

Population and Community Health News

# Advancing Health

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center

**Harm reduction: An essential step on the road to recovery.**



**INSIDE: Empowering youth through health and wellness. | Our Mobile Health Center services.**

# Letter from the President.



MedStar Health has long been committed to working together with our communities to improve health outcomes, reduce health inequities, and create lasting solutions that serve the needs of generations to come.

To that end, we conduct a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years to identify the community's significant health needs and ensure that our programs and services address those needs. You'll read about two of our initiatives in this issue of *Advancing Health*.

Our cover story features a unique program we began in 2016 that emphasizes harm reduction to reduce the negative consequences associated with substance use. Designed to identify and assist individuals with substance use disorders, it relies on the expertise of peer recovery coaches—individuals having real experience—to offer them the support and guidance they need to move toward recovery.

We also highlight how we are empowering our future generations through an alliance with The Joy of Living, through its EmpowerHER program which provides participants with the health and wellness education they need to live well and thrive.

We hope you find *Advancing Health* informative, and welcome any input you may have. Through our collective efforts, we are always striving to make a difference. *It's how we treat people.*

In good health,

**Stuart M. Levine, MD, FACP**

President, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center  
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

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At MedStar Health, we offer easy access to great health care in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., via our 10 hospitals and more than 300 other care locations. We're also committed to advancing your care by continuously learning and applying new knowledge. We help our patients and their families feel understood, appreciated, and confident in their care. MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center is proud to be part of MedStar Health. **It's how we treat people.**

Population and Community Health's mission: *Bridging gaps in health care by connecting the populations we serve with resources to enhance their health and wellbeing.*

**On the cover:** Peer recovery coaches (front row) Gerald Smith and Lydia Bongiorno; (back row) Paul Cooper, and Jeffrey James provide support, resources, and a path to recovery to patients who test positive for substance use.



# Harm reduction: An essential step on the road to recovery.

During the past decade, substance use has been a growing public health concern both nationally and here in the Baltimore area. Intensifying the problem was the arrival of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, which hit the region particularly hard resulting in thousands of fatal overdoses.

MedStar Health has long been committed to reversing this trend through a proactive approach that emphasizes harm reduction by engaging directly with people who have substance use disorders to prevent overdose, reduce infectious disease transmission, and improve the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of these individuals.

“Our harm reduction strategies are aimed at reducing the negative consequences associated with drug use. We accept that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and choose to work to minimize its harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them,” explains Samantha Sailsman, MS, CCHW, regional director, Community Health, MedStar Health, Baltimore region, who oversees what is called the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment program, also known as SBIRT.

“If an individual comes to us for care and is screened positive for substance use, one of our 36 hospital-based SBIRT peer recovery coaches—individuals who have personal experience with addiction—engage with that person, providing support, guidance, and a path to recovery.”

A nationally recognized, evidence-based program, SBIRT is offered by MedStar Health at all four Baltimore hospitals: MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital, MedStar Harbor Hospital, and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital. Initially



**The peer recovery coaches at MedStar Franklin Square include (front row): Gerald Smith, Crystalin Fox, and Lakeitha Gross; (back row) Lydia Bongiorno, Paul Cooper, and Jeffrey James. Not pictured: Teresa Christie.**

launched in the hospitals' Emergency departments, it has since been expanded to some Mother/Baby units, Behavioral Health, and large primary care practices.

The peer recovery coaches are key to the success of the program, offering unique insight and valuable perspectives that are different from what is traditionally experienced in a clinical setting. Studies have shown that having guidance and support from someone who has “been there” is what many in recovery value the most.

In addition to offering patients counseling and helping to connect them with community treatment facilities, they are also provided with harm reduction tools which include fentanyl test strips and naloxone kits.

According to Sailsman, the program is making an impact. “In FY24 alone,

we completed 295,922 screenings, identified 18,662 patients with a substance use disorder, most of whom received counseling, and referred or linked nearly 30% to treatment providers,” Sailsman notes.

“Addiction is a disease, yet historically the society's response has been to stigmatize and criminalize it, which keeps people from seeking care,” adds Corneliu Sanda, MD, chair, Behavioral Health at MedStar Franklin Square.

“Everyone is different and not all individuals with substance use disorders are going to immediately seek help or take the same road to recovery. Our goal is to help them figure out what works for them and, if possible, get them plugged into treatment before they leave the hospital. We are mentors and more... we strive to offer hope and inspiration on their road to recovery.”



For more information about our services, visit [MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth).

# Empowering youth through health and wellness.

At MedStar Health, we strive to enhance health outcomes in the communities we serve through a comprehensive approach that emphasizes prevention, builds awareness, and fosters independence. To that end, ensuring the health and wellness of young people is of particular importance as it lays the foundation for healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

"In an era where young people face a variety of challenges—ranging from mental health struggles to physical well-being—prioritizing health and wellness education is a vital step toward fostering well-rounded, empowered youth," explains Karen Polite-Lamma, MSN, CTT, RN program manager for Population and Community Health at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center.

Polite-Lamma serves as the liaison at MedStar Franklin Square with several community-based youth organizations developing and implementing programs to address the health and wellness needs of young people. One of them is The Joy of Living, which strives to facilitate stability and lasting change in the lives of women, children, and youth—many of them economically disadvantaged—through community initiatives such as EmpowerHER.

"EmpowerHER is a 36-week academic mentoring program serving middle and high school girls held at Deep Creek Middle Magnet School. Our mission is to help them thrive as resilient young women," says Kimberley McCoy-Willis, founder and executive director of The Joy of Living. "Through hands-on workshops, engaging group sessions, and

dynamic lessons tailored to each grade level, participants develop essential life skills in academic achievement, leadership, financial literacy, health and wellness, career readiness, and more."

MedStar Franklin Square has partnered with The Joy of Living and its EmpowerHER program for the past two years as an active participant in a variety of activities, including a recent interactive cooking demonstration.

Another recent event was a CPR training session led by Polite-Lamma and Anya Brooks, community health program coordinator. "Through MedStar Health's expert instruction, our young ladies learned life-saving skills, while building the confidence to act decisively in a medical emergency. Their passion and expertise educated and inspired the girls while equipping them with essential knowledge they will carry into the future."



**At the Joy of Living's EmpowerHER program, a registered dietitian provides an interactive healthy cooking demonstration for young ladies.**

"Our girls not only sharpened their culinary skills but also gained valuable insights into healthy eating and meal preparation," McCoy-Willis notes. "The experience was both fun and educational, leaving a lasting impression on our future chefs!"

"The Joy of Living is doing great things in the community with our youth, and it is a pleasure to work with them in our community benefit services area," says Polite-Lamma. "Together, we are cultivating the next generation of leaders, lifelong learners, and empowered women."

To learn more about the Community Health programs offered at MedStar Health, visit [MedStarHealth.org/Community Health](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth).

# Our Mobile Health Services.



## Two healthcare centers on wheels, serving neighborhoods across Baltimore.

Being able to see a provider when you need one is important.

MedStar Health's two Mobile Health Centers offer a solution! We visit communities across Baltimore every week, making it easier for you and your loved ones to get the medical services you need—regardless of your insurance coverage.

### Your health is our priority. Patients ages 5+ can turn to our Mobile Health Centers for:

- Primary Care
- Urgent Care
- Chronic Disease Management
- Cancer Screenings
- Vaccines
- Harm Reduction Supplies
- Mental Health
- Wound Care
- HIV and Hepatitis C Testing
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Screenings
- Women's Health

Walk-ins are accepted but appointments are encouraged and can be scheduled by calling **410-350-7511**. Learn more at [MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter) or by scanning the QR code using your mobile phone camera.



### Mobile Health Center—North Baltimore

#### Franciscan Center

101 W. 23rd St.  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Mondays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### St. Stephens AME Church

1601 Old Eastern Ave.  
Essex, MD 21221  
Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### Govans Farmers' Market

5104 York Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21212  
Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### Community Assistance Network

7900 E. Baltimore St.  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Mobile Health Center—South Baltimore

#### City of Refuge Baltimore (CORB)

3501 7th St.  
Baltimore, MD 21225  
Mondays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

#### The Transformation Center

3701 4th St.  
Baltimore, MD 21225  
Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### Drink at the Well

4710 Pennington Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21226  
Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center

201 Reedbird Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21225  
Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

We are deeply grateful to our philanthropic partner, the Baltimore Ravens.



# Community class schedules.

At MedStar Health, we care about the health and wellness of our community. One of the ways we try to keep you healthy and active is by offering a variety of free and low-cost special classes, events, and screenings at our local MedStar Health hospitals. They include the following:

## CANCER PREVENTION

### Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings

Free mammograms, clinical breast exams, PAP and HPV testing for women ages 40 and older who live in Baltimore City. Free PAP and HPV testing for women between ages 21 to 39 who live in Baltimore City.

Call **410-350-2066** for details.

### Colon Cancer Screening

Free colon cancer screenings for uninsured and underinsured men and women ages 45 or older, or younger with symptoms or family history, who live in Baltimore City, or Anne Arundel, Baltimore, or Howard counties.

Have Medicaid or Medicare? We can pay your out-of-pocket costs and help you get screened.

Call **410-350-8216** (in English) or **410-350-3444** (in Spanish) to learn more.



### Lung Cancer Screening

Free lung cancer screenings for uninsured and underinsured women and men ages 50 or older, who currently smoke or have quit in the past 15 years and live in Baltimore City or Anne Arundel County.

Call **410-350-8216** (in English) or **410-350-3444** (in Spanish) to learn more.

## DIABETES PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

### Diabetes Education

If you have diabetes, our educational classes can teach you about self-management of your disease, medical nutrition therapy, continuous glucose monitoring, and more. Virtual appointments are available.

Call **443-777-6528** for MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center; **443-444-4193** for MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital; and **410-554-4511** for MedStar Union Memorial Hospital appointments.

### Gestational Diabetes Education

In-person and virtual classes will assist gestational diabetic women with blood sugar control, diet, exercise, and medication instruction for a safe pregnancy. Call **443-777-6528** for details.

## HEART AND LUNG HEALTH

### Cardiac Rehabilitation

### Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Call **443-444-3397** for more information.

### Phase III General Exercise Program

Call **443-444-3881** for more information.

### Congestive Heart Failure Clinic

Call **443-444-5993** for details.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Contact the emails below to see if the group is virtual or in person.

### Amputee Support Group

Email [jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net](mailto:jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net) for details.

### Aphasia Support Group

Aphasia is a language disorder due to illness. Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

### Concussion Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

### Diabetes Support Group

Email [lorraine.p.giangrandi@medstar.net](mailto:lorraine.p.giangrandi@medstar.net) at MedStar Franklin Square and [alexandra.orlan@medstar.net](mailto:alexandra.orlan@medstar.net) at MedStar Good Samaritan for details.

### Stroke Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

## WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

### Tobacco Cessation

Learn to quit smoking with support from our certified tobacco cessation experts.

Free virtual or in-person classes.

Call **855-218-2435** or visit [MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking](http://MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking).

## PARKINSON'S DISEASE FITNESS

### Aquatics for Parkinson's Disease

### Parkinson's Exercise Class

### Rock Steady Boxing

Call **443-444-4600** for details.



## BIRTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Birth and family services are offered in the MedStar Health, Baltimore region at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and MedStar Harbor Hospital.

Take our birthplace virtual tours by scanning this QR code with your mobile phone camera feature and scrolling to the bottom of the page.



## IN-PERSON CLASSES AT MEDSTAR FRANKLIN SQUARE MEDICAL CENTER

### Prepared Childbirth Classes

Preparing mother and her birth partner for labor and childbirth. Offered 1 full day or as a 4-week series (1 night/week).

### Breastfeeding: Facts, Myths, and Techniques

Taught by a board-certified lactation consultant, this course is designed to prepare pregnant couples to get breastfeeding off to a great start.



### Infant Care and Safety Class

This class is designed for expectant and new parents, grandparents, and babysitters. Learn bathing, diapering, and other skills to care for your baby.

### Infant and Child CPR

Ideal for expectant parents, daycare providers, and loved ones caring for your baby.

### Infant and Child First Aid

Classes cover allergic reactions, sudden illness, head, bone and joint injury, wound care, shock, burns, and more. Classes can be taken separately or together with CPR (discount applies if taken at the same time). Classes meet the State requirement for daycare providers.

### Moms, Babies, and Breastfeeding Support Group

Facilitated by breastfeeding specialists, this group provides clinical support to new moms while providing a place to build relationships with other new moms. Professional infant scale for weigh-ins available. FREE lunches provided. Expectant moms, support partners, and siblings are welcome.

### VIRTUAL - Join from the comfort of your home!

Tuesdays, 10 to 11 a.m.

Contact [susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net](mailto:susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net) for a private link.

### In-person support group, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

First Monday of each month - MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center 3rd floor Wellness Center

Contact [susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net](mailto:susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net) for details.

### NEW eCLASSES hosted by MedStar Health

We are excited to have partnered with InJoy Health Education to provide a variety of online eClasses to help our communities and our patients prepare for pregnancy, labor, birth, and caring for their newborn. Classes include:

- Multiples
- Your Newborn
- Cesarean Section
- Grandparenting
- Childbirth
- Breastfeeding
- Natural Childbirth
- Fatherhood

For details on classes, tours, support groups, and eClasses, scan the QR code with your smart phone or visit

[MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses).

For questions on any of these classes, contact [beth.kegley@medstar.net](mailto:beth.kegley@medstar.net).

To register online, visit: [MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses) or call 888-746-2852.

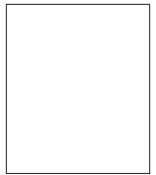




MedStar Health

5601 Loch Raven Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21239

**MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth**  
**855-218-2435**



# MedStar Health **Social Needs Program**

Find the resources you need and get connected...all in one place.

Education, employment, food security, housing, safety, social support, and transportation are all factors that affect health and well-being. Yet many individuals and families struggle to address these needs on a daily basis. The MedStar Health Social Needs program can help.

**SocialNeeds.MedStarHealth.org** is an online tool used to easily and quickly connect those in need with free or low-cost resources and services in their community. This publicly accessible tool allows community members to search for various services for themselves or on behalf of family members, friends, or neighbors. Meal delivery, medical care, rent, ride-share programs, and utility assistance are just a few of the search options available by zip code in a wide range of languages.



## Social Needs **program.**



Scan the QR code, visit **SocialNeeds.MedStarHealth.org** or call 211.