



Cover Story—Pg 2

Flu Shots—Pg 4

HeartShare President & CEO Bill Guarinello celebrates Wellness's 10th Anniversary with OPWDD Associate Commissioner Jill Gentile, HeartShare Executive Director Linda Tempel and OPWDD Director of Development Pat Sarli.

## HeartShare Wellness Celebrates 10th Anniversary

HeartShare Wellness makes a world of difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. And to all those who attended the June 22nd celebration marking the health care clinic's 10th anniversary, it was clear why: a truly dedicated, caring and experienced team of health care professionals and support staff that work together to provide exceptional patient care.

Attending the event were HeartShare Human Services executives, HeartShare Wellness board members, members of the clinical and administrative team, patients and their families, and special guest Jill Gentile, Associate Commissioner for Region 2 of the New York State Office of Persons With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Jude Alexandre, Director of HeartShare Wellness, hosted the program that featured an awards presentation followed by a reception and tour of the facility. Among those honored were individuals who played a significant role in HeartShare Wellness over the years. One of them was Miriam Dunnican. When Wellness first opened its doors in June of 2000, Miriam Dunnican was its first patient. "A clinic needs patients, they are the reason we are here," said David Biozes, Wellness Operations Manager, as he presented an award to Ms. Dunnican.

Dr. Joseph Caruana, affectionately known as Dr. Joe, received the award for Excellence

in Community Health for his years of leadership as Chairman of the Board of Directors of HeartShare Wellness. Joyce Levin, Vice President of HeartShare Human Services, was acknowledged for her ongoing vision, guidance and support of clinic initiatives. Dr. Jon Michnovicz, Wellness Medical Director, was recognized for his years of dedicated service. "Dr. Jon doesn't hesitate to go the extra mile," said Joyce Levin as she presented the award and recalled an example that had stuck in her mind: "One day I entered the Queens Day Habilitation Program to find Dr. Jon seated on the floor with a program participant who needed a blood test but was too frightened of the procedure to have it done. Dr. Jon was gently coaxing and comforting him. He just epitomizes what a good doctor should be." Receiving the two final awards were Luisa Vasquez, Office Manager, and David Biozes, Operations Manager, both who have been with Wellness from the beginning.

Much has changed since HeartShare Wellness first opened its doors in June 2000. "We grew enormously from those initial years at our 50 Court Street location," recalls Joyce Levin, who was there from the clinic's inception. "From 2,500 patient visits that first year to 17,500 patient visits by the end of 2009. We currently serve approximately 2,000 patients a year." As the demand for health care services

### HeartShare Wellness

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone: 718-855-7707  
 Fax: 718-855-7717  
 Website: [heartsharewellness.org](http://heartsharewellness.org)

#### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday 8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday & Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
 Wednesday 8:30 a.m. –8:00 p.m.  
 Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
 Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Call us for more information, to make an appointment or in case of an emergency.

#### CLINIC LOCATION

177 Livingston Street, Lower Level  
 Brooklyn, New York 11201  
 Entrance on Gallatin Place

#### DIRECTIONS

**By Subway:** 2, 3, 4 or 5 train to Borough Hall / Court Street. A, C or F train to Jay Street / Borough Hall. R train to Borough Hall / Court Street  
**By Bus:** B26, B38, B41, B52, B54

# Message from the Chairman of HeartShare Wellness



Dear Patients, Caregivers and Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of HeartShare Wellness, Ltd., it is our pleasure to introduce this first issue of *HealthBeat*. *HealthBeat* will be published in both a print and electronic version and will bring you the latest news and health information from HeartShare Wellness.

It is our goal to have *HealthBeat* be a valuable resource for our patients, their family members and caregivers, and others. We will be featuring articles on healthy eating and healthy living, providing information on proper health management, updating you on the latest developments at our clinic, and introducing you to the people who make HeartShare Wellness the special place that it is.

Also this winter we will be launching a new website, which is currently under construction. You will be able to access all issues of *HealthBeat* on the website, along with a host of other important information regarding our Article 28 and Article 16 clinical services. The address of our website is [www.heartsharewellness.org](http://www.heartsharewellness.org).

As we expand our electronic database, we encourage you to call the clinic and give our administrative assistants your email address so that you can be included in the e-newsletter version of *HealthBeat*, along with any special information or alerts that we might send. They can be reached at (718) 855-7707, ext 8010.

Finally, thank you for giving HeartShare Wellness the opportunity to serve you either directly or indirectly. While we celebrate with pride our first 10 years of services to people with developmental disabilities, we also are planning how our services can be expanded and improved for our patients and their caregivers in the future.

Sincerely,

Joseph Caruana, D.O.  
Chairman, Board of Directors



Wellness Executive Director Joyce Levin with Medical Director Dr. Jon Michnovicz and Clinic Director Jude Alexandre.



Operations Manager David Biozes with Wellness's first patient Miriam Dunican

increased for people with developmental disabilities, so did the need for more space. In February 2008 HeartShare Wellness moved to its current, more spacious quarters at 177 Livingston Street in the heart of downtown Brooklyn. Wellness operates both an Article 28 clinic, licensed by the NYS Department of Health, which provides a comprehensive range of primary, preventive and specialty medical care, and an Article 16 clinic, licensed by the OPWDD, which provides long-term rehabilitation services, evaluations and individual and group counseling.

"We are so proud of our accomplishments, our devoted and knowledgeable staff, and the high quality health care we provide daily to children and adults with developmental disabilities that helps them lead fuller and more active lives," says Jude Alexandre.

As HeartShare Wellness looks to the future, four new initiatives are planned that are certain to further enhance patient care:

- Establishment of a patient-centered medical home model
- Conversion to electronic health records
- Expansion of specialty care by hiring a staff endocrinologist and dermatologist
- Building a dental suite

# HeartShare Wellness to Establish Patient-Centered Medical Home

## What is a Patient-Centered Medical Home?

The patient-centered medical home is a new kind of health care setting that promotes and strengthens the relationship between physician and patient. It emphasizes a long-term, ongoing relationship with a personal primary care provider, appointed by the patient, who leads a team that together takes responsibility for patient care. Most care in our current health care system is provided intermittently when a patient is ill or has a complaint. Often care can become fragmented, particularly when patients are referred to several different providers for specialty care. The new model promotes continuity of care because the primary care physician and physician support team coordinate referrals to labs, diagnostic imaging, and specialty care, as well as follow up on emergency room visits. According to the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), an independent organization that sets standards for and certifies primary care medical homes, the "physician-led care team is responsible for meeting all the patient's health care needs and, when needed, arranges for appropriate care with other qualified physicians."

## Why is HeartShare Wellness creating a Primary Care Medical Home?

From its inception 10 years ago, HeartShare Wellness incorporated many of the principles and practices of a medical home, including

comprehensive, coordinated care provided by a team of doctors and other clinicians. Wellness has decided to convert to a primary care medical home for two major reasons:

- **Improved quality of care**

The new medical home model holds great promise for further improving the quality of care patients receive and for making care available to more people. Medical homes enhance services through expanded hours of operation, same day appointments, electronic health records, information technology to track lab work and referrals, health information exchange, and improved communication between patients, physicians, staff and, when necessary, the patient's family. It will also allow our providers to more readily manage and treat chronic health conditions, particularly the three most common chronic health problems for patients seen in our clinic: diabetes, hyperlipidemia and hypertension.

- **Recognition and Financial Incentives**

Many private and public health insurance plans will recognize and financially reward medical practices and individual providers that meet the certification requirements for a primary care medical home, making it more cost effective while enhancing care.

## How will it benefit the patient?

Transforming a medical practice into a primary care medical home is an enormous undertaking. And the certification process takes time. But HeartShare Wellness firmly



believes the effort is important because it will:

- Promote the overall health of patients, particularly those with chronic conditions like diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and hypertension
- Facilitate continuity and coordination of care
- Ensure follow up on all recommendations
- Enhance the quality of care
- Encourage preventive care and help patients make healthy lifestyle decisions

For more information on what the patient-centered medical home can mean for you or your Wellness patient, please contact Jude Alexandre, Clinic Director, at (718) 422-3306, ext. 8018.

## Did You Know?

### Handwashing Can Prevent the Spread of Infection

Handwashing is the simplest and best way to prevent infection and illness like colds and flu. Keeping hands clean prevents illness at home, at school, at work, or in the community.

Hand hygiene practices are key prevention tools in healthcare settings, in daycare facilities, in schools and public institutions, and for the safety of our food.

Handwashing can prevent infection and illness from spreading from person to person, and, sometimes, from throughout a community.

The basic rule is to wash hands before preparing food and after handling uncooked meat and poultry, before eating, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing one's nose

into a tissue, after using the bathroom, and after touching animals or anything in the animal's environment.

### Wash Your Hands the Right Way

#### Using soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet



and to open the door.

- Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

#### Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

# Seasonal Flu Vaccine Update

by Kevin Charlotten, MD

## Influenza can kill!!

There was a time not too long ago when influenza, more commonly known as “the flu,” killed thousands to millions of people. Today, modern medicines, improved personal and city-wide hygiene techniques, and the discovery of vaccines, have greatly improved survival and reduced the number of those who do become infected with an influenza virus. But, despite its known benefits at reducing or preventing deaths and illness, less than half of the high-risk U.S. population gets vaccinated.

## Expanded Vaccination Recommendations

People typically considered at high-risk for the flu were those with chronic illnesses like diabetes, certain cancers, HIV disease and other diseases that weaken the immune system, asthma and other pulmonary conditions, persons with kidney, liver, or heart disease, and persons age 50 years and older. Flu vaccination has been recommended for people within these categories. However, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic revealed that there are others at higher risk for serious flu-related complications that do not currently have a specific recommendation for vaccination. These include people who are obese, post-partum women, and people of certain racial/ethnic groups, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Consequently, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which advises the CDC, voted in February 2010 to expand the recommendations to not only the high-risk groups mentioned above, but also to children 6 months to 18 years of age, those in close contact with higher risk persons, and to ALL people, including those 19–49 years of age. The ACIP has issued a simple and clear recommendation – EVERYONE SHOULD GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE, unless their doctor advises against it.

## What about the H1N1 strain?

In light of the new expanded recommendations, manufacturers have promised more influenza doses for the 2010-2011 influenza season. As in previous years, this year’s vaccine will protect us against one of the three groups of influenza most commonly circulating in humans. Given the high number of people affected by H1N1 during the 2009-2010 flu season, this year’s version will include protection against the H1N1 virus. Yes that is right, this year’s vaccine will include H1N1, so there is no need for two separate vaccines to protect against this year’s influenza season.



## Are you 65 years and older? If so, there is new information just for you!

A new high-dose vaccine called Fluzone High-Dose, which is manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur Inc., contains four-times the amount of the virus-fighting agent contained in the regular flu vaccine. Not to be confused with Fluzone, the regular strength vaccine, Fluzone High-Dose is only for people aged 65 years and older and is made up of the same three flu strains most likely to cause illness this season. Why four-times the strength? The human immune system becomes weaker with age and this places those 65 and older at the highest risk of developing complications due to flu-related illness.

The higher strength vaccine makes it more likely that a higher level of antibodies will be produced. Scientists believe, but it is not yet proven, that a stronger response will mean less illness for those 65 and older. Studies proving or disproving its effectiveness will be completed in 2012. What should you do in the meantime? Discuss whether the higher strength vaccine is appropriate for you with your doctor. Be aware that some doctors may or may not carry this specific vaccine dose for the 2010-2011 influenza season, so you’ll need to ask. Whether you get the regular dose or the higher strength dose, protecting yourself from “the flu” is important. Review any potential side effects the higher dose may have with your doctor.

## What should you do if you suspect you have “the flu”?

- Stay at home and avoid close contact with healthy individuals until your fever is gone.
- If and when you sneeze or cough, do it into your inner elbow area or use a tissue.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as an alternative.
- Wipe down surfaces or items you may share with others (telephones, computer keyboards, bathroom sinks, toilet and flusher, door knobs, light switches, etc.) with disinfecting wipes.
- See or call your healthcare provider if you are not improving or your symptoms are not consistent with “the flu” like difficulty breathing, chest pains, inability to keep down foods or fluids, etc.

Make sure you call HeartShare Wellness for your flu shot! You can reach us at (718) 855-7707.

# SPOTLIGHT ON Luisa Vasquez HeartShare Wellness Office Manager

For the past 24 years, Luisa Vasquez has worked in the disability field, bringing her warmth, understanding, dedication and compassion to everyone she meets and works with. When the doors of HeartShare Wellness first opened 10 years ago, Luisa Vasquez was there to extend a warm greeting to its first patients. Initially hired as an Executive Secretary to the Clinic Director, Luisa was promoted to Executive Secretary, a position she has now held for the past nine years. As officer manager, Luisa plays a vital role in clinic operations. She makes sure that all medical records are up-to-date and well organized so that when a doctor reads a patient's chart all the required history and other medical documentation is there when it's needed. She supervises administrative assistants, mentoring, coaching and trouble-shooting problems and concerns. She coordinates physician schedules, making sure there is ample medical coverage to meet patients' needs. And she does many other things, like overseeing the clinic payroll, that contribute to the smooth daily operation of the Clinic. Before coming to Wellness, she worked at the Jerome Belson Clinic of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State for 13 years.

"I enjoy my work at Wellness very much," says Luisa. On a daily basis, I get to relate to all kinds of people—doctors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, service coordinators, and all the other clinical and support staff that work here. We are all very close and get along so well." But the part of her work she enjoys the most, she says, is the interaction with patients and their families, particularly when called on to help Spanish-speaking patients and their families with English language barriers. "I help them to understand the range of services and resources available to them and their sons or daughters with a disability. It's a bit like being a social worker, where I get to help ease the stress on families that comes with raising a child with disabilities."

Luisa was born in Puerto Rico. The oldest of five siblings, she came to the U.S.A. with her parents in 1965 as a young girl. The Guzman Family settled and raised their family in the Bronx. Luisa's two sisters and two brothers, along with their 75-year-old father—her mother died six years ago—continue to reside in the Bronx, and they are all very close.

Luisa and her second husband, Jaime Vasquez, whom she married 15 years ago, live in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania with their 7-year-old daughter, Jalisa. "It's such a beautiful place, quiet and so different from the city—it's my haven," says Luisa, who doesn't mind the travel time to and from work, which



can be up to two hours or more each way.

With their combined families, she and Jaime have eight children and are the grandparents of eleven! They are a close-knit family and love to share recreational activities and holidays together. But when she and her husband have time to spend alone, they enjoy going to the movies and restaurants.

Given her full schedule, Luisa still manages to find time to continue her education. She attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College and is currently at Lehman College's Continuing Education Program where she hopes to complete certification in health information management.

Luisa has a full and happy life—work, family, home. The biggest treasures in her life, though, are her children and husband. Of her husband, she says, "He has been a shoulder for me and very supportive of all the decisions I make." Of her daughter, Jalisa, she reflects, "Jalisa has given me the opportunity to experience the mother-child interaction anew, the one I lost when my boys grew up, but to also experience it with a daughter. We spend so much time together and it's so wonderful."

## SOME OF LUISA'S FAVORITES

### **Favorite food**

Seafood: octopus, crab and shrimp

### **Favorite dish to cook**

Spanish-style white beans with white rice and pork chops

### **Favorite actress**

Angela Jolie, she is so believable in whatever role she plays

### **Favorite Jolie movies**

*Gia*; *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*

### **Favorite actor**

Mel Gibson, I grew up on his films

### **Favorite Gibson movies**

*Braveheart*; All of the *Lethal Weapon* films

### **Favorite pastime**

Reading, I love mysteries and thrillers, and I'm about to invest in a Kindle because I'm tired of carrying around books!

### **Favorite authors**

John Saul and Nora Roberts

### **Favorite book**

*Whisper in the Wind* by John Saul



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## The Secret Garden: Food's Magic in Preventing Diabetes

by Jon Michnovicz, MD

Curry, basil pesto and spicy chili sauces are one of life's best-kept secrets. These food gems hold the secret to a long life; they also help us solve the problems of nutrition and diabetes. So, listen up! The key to discussing nutrition is to approach healthy eating from a totally different direction. We need to talk about the magic of food.

It has been said that there are as many types of curry as there are cooks in the Caribbean. That's a very large number. Now, what makes each curry so different? Ingredients – dozens and dozens of different combinations of ingredients – all based on plants. There are as many different types of basil, for example, as there are islands in the Caribbean. Each one has a different identity, aroma, and personality and each pesto sauce made from these plants is equally unique.

When people eat a healthy diet, it is always rich in fruits, vegetables, and spices. But when people get into trouble with diabetes, it's always due to an overabundance of pure starch. Just close your eyes and think of piles of white potatoes, or mounds of bleached rice or cornmeal. Not much there but pure starch. Yet plant-based foods are full of dozens of antioxidants and assorted magic bullets to fight cancer, heart disease, arthritis, toothache – you name it. Which ingredients would you want floating to all the cells in your body?



Our bodies have an upper limit on the amount of sugars and simple starches we can digest. The problem is we try to store all the energy we eat (or overeat). Meanwhile, all that extra sugar is spilling over the docks, right into the river (think blood stream). Our insulin system tries to fight it, but gives up eventually, and before long you have a big problem on your hands: diabetes.

Vegetables are the remedy: too much starch is the enemy. Try eating your veggies in sauces or making sauces from veggies. The more veggies we eat, in any wonderful sauce we can concoct, the less starch we need. It's really that simple. Nobody has to become a vegetarian to avoid diabetes. But we have to find ways to limit the crazy excess of pure starch all around

us. Veggies and spices are our secret weapon, helping us fight disease because they are full of powerful nutrients.

Join us in learning the magic of healthy eating. As our own nutrition skills improve, we become able to transfer that knowledge to our patients, consumers and loved ones. As we say to our medical assistant interns: "you see one, then do one, then teach one." You see a saucy recipe you like? Cook it! Then pass it along. That's exactly what we will do in future articles.