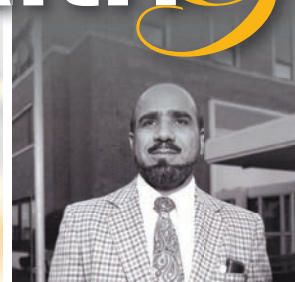
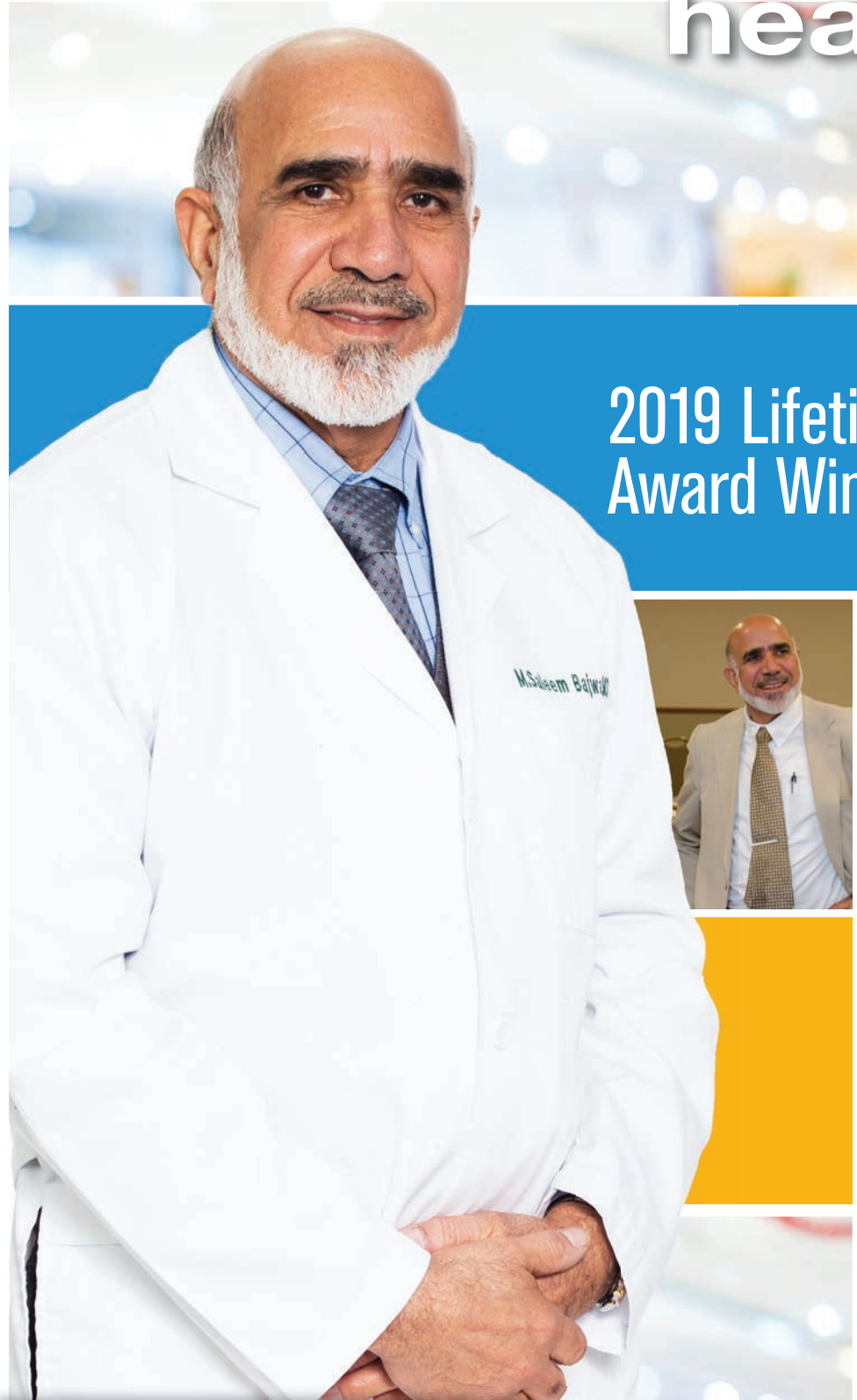


# VALLEY

## health & life



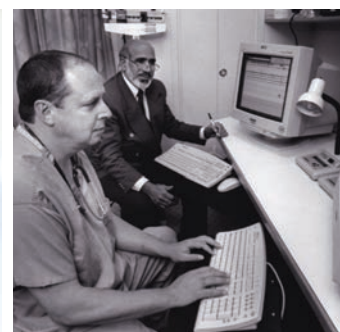
### 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner

M. SALEEM BAJWA, MD



» STEER CLEAR OF  
THE FLU

» COMPREHENSIVE  
CARE FOR  
WOMEN AND  
FAMILIES



## DEAR READERS,

I hope your summer was enjoyable and rejuvenating. While many of us here at Valley Health used the time to recharge, we were also busy planning for the coming year and beyond.

As you will see in this issue, we are very fortunate to welcome a long list of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives. Many are new to the area, while others are new to us and come with a loyal following in the Pioneer Valley. We welcome all of them to our system and value their knowledge, expertise and readiness to contribute to our community.

Speaking of community, you will notice that we have undertaken a number of initiatives this year in the Westfield area. After our successful expansion in Chicopee, we find that the demand for our services in the Westfield community is significant. Many Westfield residents use our hospital and are looking for primary care, ob/gyn and specialty care from the Holyoke Medical Group near their homes. To meet those needs, we are expanding into Westfield with family practice services, women's services, gastroenterology services and on-site lab services, to name a few. The new location will feature walk-in appointments and, of course, the compassionate care and customer service you have come to know and expect from us.

One of our major projects is the upgrade of our electronic health information system. This effort will keep all of us busy for well over a year. We expect that the upgrade to the latest state-of-the-art system will be complete in August 2020.

For our providers, the new system will mean improved efficiency and better access to information that will help them treat you. For you, it means better access to your medical record, with less redundancy, and a seamless flow of information to and from your providers. Our goal is to provide you and your loved ones with even better care and less frustration when collecting and communicating your medical information.

In closing, I wish you a wonderful fall season.

Best,

### SPIROS HATIRAS

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



#### On the Cover:

Lifetime Achievement Award winner M. Saleem Bajwa, MD, has played a key role in the hospital's growth over the last 40 years.

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## Valley Health Systems, Inc.

- **HOLYOKE MEDICAL CENTER**  
575 Beech Street, Holyoke | 413.534.2500
- **HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP**  
10 Hospital Drive, Suite 301, Holyoke | 413.535.4714
- **HOLYOKE VNA HOSPICE LIFE CARE**  
575 Beech Street, Holyoke | 413.534.5691
- **RIVER VALLEY COUNSELING CENTER**  
319 Beech Street, Holyoke | 413.540.1100



# HEALTHY HABITS

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

# 100

The average number of additional calories burned by women during the 24-hour period that followed their strength-training session.

—Medicine & Science  
in Sports & Exercise

## SLEEP YOUR WAY TO OLD AGE

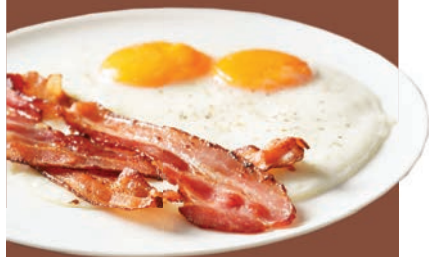
The effect of sleep deprivation on the body is similar to the aging process on a cellular level. It can cause cognitive decline (not to mention impaired memory)—so make getting enough Zs a priority!

—University of Pennsylvania

## FAT FOR BREAKFAST

Perhaps you shouldn't skip the bacon. A recent study shows that eating fat first thing in the morning may help metabolize fat and carbs for the rest of the day. It's still a good idea to avoid trans fats and not eat more than 30 percent of your calories from fat.

—University of Alabama at Birmingham



## BRAIN DANCE

Want to keep your mind sharp? Just dance. Research suggests that learning new dance moves is better than doing repetitive exercises (think your normal workout) in increasing neural connections in your brain.

—Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience



## VITAMIN KNOW-HOW

You may be relying on your multivitamin to fill in the gaps if you're not eating right, and that's fine. However, to reap the benefits of certain vitamins, you need to consume them in food, not supplements. Research indicates that vitamins A and K and the minerals copper, magnesium and zinc are associated with longevity. To maximize the benefit, eat plenty of foods rich in these nutrients, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

—Annals of Internal Medicine

## WELLNESS EVENTS

### VASCULAR CAUSES OF LEG PAIN

Leg pain can be a symptom of many vascular problems, from varicose veins to peripheral vascular disease. Join Sandip Maru, MD, Medical Director of the HMC Vascular Center, to learn more about why these conditions cause leg pain and what a vascular surgeon can do to alleviate your discomfort—and possibly save your life!

**Date:** Wednesday, October 16

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

**Location:** HMC Auxiliary Conference Center

To register, visit [www.HolyokeHealth.com/events](http://www.HolyokeHealth.com/events) or call 413.534.2789.

### FREE FLU CLINIC

**Date:** Saturday, November 9

**Time:** 9 to 11 a.m.

**Place:** HMC Auxiliary Conference Center

Registration required. Please call 413.534.2533.

### ANNUAL DIABETES WELLNESS FAIR

Featuring FREE:

- Information on preventing diabetes-related complications
- Blood pressure screenings
- Type 2 diabetes risk test questionnaire
- Raffles and more!

**Date:** Wednesday, November 13

**Time:** 3 to 7 p.m.

**Place:** Holyoke Mall at Ingleside

For more information, please visit [www.HolyokeHealth.com/DiabetesFair](http://www.HolyokeHealth.com/DiabetesFair).

### COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS

The holiday season can be a time of joy and excitement, but it can also be a time of stress, chaos and grief. Holiday stress can affect our ability to manage anxiety and depression and make it difficult for us to care for ourselves. Joy P. Brock, PsyD, program director for the CONCERN Employee Assistance Program, will help you learn how to reduce your vulnerability to holiday stress, manage strong feelings and develop healthy coping skills.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 20

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

**Location:** HMC Auxiliary Conference Center

To register, visit [www.HolyokeHealth.com/events](http://www.HolyokeHealth.com/events) or call 413.534.2789.





# KEEP YOUR KIDS HEALTHY



## TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM THE FLU, TAKE HIM OR HER TO BE VACCINATED NOW.

**LAST YEAR**, nearly 46 percent of children received the flu vaccine, up from about 39 percent the year before, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). While that's good news, it means that about half of children aren't getting vaccinated. That's unfortunate, because the flu—whose symptoms include fever, body aches, chills, fatigue, chest discomfort and headache—can lead to serious complications, such as pneumonia (a lung infection). "Children under 5 are especially at risk for complications," says Beth Laton Brown, MD, a pediatrician at Holyoke Medical Group Pediatric Care. Here, she answers common questions about the flu vaccine.

### WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?

All children ages 6 months and older should receive the flu vaccine, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the AAP. The vaccine is especially important for children with underlying medical conditions, such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes, says Dr. Brown. It's also critical for children who are being treated for cancer and may have a suppressed immune system.

### WHAT ARE COMMON COMPLICATIONS OF THE FLU?

Ear infections, pneumonia and dehydration are among the most common complications. The flu can also trigger a serious asthma attack, which may require oral steroid medications

or more aggressive respiratory treatment in the hospital. Every year, Dr. Brown sees at least one case of myositis, muscle inflammation that causes leg

pain and difficulty walking. The condition usually resolves in a few days, but children may require intravenous fluids.

### IS THE VACCINE SAFE?

Yes—even for people with egg allergies, says Dr. Brown. In the past, there were concerns that people with allergies to eggs—which are found in small amounts in most flu vaccines—would experience a reaction after receiving the shot. But studies have shown that severe allergic reactions are unlikely, so the CDC says that people with egg allergies can receive any licensed, recommended and age-appropriate flu vaccine.

Although a child may feel achy or develop a low-grade fever after receiving the vaccine, it's unlikely that he or she is ill as a result. "Toddlers get eight to 12 colds a year," says Dr. Brown. Studies show that children given a sugar pill are just as likely to develop a cold as children given the flu shot.

### HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE VACCINE?

The flu virus changes constantly, and some strains are more virulent than others. As a result, the vaccine's effectiveness fluctuates each year. "It was about 40 to 50 percent effective last year," says Dr. Brown. "But that's better than going unprotected." If a child contracts the flu despite being vaccinated, he or she usually has a milder case. The CDC estimates that during the 2017-2018 flu season, vaccines prevented about 7 million cases of the flu and avoided 109,000 hospitalizations and 8,000 deaths.

### WHAT'S THE BEST TIME TO GET VACCINATED?

Flu season tends to run from November to March, but it sometimes starts as early as October. To maximize the benefit, be sure your child is vaccinated by the end of October. However, it's not too late for your child to benefit if he or she is vaccinated in November or even December, says Dr. Brown.



Beth Laton Brown, MD



# 7 million

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that during the 2017-2018 flu season, vaccines prevented about 7 million cases of the flu.

### HOW MANY DOSES DOES A CHILD NEED?

Children under age 8 who've never had the vaccine usually need two doses one month apart. Babies typically get a dose at 6 months and then again at 7 months. The recommendations shift every year, depending on the strains of the flu that are expected and the predicted effectiveness of the vaccine.

### SHOULD MY CHILD HAVE THE SHOT OR THE NASAL SPRAY?

In the 2016-2017 season, the shot was more effective than the nasal spray. Last year, the AAP recommended the shot because it seemed to work better. However, changes to the nasal spray formulation may have improved its effectiveness. Keep in mind, any vaccine is better than no vaccine, says Dr. Brown.

✱ Holyoke Medical Group Pediatric Care is located at 10 Hospital Drive, Suite 201, Holyoke. To schedule an appointment, please call **413.534.2800**.



# PUTTING AN END TO PAIN

A NEW PHYSICIAN OFFERS THE MOST ADVANCED METHODS OF CONTROLLING DISCOMFORT CAUSED BY A VARIETY OF MEDICAL PROBLEMS.

**CHRONIC PAIN** can disrupt daily living and lead to anxiety and depression. Fortunately, advanced and effective treatments are now available at the Pain Management Center at Holyoke Medical Center. In September, Yuri Khibkin, MD, joined the practice, which also includes Carly Berneche, DNP, FNP-BC. He treats patients with back, neck, joint, abdominal and cancer pain. He also helps patients

find relief from chronic pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), chronic pelvic pain and pain related to a stroke, trauma and orthopedic surgery.

Patients often come to



Yuri Khibkin, MD

Dr. Khibkin's office in a wheelchair because they are unable to walk. After treatment, they can often walk without even a cane.

During a consultation, Dr. Khibkin performs a physical examination and reviews blood work and imaging studies. With a diagnosis in place, he recommends a personalized treatment plan. "I'm looking forward to advancing the practice of pain management in Holyoke," he says.

Here are a few of the procedures Dr. Khibkin offers:

## **RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION**

**IDEAL FOR:** back, neck, head and joint pain

**HOW IT WORKS:** A precisely placed needle applies heat to nerves that

cause pain. This stops the transmission of pain signals.

## **INTRATHECAL PUMP**

**IDEAL FOR:** back, neck, pelvic and abdominal pain, as well as cancer-related pain

**HOW IT WORKS:** This pump, which is implanted under the skin of the abdomen or buttock, delivers small amounts of pain medications to spinal fluid.

## **SPINAL CORD STIMULATION**

**IDEAL FOR:** chronic back and neck pain, pain in the extremities after trauma or surgery and pain resulting from spinal surgery

**HOW IT WORKS:** A device that transmits an electrical pulse is implanted into the spinal canal. It disrupts the transmission of pain signals in the spinal cord.

## **DORSAL ROOT GANGLION STIMULATION**

**IDEAL FOR:** localized pain in the limbs, such as hip joints, knees and feet

**HOW IT WORKS:** This device, which works like the spinal cord stimulator, sends electrical pulses to certain nerves in the spinal cord.

## **STEROID AND PLATELET-RICH PLASMA INJECTIONS**

**IDEAL FOR:** multiple body parts, including the back, neck, hips, elbows, shoulders and knees

**HOW THEY WORK:** Injections of powerful anti-inflammatory medications can ease pain temporarily. Injections of platelet-rich plasma can help ease pain for a prolonged period of time.

## **SYMPATHETIC BLOCKS**

**IDEAL FOR:** abdominal, pelvic, tailbone and cancer-related pain

**HOW THEY WORK:** These injections block the overreaction of sympathetic nerves, which are often the source of pain and inflammation.

✱ **HMC Pain Management Center is located at 10 Hospital Drive, Suite 103, Holyoke. The Musculoskeletal Spine Center is located at 575 Beech Street on the 2nd floor of Holyoke Medical Center. To schedule an appointment, please call 413.535.4933.**



# BATTLING HEARTBURN

THE BEST WAYS TO KEEP  
CHRONIC ACID REFLUX  
IN CHECK.

**IF YOU EXPERIENCE** a burning sensation in your chest or a bitter taste in your mouth after eating, you may be among the 20 percent of people who suffer from chronic heartburn, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). At HMC Gastroenterology, patients are assessed to determine the best treatment. Here, Tuyyab Hassan, MD, an HMC gastroenterologist in Holyoke and Westfield, answers common questions about GERD.

## WHAT CAUSES GERD?

GERD occurs when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus—a muscular tube that connects the throat to the stomach—instead of moving through the gastrointestinal tract. The acid causes a burning sensation, sore throat or cough, hoarseness and frequent burping. When symptoms occur more than twice a week for a few weeks, you may have GERD.

## IS GERD SERIOUS?

It can be. Chronic acid reflux can cause the esophagus to narrow, which interferes with swallowing and can cause food to get stuck. Over time, chronic inflammation in the esophagus can lead to precancerous changes and cancer. About 10 to 15 percent of



Tuyyab Hassan, MD



people with GERD develop precancerous changes known as Barrett's esophagus. An estimated 1 in 200 people with Barrett's develop esophageal cancer.

## WHO'S AT RISK FOR GERD?

People who are overweight or pregnant, smoke or take certain medications—such as calcium channel blockers for high blood pressure, asthma drugs, painkillers, sedatives and antidepressants—are at risk. Those who have a hiatal hernia—in which an opening in the diaphragm allows the upper part of the stomach to bulge into the chest—are also predisposed.

## HOW IS GERD TREATED?

GERD symptoms can be improved by maintaining a healthy weight, eating low-fat foods, quitting smoking, not eating two to three hours before bedtime, and raising the head of your bed to prevent

acid from rising into the esophagus. Also, avoid or reduce your consumption of foods and drinks that trigger symptoms, such as coffee, tea, chocolate, mint and tomato sauce. If these measures don't work, you may need to take an over-the-counter antacid medication. Stronger medications, which are available over-the-counter and by prescription, include H2 blockers and proton pump inhibitors, which reduce acid production in the stomach. If medications aren't effective, surgery may be an option.

## WHAT TYPES OF SURGERY ARE AVAILABLE?

In one procedure, the stomach is wrapped around the lower esophagus to strengthen the area and prevent acid from rising into the organ. Another procedure involves implanting magnetic beads around the lower esophagus to strengthen it.

**\* HMC Gastroenterology has two locations: 11 Hospital Drive, 3rd Floor, Holyoke, and 94 North Elm Street, Suite 206, Westfield. To schedule an appointment, call 413.540.5048.**

# A TEAM EFFORT

FAMILY MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS COLLABORATE WITH PATIENTS TO PROVIDE THE BEST CARE.

**WHEN LISA HEENEHAN** and her family relocated to the Holyoke area last year, she needed to find a family medicine provider. After a well visit in January with Deborah Pisciotta, MS, PA-C, a certified physician assistant at Holyoke Medical Group Family Medicine, Lisa knew her search was over. "The staff is very calming and friendly, and I don't feel rushed when I'm there," says Lisa, 53, of Westfield. "The healthcare providers take their time with patients, and they listen to what you have to say."

After her initial visit, Lisa returned to Pisciotta when she had the flu and then again for her annual gynecologic exam. She's brought her 17-year-old daughter to Pisciotta several times, and her husband and 21-year-old son also go to the practice. Lisa likes that she and her family members are always seen promptly and treated professionally, and she appreciates that Pisciotta values her opinion about her health. "I don't feel like Deborah talks down to me and says, 'This is what has to happen,'" says Lisa. "Her approach is, 'This is the best practice. Will you be able to abide by this recommendation?' And if you can't, she helps you find an alternative."

## CARING FOR ALL AGES AND STAGES

Pisciotta is one of two providers at Holyoke Medical Group Family Medicine. Thomas J. Graziano, MD, a family medicine physician, recently joined the practice. Both healthcare providers see patients at all stages of life for well visits, chronic diseases, preventive care, and illnesses and injuries. "We see patients with minor injuries, asthma, COPD, hypertension, heart disease, obesity, depression and anxiety," says Pisciotta. She can repair wounds and drain abscesses. Dr. Graziano can perform injections for arthritis pain, cryotherapy for simple skin lesions and simple skin biopsies.



**Deborah Pisciotta,**  
MS, PA-C

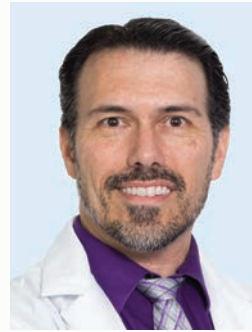
In August, the practice moved from a location across the street from Holyoke Medical Center to a new office in Westfield. The providers expect to offer lab draw services, as well as walk-in care for urgent medical problems, in the near future.

## PERSONALIZED TREATMENT

Pisciotta and Dr. Graziano share the same philosophy when it comes to healthcare: They want to understand patients' needs and collaborate with

them to find the best treatment plan. "I try to build a relationship with patients," says Pisciotta.

The practice focuses on treating the whole patient. The providers take into consideration a person's family dynamics, career, place of residence and socioeconomic status—all of which may impact health. They also seek input from patients when coming up with a treatment plan. "Shared decision-making is important," says Pisciotta. "Taking care of your health is a team effort."



**Thomas J. Graziano, MD**

## WELCOME, DR. GRAZIANO!

Thomas J. Graziano, MD, a new family medicine physician at Holyoke Medical Group Family Medicine, isn't new to Holyoke Medical Center (HMC). Before he became a physician, he was a nuclear medicine technologist at HMC. Dr. Graziano graduated from the

University of Massachusetts School of Medicine in 2007 and did his family medicine residency at the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Graziano enjoys family medicine because of its positive impact on patients' lives. "I enjoy seeing patients from birth all the way up to age 102," he says. "What makes family medicine really special is that none of it takes place in a vacuum. [I help] create medical plans that fit into people's lives. I like knowing my patients and not just their disease states. I feel that having that context makes me a better physician."

Dr. Graziano is married with two grown daughters and a young son. In his spare time, he enjoys taking bike rides with his family, ballroom dancing and dabbling in the circus arts. "I juggle and walk on stilts," he says. "My newest interest is lyra, which looks like a Hula-Hoop suspended from the ceiling."

✱ Holyoke Medical Group Family Medicine is located at 140 Southampton Road in Westfield.  
To schedule an appointment, please call **413.535.4800**.





Lisa Heenehan is examined by Deborah Pisciotto, MS, PA-C, a certified physician assistant at Holyoke Medical Group Family Medicine.



# A WELL-DESERVED HONOR

IN NOVEMBER, A LONGTIME HMC PHYSICIAN WILL RECEIVE THE 2019 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

**IN HIS 40 YEARS** at Holyoke Medical Center (HMC), M. Saleem Bajwa, MD, the former Chief of Medicine and President of the HMC medical staff, has played a key role in the hospital's growth. To honor his exemplary service, Dr. Bajwa will receive the HMC Lifetime Achievement Award at the gala on November 23. "I'm very honored," he says.

## A LEADER IN HIGH-QUALITY CARE

Dr. Bajwa earned his medical degree at King Edward Medical College in Lahore, Pakistan, and completed his training at Catholic Medical Center and Queens Hospital Center in Queens, N.Y. Board-certified in internal medicine and pulmonology, Dr. Bajwa joined the HMC staff in 1979.

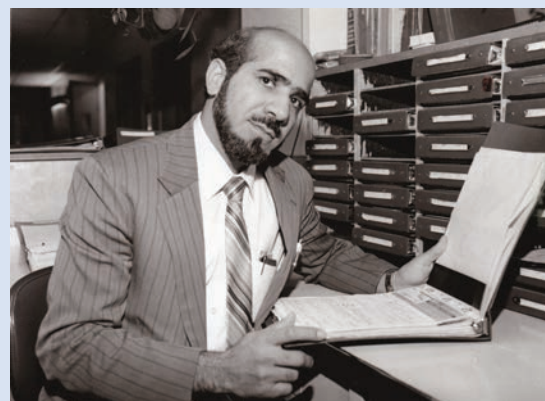
In addition to running a busy private practice in internal and pulmonary medicine, Dr. Bajwa has been an advocate for new programs at HMC. In the early 1980s, he helped launch The Work Connection and provided care for employees from many local industries until full-time medical staff members were hired.

In the 1990s, sleep medicine became an important field. Dr. Bajwa helped the hospital open the Sleep Lab in 1998. The Lab, which expanded a decade later, has provided a much-needed service in the area of sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea. Sleep disorders can lead to serious medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, mood disorders, trouble driving and poor performance at work. Dr. Bajwa directed the Sleep Lab until 2018, when he worked with the hospital administration to recruit a board-certified physician in sleep medicine to take over the position.

Dr. Bajwa also served as director of the Respiratory Department, a position he still holds. He launched the Pulmonary Rehabilitation program in 2002 and oversaw a multidisciplinary team of healthcare providers. The rehabilitation program was expanded in 2012 to serve the growing number of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other serious pulmonary diseases. "COPD is one of the leading causes of hospitalization, disability and death," he says. "It requires treatment on an ongoing basis. The rehabilitation program has become an essential component of patient care."

Until recently, Dr. Bajwa was the sole pulmonologist at HMC. Once again, he worked with the hospital administration to





Clockwise, from left to right: M. Saleem Bajwa, MD, reviews charts in 1986; with HMC Pulmonary Rehab Program team members in 2002; with HMC Sleep Lab manager Don McDonough in 2000; with HMC President and CEO Spiros Hatiras and Stephen Levine, MD, in 2013; and with his wife, Kaneez Fatima.

recruit two new physicians. Thanks to his efforts, HMC now has a Pulmonary Center, which offers bronchoscopy and other interventional procedures. "It was my dream that one day we would have a state-of-the-art department and could provide the full scale of pulmonary services," he says.

## A COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Dr. Bajwa, who has served on the HMC Board of Directors, is also dedicated to his community. He's one of the founding members and former president of the Islamic Medical Association of North America. Over the years, he's watched the organization grow to include more than 1,000 members and has been active in providing educational as well as humanitarian services. "I'm proud of the Association's relief work and volunteer medical missions," he says.

Dr. Bajwa is also a founder of the Islamic Society of Western Mass. He has held various positions in the Society and coordinates the interfaith and outreach programs. "I love coordinating the interfaith programs and promoting friendship, dialogue and mutual understanding between all religious denominations," he says. "That will continue to be my lifelong mission." Dr. Bajwa served as a trustee of the Hartford Seminary—a leading multi-faith teaching institute—for nine years and has been the Executive Director of the Islamic Council of New England for almost two decades.

For many years, Dr. Bajwa returned to Pakistan annually with his wife, Kaneez Fatima, and his children for vacation. During

most of these trips, he ran a small clinic in his home village. The clinic offers screening and preventive services for residents in the rural area he grew up in.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Dr. Bajwa has given up his private practice in internal medicine and pulmonary diseases. His focus is now on HMC's new Pulmonology Center. "That's a big change for me," he says. "I will miss my internal medicine patients, who became my friends over the past 40 years, but at the same time it gives me the opportunity to provide quality care in pulmonology." While he's not ready to retire, when he does he plans to spend more time with his three children and 10 grandchildren in Chicago and Palo Alto, Calif.

Dr. Bajwa lives in South Hadley with Kaneez. "She has been a vital partner and big supporter of my practice and all of my accomplishments," says Dr. Bajwa.

The November gala will not only celebrate Dr. Bajwa's Lifetime Achievement Award, but it will also recognize the hospital's ACE Awards finalists in the categories of best caregiver, best supporting employee, best leader and best physician. The black-tie-optional gala includes a seven-course chef's dinner, wine pairings and dancing to the O-Tones at the Log Cabin. It promises to be a special celebration for all. "My motto is to provide state-of-the-art care close to home," says Dr. Bajwa. "HMC has been a wonderful place. It has been very supportive in helping me to provide the best possible medical care to Valley residents."

✱ To learn more or to purchase tickets to the **Holyoke Medical Center Annual Gala**, please visit [www.holyokehealth.com/gala19](http://www.holyokehealth.com/gala19), email [development@holyokehealth.com](mailto:development@holyokehealth.com), or call 413.534.2579.

# COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR WOMEN

HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP WOMEN'S SERVICES OFFERS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF PREGNANCY AND GYNECOLOGIC CARE.



**WHETHER YOU'RE IN NEED** of a routine gynecologic exam, newly pregnant or entering menopause, you want a healthcare provider who not only has expertise but also cares for your overall well-being. At Holyoke Medical Group Women's Services, three obstetrician/gynecologists (ob/gyns) and seven Certified Nurse Midwives work collaboratively to care for women from adolescence through menopause. Here, Catherine Ruell, Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), Brian Toole, MD, and Marc Zerbe, MD, discuss their philosophy of care and the services they offer.



Catherine Ruell, CNM



Brian Toole, MD



Marc Zerbe, MD

## WHAT KIND OF CARE DO YOU PROVIDE?

• **Ruell:** In addition to prenatal and pregnancy care, women come to us for sexually transmitted disease screening, contraception counseling, preventive care (the annual breast and pelvic exam), coordination of mammogram screenings and Pap smears. We also see patients who are concerned about abnormal vaginal discharge and pain with intercourse.

We try to empower and advocate for women, whether it's related to ob/gyn issues or not. We can provide referrals for physical and mental health consultations.

• **Dr. Toole:** We see a lot of women with heavy periods and pelvic pain. We also perform initial evaluations of patients with bladder problems and urinary incontinence.

• **Dr. Zerbe:** At Holyoke Medical Center, we take a collaborative, team approach to care. Our team, which consists of certified nurse midwives and physicians, works with pregnant patients to help them create a birth plan for their delivery. We offer water birth, as well as vaginal birth after C-section (VBAC). We also promote breastfeeding for the wellness of mothers and babies.



From left: Marc Zerbe, MD; Yi-Lo Yu, MD; Brian Toole, MD; Brenda Maloney, CNM; Mary O'Brien, CNM; Kathleen Cullen-Lutter, CNM; Marilyn Cabral, CNM; Catherine Ruell, CNM; Kelly Ostrowski, CNM; and Susan Lufkin-Curtis, FNP-C, CNM



### WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF CARE?

- **Ruell:** As midwives, we believe that birth is a natural process. During labor, we encourage movement, using the birthing ball and massage. I'm certified as a provider of Reiki (a technique in which the hands are used to encourage healing), so I can offer that to patients if they're interested.
- **Dr. Toole:** The physicians here work very well with the midwives. We're supportive of their philosophy.
- **Dr. Zerbe:** All of us believe in excellent care with the least amount of intervention.

### SOME WOMEN ASSUME THAT THEY'LL HAVE TO FOREGO AN EPIDURAL IF THEY SEE A NURSE MIDWIFE. CAN A WOMAN HAVE ONE IF SHE'S RECEIVING CARE FROM A NURSE MIDWIFE?

- **Ruell:** Yes. We support women and try to empower them. We encourage women to take childbirth education classes,

and we ask about their birth plan. We offer epidurals and intravenous pain medication as well as nitrous oxide, a reliable pain management practice that gives the patient greater control. So just because you're with a midwife doesn't mean you can't have medication.

- **Dr. Zerbe:** Somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of our patients end up having an epidural.

### DO YOU PERFORM GYNECOLOGIC SURGERY?

- **Dr. Zerbe:** We offer laparoscopic procedures. This is a minimally invasive surgery, in which a small incision is made in the abdomen, through which a thin, hollow device is placed. Surgical instruments are inserted into the device to perform the operation.

### WHAT TYPES OF LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY DO YOU PERFORM?

- **Dr. Toole:** We often perform laparoscopic sterilization for birth control. If a patient needs a hysterectomy, we aim to use a minimally invasive approach. We can remove ovarian cysts and treat endometriosis laparoscopically.

### WHAT DO PATIENTS LIKE ABOUT YOUR PRACTICE?

- **Ruell:** We care about our patients. So, if a woman misses her appointment, we might call and ask, "Are you sick? Do you have transportation needs? Is there anything we can do to help you?" We also call new moms a week or two after they've had their babies to make sure everything's going well. If things aren't going well, we will ask them to come in before their scheduled appointment. We're closely connected with our patients.
- **Dr. Zerbe:** We also continue to grow the practice, which our patients appreciate because it provides them with greater access to care. Our growth has involved the addition of highly skilled providers, as well as additional office locations, such as the new site in Westfield.



### WE'RE IN WESTFIELD!

Brian Toole, MD, Yi-Lo Yu, MD, and Certified Nurse Midwife Brenda Maloney now have regular hours in the Westfield office. All providers are accepting new patients.

✱ Holyoke Medical Group Women's Services has three locations: 575 Beech Street, Suite 501, Holyoke; 230 Maple Street, Suite 200, Holyoke; and 94 North Elm Street, Suite 102, Westfield. To schedule an appointment, please call 413.534.2826.

## NEW OUTPATIENT PROVIDERS



**Michael Bell, PA**  
HMC WOUND CARE CENTER  
18 Hospital Drive, Holyoke  
413.535.4740



**Beth Laton Brown, MD**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
PEDIATRIC CARE  
10 Hospital Drive, Suite 201, Holyoke  
413.534.2800



**Kathleen Cullen-Lutter, CNM**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
WOMEN'S SERVICES  
575 Beech Street, Suite 501, Holyoke  
230 Maple Street, Suite 200, Holyoke  
94 North Elm Street, Suite 102, Westfield  
413.534.2826



**Thomas Graziano, MD**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
FAMILY MEDICINE  
140 Southampton Road, Westfield  
413.535.4800



**Yuri Khibkin, MD**  
HMC PAIN MANAGEMENT  
CENTER  
10 Hospital Drive, Suite 103, Holyoke  
413.535.4933



**Susan Lufkin-Curtis, FNP-C, CNM**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
WOMEN'S SERVICES  
575 Beech Street, Suite 501, Holyoke  
230 Maple Street, Suite 200, Holyoke  
94 North Elm Street, Suite 102, Westfield  
413.534.2826



**Andrey Pavlov, MD**  
HMC PULMONOLOGY CENTER  
5 Hospital Drive, Holyoke  
413.534.2582



**Miguel Rodriguez, MD**  
HMC PULMONOLOGY CENTER  
5 Hospital Drive, Holyoke  
413.534.2582



**Jessica Sanky, FNP**  
HMC GASTROENTEROLOGY  
11 Hospital Drive, 3rd Floor, Holyoke  
94 North Elm Street, Suite 206, Westfield  
413.540.5048



**Emily Urquhart, MD**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
PEDIATRIC CARE  
10 Hospital Drive, Suite 201, Holyoke  
413.534.2800



**Sonia Valentine, NP**  
HOLYOKE MEDICAL GROUP  
PRIMARY CARE  
2 Hospital Drive, Suite 101, Holyoke  
413.535.4800

## NEW HOSPITAL PROVIDERS



**Huascar Perez Torres, MD**  
HOSPITALIST



**Aneta Rafalowski, MD**  
PATHOLOGY



**Alexander Zeidel, MD**  
ANESTHESIA





# PUMPKIN POWER

THIS BEAUTIFUL SYMBOL OF FALL BENEFITS YOUR EYES, IMMUNE SYSTEM AND HEART.

## POWER UP

This deeply hued gourd is rich in vitamin A, which is important for eye health, as well as bone and tissue growth. A half-cup serving contains all the vitamin A you'll need for the day. Pumpkin is also a source of heart-healthy potassium. It even boosts the immune system with a healthy dose of vitamin C. All of this nutrition comes with only 30 calories in a one-cup serving.

The seeds confer their own unique health benefits. They're packed with magnesium, which helps to regulate blood pressure and blood sugar. The zinc in pumpkin seeds can help you fight off colds and heal more quickly. High in iron, they can also help fight fatigue. The seeds pack more than 700 calories per cup, but their high fiber content makes them filling, so a few go a long way.

## BUY/STORE/SERVE

While large pumpkins make great jack-o'-lanterns, choose smaller sugar or pie pumpkins—between two and eight pounds, with the stem attached—for cooking and baking. Check for bruises or soft spots that may indicate rot. Keep in mind, color will naturally dull without affecting freshness.

A pumpkin can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to two months. Once cut, it should be tightly wrapped, refrigerated and used within five days. Pureed pumpkin can be kept frozen for up to three months. If you're buying canned pumpkin, make sure the label reads "puree" rather than "pie filling" and check for added salt.

To prepare a pumpkin, carefully slice it open, remove the stem and scoop out the stringy insides, reserving the seeds for roasting. Cube the pumpkin flesh and roast or steam it. The cubes can be eaten on their own or added to savory dishes like chili, stew or gratin. Cooked cubes can also be pureed. Add puree to smoothies, oatmeal or pancake batter for a healthy fall breakfast. Combine with sage or curry for a tasty soup, or layer into a spinach lasagna. Puree can even be substituted for oil or butter when baking to lighten sweet treats. Seeds make a great snack on their own or can be added to salads, soups or granola.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Pumpkins are a fruit! They're part of the Cucurbitaceae family, which includes more than 900 fruits, from winter squashes to watermelons and cucumbers.

**2,624.6**

**Pounds the largest pumpkin on record weighed**

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Most popular variety of pie after apple**

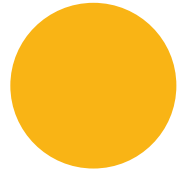
**30**

**Minutes to roast pumpkin seeds at 350 degrees**

**3x**

**A half-cup of roasted pumpkin seeds has three times more iron than a half-cup of raw spinach**

Holyoke Medical Center Annual



# Gala

FEATURING  
THE ACE AWARDS AND  
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
OF M. SALEEM BAJWA, MD

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2019**

The Log Cabin • 500 Easthampton Road • Holyoke, MA 01040

- Complimentary cocktail reception
- Seven-course chef's dinner and wine pairings
- Silent auction
- Dancing to the O-Tones

**Tickets are still available! Purchase today!**

Order tickets online at [www.holyokehealth.com/gala19](http://www.holyokehealth.com/gala19)  
or call (413) 534-2579 for more information.

*All proceeds to benefit Valley Health Systems*

 Holyoke Medical Center

 Holyoke Medical Group

 Holyoke VNA • Hospice Life Care

 River Valley Counseling Center

**HolyokeHealth.com**