOLYOKE COMMUNITY has a new comprehensive, integrated pain-management resource. "We view ourselves as the primary-care physicians of pain management," says Joseph Strebel, M.D., D.P.T., director of the HMC Pain Management Center.

Whether treating chronic pain or acute pain from an injury, illness or surgery, providers at the new Pain Management Center will offer individualized care plans tailored to each patient's needs. "The program is unique in that no one in this area has formally put all of the services a patient needs together to provide a pain-care plan," explains Dr. Strebel. The comprehensive plans will involve any service within the hospital that's necessary for the individual patient, including physical therapy, surgery, alternative medicine, behavioral medicine, tobacco cessation, addiction services and weight-loss management.

A unique facet of the Holyoke Medical Center program is how the success of pain management is measured. The standard pain score—"How severe is your pain today, on a scale of 1 to 10?"—is subjective, so it's hard to establish a concrete treatment goal.



Joseph Strebel,  
M.D., D.P.T.

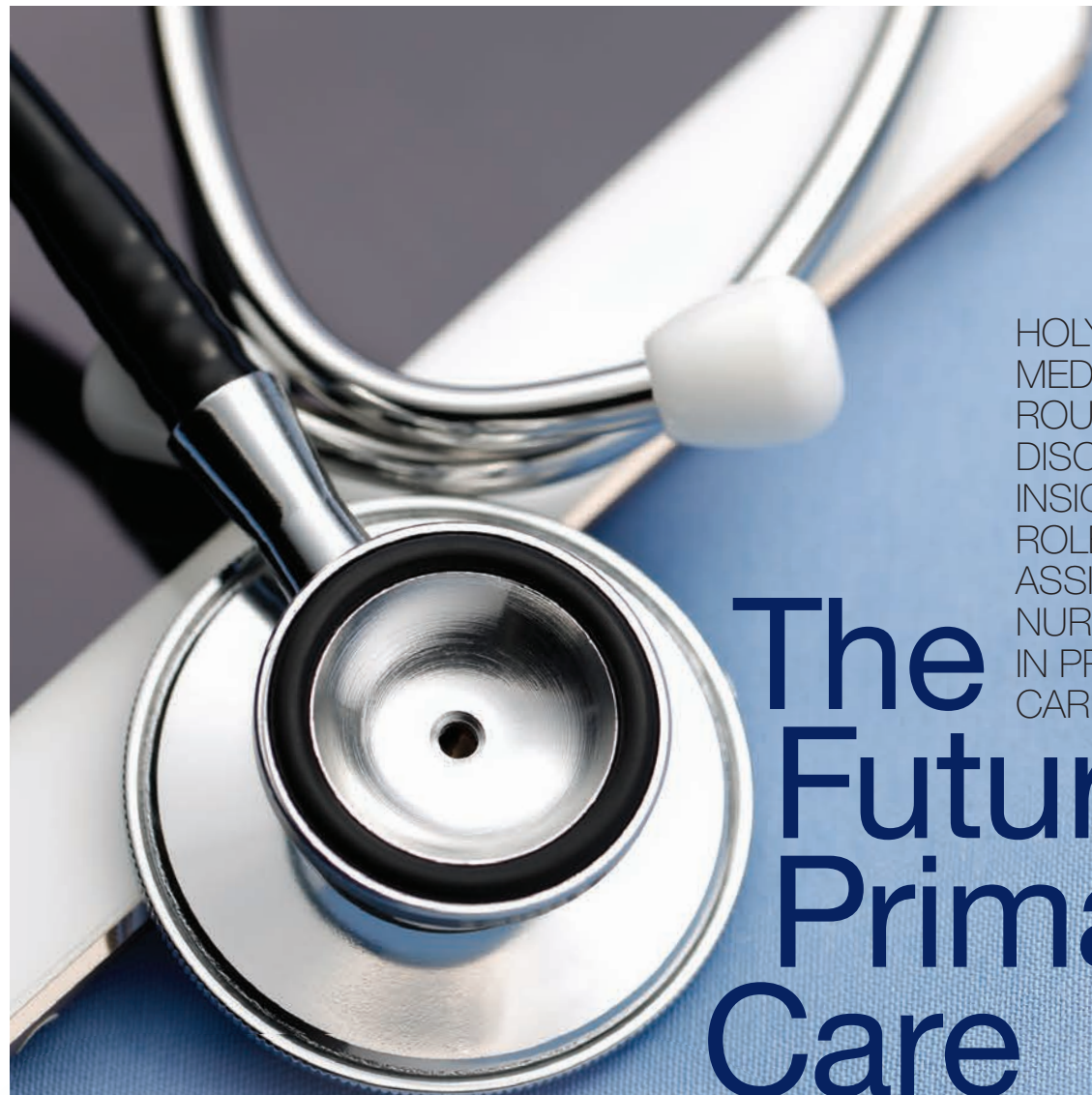
In Holyoke Medical Center's new pain management program, the goal is to have patients focus on their personal objectives, whether that's spending more time with family, returning to work or getting back to an activity they enjoy. "We want to make the goals more objective and tangible," says Dr. Strebel, "so patients can really see the benefits of what we're doing, as opposed to an abstract and subjective pain score."

Dr. Strebel also believes the new Pain Management Center can help to address the growing opioid-addiction crisis, a problem in Massachusetts and around the country. "People who have an injury and are prescribed an opioid can become addicted," explains Dr. Strebel. "At that point, they can no longer use opioids, but they still have pain. This is often when I see them. It's a huge issue, crossing all socioeconomic boundaries." A comprehensive pain management program can facilitate tapering and transition to a more effective long-term program.

Dr. Strebel views comprehensive pain management as a tool to help patients navigate the intricacies of the health-care system. "These resources are available, but they're not easily accessible. Services aren't coordinated and promoted, so people can't always get the help they need," he says.

**To learn more about the HMC Pain Management Center, call 413.535.4933.**





HOLYOKE  
MEDICAL CENTER'S  
ROUNDTABLE  
DISCUSSION GAVE  
INSIGHTS ABOUT THE  
ROLE OF PHYSICIAN  
ASSISTANTS AND  
NURSE PRACTITIONERS  
IN PRIMARY HEALTH  
CARE TODAY.

# The Future of Primary Care

WHEN YOU GO TO YOUR primary-care doctor's office for a well visit or to seek relief for your sore throat, you might see a healthcare provider who isn't a doctor. Nurse practitioners and physician assistants—both have the skills and training necessary to treat patients independently—have become an integral part of primary-care practices at Holyoke Medical Center and affiliate Western Mass Physician Associates.

NPs and PAs are known as mid-level health providers because, unlike nurses, they can diagnose and treat patients, but their level of training isn't as extensive as a physician's. Nationwide, they're extending the reach of primary-care physicians and helping practices run smoothly.

At a roundtable discussion in October, several mid-level providers explained what they do and what patients should expect when they are treated by nurse

practitioners or physician assistants.

## A CARING CONNECTION

Nurse practitioners and physician assistants often take more time to relate to their patients because it helps them understand the reasons behind patients' health habits. Armed with this knowledge, mid-level providers can create treatment plans that patients may be more likely to follow.

"We're connecting on the level of trying to understand why you're living your life the way you are," says Martha Spiro, FNP, who has been a nurse practitioner for more than 30 years. "Why are you taking your meds or not taking your meds? Can you lose weight in a way that will work well with your lifestyle?"

NPs and PAs try to take the whole person into account when making a diagnosis and determining the best treatment.

"We take a little more time to look at the big picture, which allows us to determine a fair treatment plan a little bit differently than a physician might," says John Glogowski, FNP. "We consider things like patients' personalities, their way of learning or the way they look at life, and then base our treatment off that."

## KEEPING PATIENTS HEALTHY

Having good rapport with your primary-care provider can prevent complications from becoming chronic conditions. NPs and PAs often can stop problems before they spiral out of control. "Talking to patients and having them listen to you and being a source they come to trust can prevent a lot of admissions to the hospital for things like congestive heart failure or diabetes," says Nick Felton, PA-C.

As more mid-level providers join the



“We take a little more time to look at the big picture, which allows us to determine a fair treatment plan a little bit differently than a physician might.” —JOHN GLOGOWSKI, FNP

community, primary care may be able to extend its reach. “There are roles to step out into communities and into places that haven’t been well served before, where there are gaps in care,” says Martha. “We can bridge those gaps—getting primary care to people with severe mental illness, for example. Or more palliative care to bridge that care gap into hospice.”

If you have never met with nurse practitioners or physician assistants before, don’t be afraid to ask them about their experience. “It’s important for patients to understand our background and schooling,” says Bethany Williams, PA. “Don’t be afraid to ask a mid-level provider about his or her training and experience. Personally, I would love to share this information with you if you have any questions about our role.”

In many cases, patients have met with an NP or PA in the past, and then deliberately chosen that provider again for future visits because they enjoyed the personal connection and are confident in the quality of care.

## FASTER ACCESS TO CARE

Acting as extenders to the physician’s practice, NPs and PAs usually have schedules designed for open access to meet same-day and urgent-visit requests versus waiting sometimes weeks or even months to access a busy physician. The doctors they work with are always easily accessible. PAs and NPs are trained to recognize when the situation requires a higher level of expertise, and can easily bring in one of the physicians they practice with when required.

Holyoke’s nurse practitioners and physician assistants strive to provide quality care with heart. “Ninety percent of care is listening,” says Martha. “Trying to really hear what’s going on with someone is why I love mid-level care—understanding differences in people’s worlds and understanding what makes people tick. That’s what being a mid-level provider is about.”

## Our primary care nurse practitioners and physician assistants are accepting new patients:



**NICK FELTON, PA-C**  
adult primary care in  
Holyoke: 413.536.7040



**JOHN GLOGOWSKI, FNP**  
adult primary care in  
Chicopee: 413.552.3250



**KRISTIN O'CONNOR, CNP**  
adult primary care in  
Chicopee: 413.552.3250



**MARTHA SPIRO, FNP**  
adult primary care in  
Chicopee: 413.552.3250



**BETHANY WILLIAMS, PA-C**  
pediatric primary care in  
Holyoke: 413.534.2800

## What the letters mean

### ■ PA-C PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

- Has a bachelor’s degree, plus a graduate degree from a PA program. PAs are trained in the medical model, which emphasizes disease pathology. They must pass a national certification exam and be licensed by the state.

### ■ CNP or NP CERTIFIED NURSE PRACTITIONER

- Is a registered nurse who has earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree (or in some cases, a Doctor of Nursing Practice). NPs are trained in the nursing model, which emphasizes patients and their outcomes. NPs must pass a national certification examination and be licensed by the state.

## Specialties Include:

### ■ FNP-BC or FNP-C FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER *Board Certified*

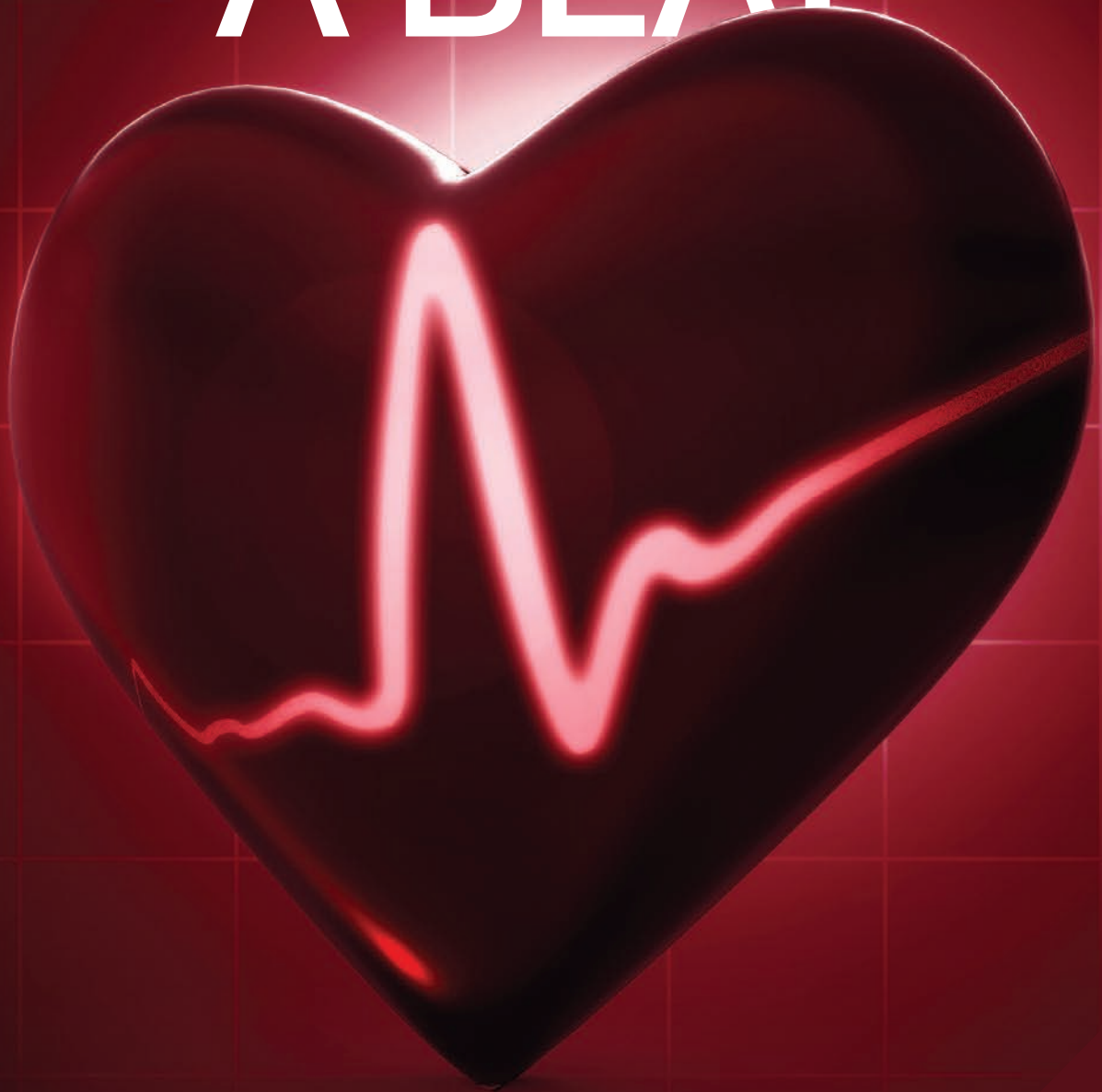
- Has a specialization in family practice.

### ■ AGNP-C ADULT GERONTOLOGY NURSE PRACTITIONER *Certified*

- Has a dual specialization in both adult and geriatric practice.



# DON'T MISS A BEAT



WHY IT'S CRUCIAL TO TREAT ATRIAL FIBRILLATION, THE MOST  
COMMON TYPE OF IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT.



**THAT FEELING** when your heart flutters, misses a beat, speeds up or slows down can be alarming. Though these palpitations are often harmless, they can signal serious malfunctions in the heart's muscles and nerves.

The most common type of irregular heartbeat, or arrhythmia, is atrial fibrillation—AFib for short. At least 2.7 million Americans are living with AFib, and that number is expected to grow as the average age of the population rises. Untreated AFib significantly increases both risk of heart-related death and risk of stroke.

### What is AFib?

When the heart beats, it squeezes and that pushes blood through each of the heart's four chambers. With AFib, the top two chambers of the heart quiver instead of beating regularly. This means the heart can't pump well so some blood is left sitting. And when blood is stationary, clots form. Blood flowing through the heart can sweep clots out into the circulatory system, where they can cause blockages that lead to complications such as stroke.

### Analyzing symptoms

The first step in assessing an arrhythmia is a thorough patient history. Doctors look for clues: When do symptoms occur? Are they associated with specific activities? Do lifestyle factors contribute? Will weight loss help? For instance, sleep apnea,

associated with obesity, can cause arrhythmia, including AFib. Stress and medications also can play roles.

Several tests are used to diagnose AFib. An electrocardiogram (ECG) records electrical signals as they move through the heart and can show irregularities. To further evaluate how the heart is working, patients may be asked to wear a portable ECG device called a Holter monitor for 24 hours or longer. An event recorder is a portable device that monitors heart activity over longer periods—a few weeks to a few months. Patients activate the device when they experience symptoms and doctors are able to review the heart's rhythm at the time symptoms occurred.

### Resetting rhythm

Treatment for AFib aims to regulate the heartbeat and prevent clots from forming. If the AFib is caused by an underlying condition, that will be treated first. The heart's regular rhythm (called sinus rhythm) can be re-established using medication, an electrical shock or a combination of the two.

If those treatments don't work, a minimally invasive procedure can be used to ablate, or destroy, the tissues that trigger or maintain the disruptive rhythms. This stops the arrhythmia at its source.

Blood thinners are prescribed to help prevent blood clots. Because AFib can occur without symptoms, many patients continue these medications even after normal heart rhythm is reestablished.

With active monitoring, patients who have AFib can reduce their risk of complications. It's important to keep follow-up appointments with a primary-care provider, who will watch for and help manage additional stroke risk factors, including high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking and obesity.



**HARI SUBRAMANIAN, M.D.**  
**NIRAV SHETH, M.D.**  
Cardiologists

### WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

The symptoms below have many possible causes—atrial fibrillation (AFib) is just one of them. Consult your physician if you experience:

- Fluttering or thumping in the chest
- Heart palpitation—periods of especially rapid, intense heartbeat
- Confusion
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Loss of ability to exercise
- Shortness of breath

Whether you are coping with AFib or other cardiac conditions, our triple board certified cardiologists are ready to help you find the answers you are looking for and a treatment plan that's right for you.

**Make an appointment at HMC Cardiovascular Specialists by calling 413.534.2870.**

### WHO IS AT RISK?

If you have one or more of the following conditions, you may be at higher risk for atrial fibrillation, or AFib:

- Alcohol use (especially binge drinking)
- Coronary artery disease
- Heart failure or an enlarged heart
- Family history of AFib
- Overactive thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism)
- High blood pressure
- Sleep apnea
- Advanced age
- High-performance or endurance athlete

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: MAKING MEDICATION EASIER

IN A FIRST FOR WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, RIVER VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER HAS OPENED AN ON-SITE PHARMACY TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE.

**IN ANY SPECIALTY**, ensuring that patients take prescribed medications as directed can be difficult. The challenge is even greater for patients dealing with mental-health problems.

"A high number of behavioral-health patients pick up their prescriptions for the first time and either don't take them or don't refill them," explains Rosemarie Ansel, executive director of River Valley Counseling Center (RVCC). "These medications are an important part of their treatment plan."

To combat this problem, RVCC has partnered with Genoa, a QoL Healthcare Company, to open an on-site pharmacy within the 303 Beech Street Clinic in Holyoke. This is the first in-house pharmacy in a behavioral health clinic in Western Massachusetts. RVCC patients can have all of their prescriptions filled at the pharmacy,

offering a convenient one-stop shop.

"We hope this helps patients become more engaged in their treatment plans," says Ansel. "The whole idea is to provide more comprehensive care and the best possible mental-health treatment."

Angel Marrero, PharmD, site manager for Genoa, agrees. "Genoa's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals living with mental-health issues," he says. "Being closer to the patients makes more sense because we want to help this population. We see ourselves as a community pharmacy within the clinic, helping to remove barriers that can come up between patients and their prescriptions. Those barriers can be economic, cultural or transportation-related, and we can help."

Ansel had two major requirements for the pharmacy: for the staff to speak both English and Spanish to best serve the diverse community, and for the pharmacy staff to be able to help with insurance paperwork. "Now we can see more clients than we were able to before," she says. "The in-house pharmacy has made things better for our patients and our practitioners."

Marrero is excited about the new pharmacy. "We're small, so we can have better interactions with patients," he says. "We have more time, more space and offer more privacy than some of the larger pharmacies out in the community. This pharmacy helps patients feel comfortable filling their medications."

Originally from Puerto Rico, Marrero says they have a saying there, "buen vivir," which means "to have a good life." He says, "Our goal is to help all of our patients to have a good life."

**Pharmacy services are available to RVCC clients. The pharmacy can be reached at 413.315.4878. To learn more about the services available through River Valley Counseling Center, please visit [RVCC-inc.org](http://RVCC-inc.org).**



Rosemarie Ansel



Angel Marrero, PharmD



# ACE AWARDS

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS.

THE THIRD ANNUAL ACE AWARDS TOOK PLACE on Saturday, October 7, 2017, honoring two lifetime achievement award recipients: Esmat Ezzat and Tom Hazen, along with a variety of dedicated employees. Valley Health Systems would like to extend appreciation to the event sponsors for their support:

## Leading Role Sponsors:

Coverys, Huron Consulting, Medline, People's United Bank, Shepherd Kaplan LLC

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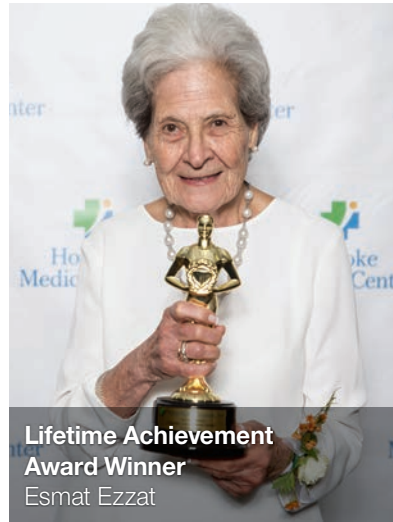
Phillip Candito & Amy Bullen, Spiros Hatiras & Family, New England Dental Administrators, LLC, Drs. Nirav & Savita Sheth

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2017 ACE AWARDS FINALISTS! (pictured below)

**Front row:** Angela Lozano Callahan, Sara Taylor, Maria Young, Darlene Gramolini, Vimari Lassalle-Garcia, Kaye Van Straten **Back row:** John Glogowski, Lynn Grondin, Dr. Zubeena Mansoor-Mateen, Spiros Hatiras, Dr. Kevin Snow, Iris Romero.

**Absent:** Dr. Arthur Weinstock

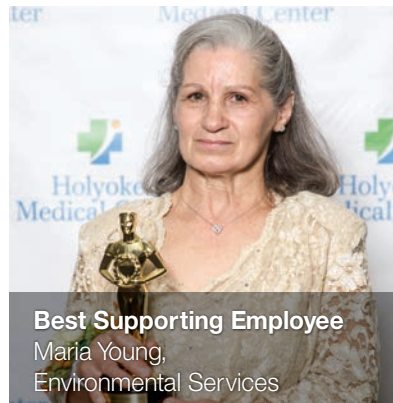
*winners*



**Lifetime Achievement Award Winner**  
Esmat Ezzat



**Lifetime Achievement Award Winner**  
Tom Hazen



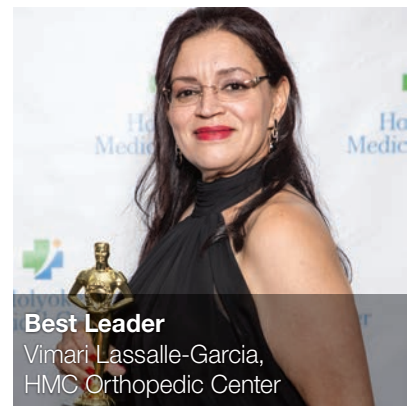
**Best Supporting Employee**  
Maria Young,  
Environmental Services



**Best Physician**  
Zubeena Mansoor-Mateen, M.D.,  
Oncologist



**Best Caregiver**  
Sara Taylor, LCSW,  
Behavioral Health



**Best Leader**  
Vimari Lassalle-Garcia,  
HMC Orthopedic Center

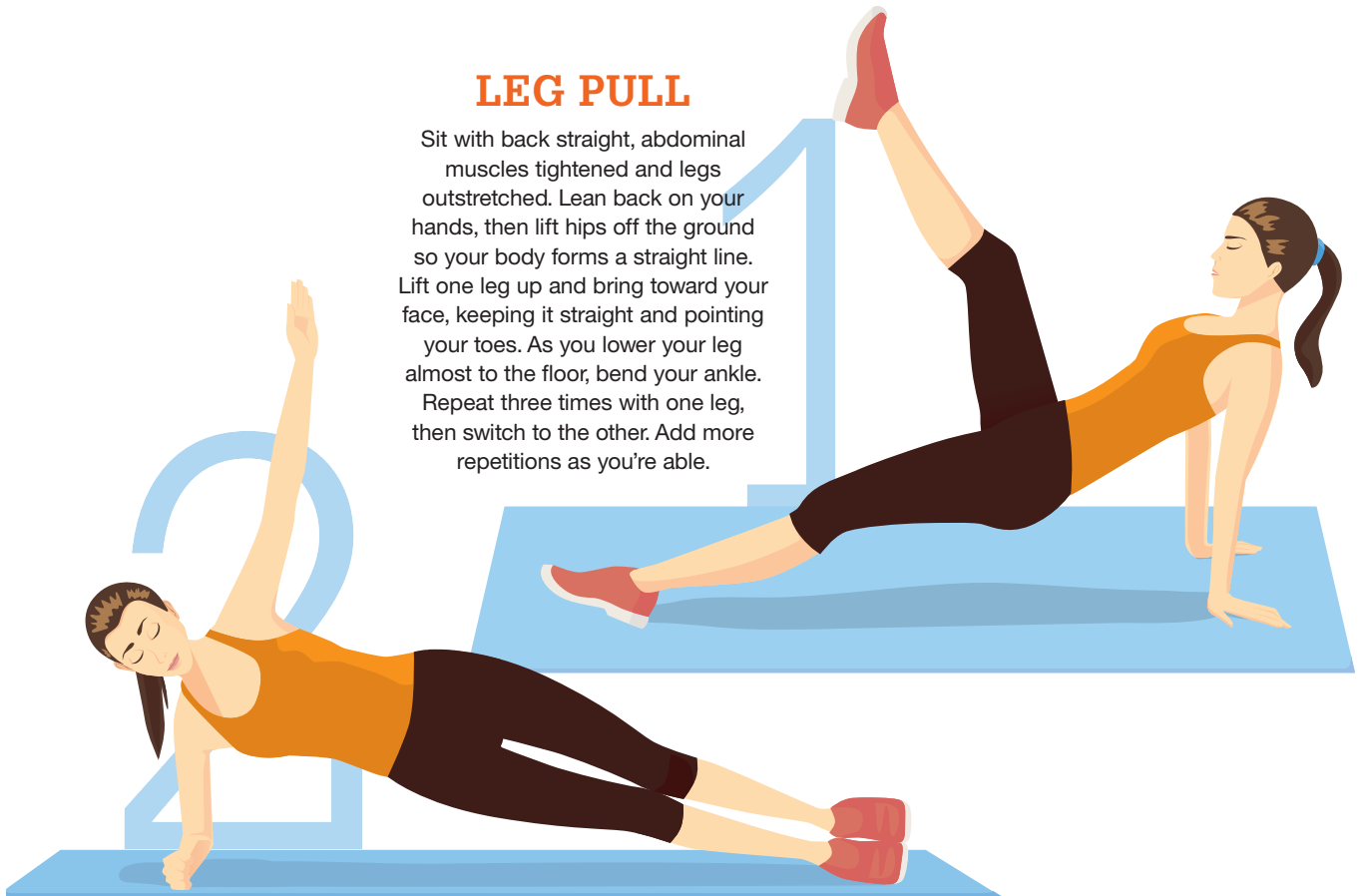


# DO MORE FOR YOUR CORE

THESE THREE EXERCISES WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE, THE MUSCLES AROUND YOUR BACK, ABS AND PELVIS. A STRONG CORE HELPS KEEP THE BODY STABLE DURING DAILY ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE, REDUCING INJURY RISK AND MINIMIZING STRAIN.

## LEG PULL

Sit with back straight, abdominal muscles tightened and legs outstretched. Lean back on your hands, then lift hips off the ground so your body forms a straight line. Lift one leg up and bring toward your face, keeping it straight and pointing your toes. As you lower your leg almost to the floor, bend your ankle. Repeat three times with one leg, then switch to the other. Add more repetitions as you're able.

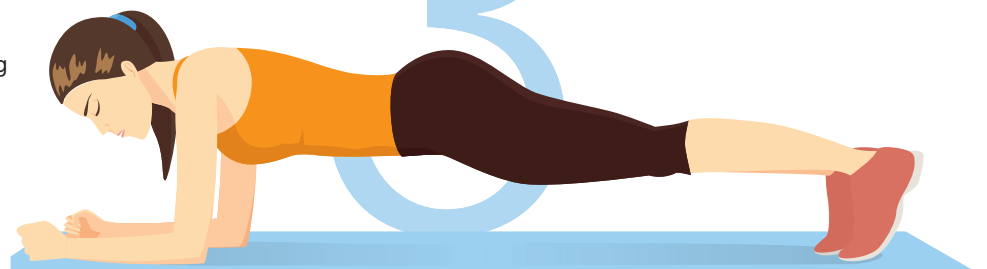


## SIDE PLANK

Lie on your right side, resting on your forearm, which should face forward. Position your elbow directly below your shoulder. With legs straight and feet stacked, tighten your abdominals and raise up off your hip. (Use your free hand to help if needed.) Raise your free hand. Keeping your back straight and abdominals tight, hold for 10–30 seconds to start, increasing as you're able. Repeat three times. Repeat on the left side.

## CLASSIC PLANK

Start in a modified push-up position, with elbows bent, positioned directly below shoulders, and forearms forward. Look down at the floor. Tighten abdominal muscles and flatten your back so your body forms a straight line from the crown of your head to your heels. Keep feet together. Hold for 10–30 seconds to start, increasing as you're able. Repeat three times.







# BRAVO FOR COCOA!

NOT MANY FOODS CAN CLAIM TO BE BOTH DECADENT AND HEALTHY.  
DARK CHOCOLATE IS ONE OF THEM.

**CHOCOLATE'S POSITIVE** press began in the days of the Aztec emperor Montezuma II, who called hot, frothy Aztec cocoa “the divine drink,” claiming that one cup enabled a man to walk for an entire day without food. Today, dark chocolate continues to generate news about its health benefits as science begins to unravel its mysteries.

## POWER UP

Eating one ounce of dark chocolate (at least 70 percent pure cocoa) a day may help keep the doctor away. Let us count the ways. Dark chocolate is rich in antioxidants, which neutralize free radicals in the body that can damage cells. It also contains cocoa butter, which the liver converts to a healthy monounsaturated fat that lowers bad (LDL) cholesterol while raising good (HDL) cholesterol. Additionally, chocolate contains several anti-inflammatory compounds that help to reduce blood pressure. Though chocolate and hearts are forever linked in our minds thanks to Valentine's Day, the health benefits of cocoa extend well beyond it. Studies have found that eating dark chocolate can reduce risk of some cancers, asthma, osteoporosis and type 2 diabetes. It also has been shown to improve concentration and decrease memory loss.

## BUY | STORE

When selecting chocolate, check the ingredients. Choose products that list cocoa, or something that comes from it (like cocoa butter or cocoa powder), first. Avoid choices that list hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils—those contain unhealthy trans fat. Some chocolate is “Dutched” to cut bitterness, but that process also reduces antioxidants. To identify Dutched chocolate, look for “cocoa processed with alkali” on the ingredients list. Store chocolate in a cool, dark, dry place. It should be well wrapped in foil, as well as a paper over-wrapper. Kept like this, it can last up to a year. A telltale sour aroma will let you know if chocolate is spoiled. Grittiness and discoloration are other signs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that it takes 200 mg of flavanols (one of the antioxidants in cocoa) a day to reap heart-health benefits. Flavanols don't have to be reported on food labels, but some companies are making chocolate that meets the 200 mg standard and including that information on their wrappers. As you celebrate the health benefits of this tantalizing treat, keep in mind that it's high in calories. Balance the extra calories and sugar by cutting them elsewhere.

**9.5**

Pounds of chocolate eaten by the average American each year

**101**

Billion dollars spent on chocolate worldwide each year

**4+**

Years it takes for a cacao tree to produce its first beans

**18%**

Share of the world's chocolate eaten by Americans annually

# Our surgical patients lose an average of 103 pounds in 12 months.



*Elana Davidson, MPAS, PA-C;  
Dr. Yannis Raftopoulos,  
Medical Director*



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