Bariatric surgery offers healthier future
Dear friends,

“How are you?” is a question asked and answered countless times each day. From the friendly supermarket cashier to a parent checking in, it can be a passing pleasantr-an impulse, a habit. Maybe we listen for the answer, or even share an honest one; perhaps we move along without registering someone’s response, or fully considering our own.

Regardless, the words carry weight. The question is deeply personal.

And while wellness looks and feels different for each person, the need to practice self-care is universal: we cannot pour from an empty cup.

In doing so, pause and listen to your body. For some, that might mean stopping in to visit a care provider you haven’t seen in a while. If you’re among the thousands of Americans who canceled or deferred a health screening or annual exam in the last two years, you’re not alone! Screenings for cervical cancer were down 10% in 2021, compared to the previous year.

Screenings save lives.

Whether your needs involve routine or specialized care, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital continues to expand its programs to meet our community’s needs. In this issue of Healthy Living, you’ll meet Dr. Jorawer Singh, fellowship-trained ophthalmologist and surgeon, with insights into how we see.

Dr. Anand Nath discusses lifestyle changes that can help alleviate common gastrointestinal symptoms, and Dr. Frank Chen is welcoming new patients for expert ear, nose, and throat care.

As always, we are grateful for your continued support of our hospital. Philanthropy takes center stage in this edition, showcasing our Hospital Auxiliary and the many ways we have been fortunate to benefit from their generosity. Also, please save the date for Oct. 21: we are excited to welcome our community partners back to our black-tie gala this fall.

Wherever this summer may take you, I wish you good health.

Best regards,

Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP

President and Chief Medical Officer
MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital
Robert started researching bariatric surgery in November 2020. A simple internet search led him to Nicholas Tapazoglou, MD, bariatric surgeon with MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital in Leonardtown. “I had a consultation with Dr. Tapazoglou to see what the program was all about. I was told I would have to take six months of nutrition classes before the surgery,” said Robert. “I started my first class in December 2020, and I had the surgery the following June.”

Robert admits he has always struggled with weight, although he was never a fast dieter switching between popular weight-loss programs. “I am just a cheap person,” he joked. “All of my friends make fun of me for being cheap—I did not want to pay for anything. I tried counting calories and reducing carbs, but it was hard to stay motivated and I kept falling off the wagon.”

“Robert was the perfect candidate for weight loss surgery because he was motivated to change his lifestyle and non-surgical methods were not working for him. He understands that any weight loss surgery will not work in the long term without commitment.”

Following the nutrition classes, Robert underwent a vertical gastric sleeve minimally invasive and performed through four or five small incisions, reduces the size of the stomach to only hold about three to four ounces. Robert had surgery on a Thursday and returned home on Saturday. He said “Robert had surgery on a Thursday and returned home on Saturday. He said they were surprised by the quick recovery. "I was in a lot of pain for the first few days, but it was nothing compared to the pain I was in before the surgery." Daniel, Robert’s wife, Gabby, were expecting their first child.

Robert started researching bariatric surgery the following June.”

Robert Newton made the decision to have bariatric surgery when he and his wife, Gabby, were expecting their first child.

Robert Newton, 28, of Mechanicsville. “I have always been a big person,” said Robert. “I didn’t really have any health issues other than joint pain, but I could see the writing on the wall. I have a lot of diabetes and heart disease in my family, things I know could go wrong if I stayed the weight I was.”

During his college years, Robert played football and was an avid weightlifter and, like many athletes, learned a lot about nutrition. Following college, however, the pounds started adding up. “I was 394 pounds at my heaviest,” said Robert. “At the time I decided to have the surgery, my son was on the way. That is the other reason I wanted to get the surgery because I wanted to be healthy for my son.”

Robert followed a progressive diet after surgery, moving from liquids to soft diet to a modified diet with regular foods. The weight quickly went away quickly and has not returned. The hardest part of the recovery for Robert was not being able to lift his three-month-old son. “For about eight weeks, I couldn’t lift more than a gallon of milk,” said Robert. “That was hard with a three-month-old.”

Robert followed a progressive diet after surgery, moving from liquids to a soft diet to a modified diet with regular foods. The weight quickly began to drop off and Robert was losing a pound or two a day. “I think one of the biggest challenges I had was making sure to separate liquids and foods at meals,” said Robert. “If I ate a meal, I could not drink anything for 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after. It was something to get used to, but I was mentally prepared for whatever I had to do to make a positive change in my life.”

Five months post-surgery, Robert had lost approximately 100 pounds. Although his weight loss has slowed, he is still losing and, as of April, was 125 pounds down from his pre-surgery weight which has allowed him to return to physical activities he enjoys. “Most patients will reach their weight loss ‘plateau’ between 6 to 9 months post-operatively,” said Dr. Tapazoglou. “The average patient is expected to lose between 50-70% of their ‘excess body weight,’ which is their weight above their ‘ideal body weight.’ For the majority of patients, this means reducing their weight below the dangerous morbid obesity classification.”

“Bariatric surgery is a tool, and it has helped me so much,” he said. “It put me on the right trajectory and I’m able to keep going.” For Robert Newton, 2021 was a life-changing year. Not only did he become a father for the first time, but he also made the decision to undergo a procedure to change the course of his health—bariatric surgery. “I have always been a big person,” said Robert, 28, of Mechanicsville. “I didn’t really have any health issues other than joint pain, but I could see the writing on the wall. I have a lot of diabetes and heart disease in my family, things I know could go wrong if I stayed the weight I was.”

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“This is the lightest I’ve been since high school,” said Robert, who coaches wrestling at a local high school. “I am back in the gym and lifting weights like I used to. I recently wrestled in an open wrestling tournament, and I placed first in the tournament which is awesome! I proved to myself I still have it a little bit. I feel like now I can do whatever I want to do.”

Approaching a year after his surgery, Robert said he has no regrets about his decision. “Bariatric surgery is a tool, and it has helped me so much,” he said. “It put me on the right trajectory and I’m able to keep going.”
Robotic surgery

Robotic assisted bariatric surgery means faster healing, better outcomes for patients.

Although she had been considering it for several years, Stacy Tobin of Mechanicsville was not sure she would be a suitable candidate for bariatric surgery. Having had multiple surgeries, she was afraid scar tissue would prevent her from being able to undergo what she hoped would be a life-changing procedure. Then she met bariatric surgeon Nicholas Tapazoglou, MD, with MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital.

Recently diagnosed with diabetes and an autoimmune disorder and having difficulty with her knees due to her weight, Stacy finally made the decision to put her health first and scheduled a consultation with Dr. Tapazoglou.

“I really liked how straightforward Dr. Tapazoglou was with me,” Stacy said. “He did not speak doctor mumbo jumbo to me; he just talked to me like a normal person and was not judgmental about my reasons or my struggles. He was honest with me about how the surgery could help and the responsibilities I would have if I decided to have it.”

During her consultation, Dr. Tapazoglou reviewed Stacy’s medical records and discussed her previous surgeries with her—a C-section, hysterectomy, and appendectomy. He assured Stacy that she could undergo the gastric sleeve procedure. “We began performing bariatric da Vinci procedures at MedStar St. Mary’s in January of 2022,” said Dr. Tapazoglou. “This technology allows a greater degree of precision and control using small incisions, which translates to better outcomes for our patients.”

During robotic surgery, a surgeon makes several small incisions each about the size of a fingertip and uses a camera and tiny instruments to complete the operation. The system delivers 3D, high-definition views magnifying the surgical area 10 times what the human eye sees. The instruments move like a human hand in real time but with smooth precision and an increased range of motion. “Since starting to use the robot, I am finding that patients have less post-operative discomfort and shorter hospital stays,” said Dr. Tapazoglou. “I am always striving to improve patient outcomes and get patients back to their lives as happy and healthy as possible.”

Stacy, who is 45, underwent the gastric sleeve bypass procedure on valentine’s Day, Feb. 14. She had no complications from the surgery, returned home quickly, and never had to take pain relievers after leaving the hospital. Approximately two months later, she was down 35 pounds. “I cannot even say I was scared about having the procedure,” said Stacy. “Because I just had peace about my decision and about Dr. Tapazoglou. I was just excited because this felt like this was the first day of the rest of my life.”

MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital welcomes Dr. Mimi Novello as president, CMO

In January, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital welcomed a new president and chief medical officer (CMO), Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP. Although Dr. Novello was excited to move to a hospital with a strong record of delivering quality, safe patient care, it was her family’s ties to the Southern Maryland area that gave the transition deeper meaning. “My grandfather was born and raised on a farm in Hughesville, and we were incredibly close,” said Dr. Novello. “I am really delighted to be able to care for people in the community that was part of her heritage.”

Dr. Novello grew up in Bethesda, “back when it was a quiet suburb,” she said, and attended Georgetown University and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, which is where Dr. Novello discovered her passion for emergency medicine. She completed an internship at Rhode Island Hospital and her residency at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. “After my residency, I really wanted to come back home again,” said Dr. Novello. “I missed the D.C. area and wanted to work with an outstanding group of emergency clinicians. That is how I ended up at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center.”

There Dr. Novello joined MedStar Emergency Physicians and quickly became part of the leadership team, eventually moving into the role of vice chair of the Emergency Department. She spent 22 years at MedStar Franklin Square, where she became the chief medical officer in 2017.

“MedStar Franklin Square was a wonderful place and my time there was a great learning experience,” she said. “I learned a lot about leadership and informatics. Quality and safety are my passion, and community benefits, community health, and outreach are all things I really enjoy. I think this comes from my ER days.”

Having served on numerous committees and boards as part of MedStar Health, Dr. Novello said she was always impressed with MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital’s reputation for outstanding care. “MedStar Franklin Square was a wonderful place and my time there was a great learning experience,” she said. “I learned a lot about leadership and informatics. Quality and safety are my passion, and community benefits, community health, and outreach are all things I really enjoy. I think this comes from my ER days.”

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“MedStar St. Mary’s has had remarkable success in quality metrics and that happens because of the dedication of its leaders and staff,” she said. “I value innovation and I think when presented with problems, the collaborative teams at MedStar St. Mary’s come together to solve challenges. That is how we move forward as an organization and improve care for our patients.”

“Since coming here, I have felt warmly welcomed and supported, and I am very appreciative of that,” said Dr. Novello. “I cannot imagine being anywhere else.”

About Dr. Novello

Member of:
• American College of Emergency Physicians
• American College of Physician Executives
• American College of Healthcare Executives

Committees/boards:
• MedStar Health Capacity and Throughput Task Force, co-chair
• Catholic Charities of Central Maryland Board of Directors
• Physician representative on the American Hospital Association Region 3 Policy Board
• Chesapeake Potomac Healthcare Alliance Board of Directors
• Chesapeake Potomac Home Health Alliance
• Southern Maryland Navy Alliance

Da Vinci Xi surgical system

Sameer Alrefai, MD
General surgeon MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital
Call 240-434-4088.

Gustavo J. Franco Vasquez, MD
General surgeon MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital
Call 240-434-4088.

Arthur Greenwood, MD
Obstetrics and Gynecological surgeon MedStar Medical Group Women’s Health
Call 301-997-1788.

Tushar Samdani, MD
Colon and Rectal surgeon MedStar Shah Medical Group
Call 301-373-7900.

Nicholas Tapazoglou, MD
General and Bariatric surgeon MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital
Call 240-434-4088.

ROSA robotic knee system

Daniel Bauk, MD
Orthopaedic surgeon Southern Maryland Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine Center
Call 301-475-5555.
Flag exhibit honors healthcare team’s dedication

On March 23, 2020, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital admitted its first confirmed COVID-19 positive inpatient. As of March, nearly 1,200 inpatients had been cared for in our community hospital—a number that increases greatly when we consider all those for whom we have cared for in the Emergency Department, drive-thru testing, monoclonal antibody infusion centers, vaccine clinics, and other additional services. On March 22, staff and medical providers commemorated the two-year anniversary of the pandemic with a flag exhibit at the main entrance of the hospital.

Meet our new medical professionals.

MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital is pleased to introduce the newest members of our medical staff. We strive to bring high-quality physicians and specialists to Southern Maryland to meet our community’s needs close to home. For a full list of local MedStar Health provider resources, visit MedStarHealth.org/Doctors for individual doctor profiles.

Samer Jabbour, MD
Reconstructive plastic surgery, plastic surgery

MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital welcomes Samer Jabbour, MD, a fellowship-trained plastic and reconstructive surgeon. Dr. Jabbour specializes in breast reconstruction, microsurgery, body contouring, and cosmetic surgery. Dr. Jabbour completed five years of plastic surgery residency, along with three different specialty fellowship trainings in cosmetic and reconstructive plastic surgery, after earning his medical doctorate from Saint Joseph’s University Medical School. He did his first fellowship at the Groppu Hospitalier Paris Saint-Joseph hospital in Paris, France, and then underwent another year of fellowship training with a focus on reconstructive plastic surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Jabbour went on to complete a third year of specialty training at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, where he focused on advanced breast reconstruction techniques.

Dr. Jabbour is accepting new patients. Call 240-434-4088 for more information.

Wellness rounds is one of many programs aimed at improving employee wellbeing at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital.

Workforce wellbeing

MedStar Health supporting employees with new center devoted to boosting wellness, quality of life

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the daily lives of healthcare workers became increasingly complex. To help its employees manage the day-to-day stresses of work and home, MedStar Health recently launched the new MedStar Health Center for Wellbeing.

“For the past four years, MedStar Health has built robust wellbeing programs that support wellness, professional satisfaction, and quality of life for its associates,” said Daniel Marchalik, MD, executive director of the new center. “The MedStar Health Center for Wellbeing signals a significant new investment in our workforce and a commitment to creating and growing programs that focus on the needs of not only our clinicians but all of our associates who have been fighting the pandemic in some capacity for two full years now.”

The Center for Wellbeing will function as a new incubation center within the MedStar Institute for Innovation and will focus on the research and development of best practices and programs. In 2021 MedStar Health earned the Joy in Medicine™ distinction from the American Medical Association (AMA).

“Through the center’s creation, we are both elevating MedStar Health’s internal wellbeing priorities, and striving to serve as a national leader in wellbeing innovation, research, and education more broadly,” said Dr. Marchalik.

Tips for maintaining workplace wellness

Heather Hartman-Hall, PhD, clinical director of Behavioral Health Initiatives for the MedStar Health Center for Wellbeing offers the following suggestions for maintaining your workplace wellbeing.

Focus on where you have control

We may not be able to control the demands of work, our work conditions, or other perceptions of us, but we can control how we approach our work, how we behave, and how we care for ourselves. And consider speaking up if you have ideas to solve problems at work.

Get rid of the guilt

If you are going to function at your best, you must take care of yourself—you are not being selfish.

Set boundaries

These days we can be plugged into work 24/7. Taking actual breaks from thinking about and engaging in work is essential so that you can recharge and reconnect with other important things in your life.

Refocus on meaning

When we find our work meaningful and see purpose in what we do, the challenges and demands are more manageable, and we derive more enjoyment from work.

Look for the positive

It is easy to focus on things we are worried about or that aren’t going well. Try making the “Three Good Things” exercise part of your daily routine—look for three things you are grateful for or that are going well each day.

Talk it over

Whether you are trying to set self-care goals, feeling overwhelmed with something at work, or in a low mood and you are not sure why, talking it over with someone who can help you feel supported or get clarity about what to do next. Talk to someone you trust at work or in your personal life or consider talking to a mental health professional or coach.

Visit MedStarHealth.org/Wellbeing for more information about wellness resources at MedStar Health.
Auxiliary’s support of student scholarships establishes new endowment

Since 1916, the all-volunteer MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital Auxiliary (pictured above) has led many efforts to strengthen our non-profit organization. Decades of volunteer work and community patronage at the hospital’s gift shop and participation in past events—including ADF Bingo, golf tournaments, sales and bazaars—have funded hospital renovations and medical equipment, allowed for the purchase of patient experience items, and much more. In 2021, the Auxiliary made a generous $425,000 donation to establish the hospital’s new Scholarship Endowment for Southern Maryland students pursuing healthcare careers. The fund continues to build toward the $2.5 million goal needed to award annual scholarships in perpetuity.

“Our commitment to delivering outstanding care at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital hasn’t changed. And, since 1984, neither has much in the space of the Central Sterile processing department. While surgical services keep expanding, now through robotic-assisted procedures with da Vinci Xi (above right), our small area for sterile processing has not kept pace with this progress. Patients in every area of the hospital, who must receive care with specially-cleaned tools to prevent infection. Whether you have:

• Had surgery
• Welcomed a baby
• Undergone a diagnostic procedure, like an endoscopy
• Or many other events . . .
You have been touched by the services of the Central Sterile team.

Who relies on Central Sterile?

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News briefs

Leapfrog “A” for Patient Safety

MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital earned its seventh “A” in the Leapfrog Group’s Hospital Safety Grade for Spring 2022. Published twice annually, Leapfrog’s scores reflect an organization’s commitment to prioritizing patient safety above all else. Call 240-434-7670 to learn more.

Wound Healing Center of Distinction

The Wound Healing Center at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital was named a 2021 Healogics Center of Distinction, honored for achieving outstanding clinical and operational results last year! The team maintained its patient-first focus throughout COVID-19, earning patient satisfaction rates higher than 92% in 2021, among other important measures. Call 240-434-7670 to learn more.

Braveheart Award honors team’s dedication

During National Public Health Week in April, the St. Mary’s County Health Department honored MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital with a Braveheart Award in recognition of our COVID-19 efforts. The Commissioners of St. Mary’s County also issued a commendation in recognition of the team’s “compassion, integrity, and professionalism,” stating, “You are a true example of bravery in times of challenge.”

Accepting on behalf of MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital were president and CMO Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP, pictured second from left; Lori Werrell, MPH, MCHES, assistant vice president, care transformation, southern region, MedStar Health; and Stephen Michaels, MD, FACHE, president of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, formerly chief operating and chief medical officer, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital.

Annual Gala set for Oct. 21

Coming to a red carpet near you: MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital’s annual Gala will return for an in-person night of Hollywood-inspired glitz on Friday, Oct. 21! Join us in Hollywood (Maryland, that is!) for a fanful night out in support of our non-profit hospital. Sponsorship opportunities are available now. Visit MedStarHealth.org/RedCarpet to learn more, or contact Holly Meyer, director of Marketing, Public Relations & Philanthropy, at holly.b.meyer@medstar.net.

What’s in your blood?

Regular blood testing is an important glimpse at your overall physical health. By establishing a baseline for your “normal” and following up with regular testing, it’s more likely that changes will be spotted quickly. Here, just a few of the commonly-ordered blood tests you could undergo at the recommendation of your primary care provider.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood test:</th>
<th>Tests for:</th>
<th>Normal range:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic metabolic panel</td>
<td>Levels of eight different compounds, including calcium, glucose, sodium, potassium, chloride, and creatinine</td>
<td>Varies. Abnormal results may indicate diabetes, kidney disease, hormone imbalances, or other conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipid panel</td>
<td>Two types of cholesterol: • High-density lipoprotein (HDL), or “good” cholesterol, which removes harmful substances from the blood • Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad” cholesterol, which can cause plaque build-up in the arteries, increasing the risk of heart disease</td>
<td>HDL High: &gt;60 mg/dL Low: &lt;40 mg/dL (men) &lt;50 mg/dL (women) LDL High: &gt;160 mg/dL Low: &lt;100 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete blood count (CBC)</td>
<td>Levels of 10 different components of every major cell in the blood: platelets, white blood cells (WBC), and red blood cells (RBC). RBC carry oxygen throughout the body; a normal range is important. High WBC could indicate infection. Abnormal levels could also indicate anemia, cancer, nutritional deficiencies, clotting problems, or other issues.</td>
<td>Red blood cells 4.3-5.9 million/mm³ (men) 3.5-5.5 million/mm³ (women) White blood cells 4,500-11,000/mm³ Platelets 150,000-400,000/mm³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid panel</td>
<td>This test checks how well your thyroid is producing and reacting to certain hormones, including: • T3, which regulates heart rate and body temperature • T4, which regulates metabolism • Thyroid-stimulating hormone, which regulates the levels of hormones the thyroid releases</td>
<td>T3: 80-180 ng/dL T4: 0.8-1.8 ng/dL TSH: 0.5-4.5 mIU/L Abnormal levels can indicate conditions including thyroid growth disorders, or abnormal testosterone or estrogen levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chronic runny nose? Ringing in your ears? It may be time to see an ENT.

If you are experiencing any of the following, you may need the expert care of an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist.

- Ear infections that are recurring
- Hearing loss that does not resolve in a week or two
- Nasal congestion that is persistent and does not go away
- Ringing in your ears
- Sinus pain or repeated sinus infections
- Sleep apnea or snoring
- Sore throat that will not go away or happens repeatedly
- Swimmer’s ear
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- Sleep apnea or snoring
- Sore throat that will not go away or happens repeatedly
- Swimmer’s ear

Although some of these conditions may not be cause for alarm, they could lead to serious consequences if left untreated.

What Dr. Chen’s patients are saying:

“Dr. Chen is very patient and listens to you. He had a couple of solutions for me and let me make the final decision. He explained things thoroughly and, in a language I could easily understand. Wonderful doctor and I would not hesitate to recommend him.”

“Excellent provider. Dr. Chen is very professional and knowledgeable in his field. I have referred other friends and family members to see him.”

“This was my first visit with Dr. Chen. He was professional throughout the visit and took much time and care when reviewing my post-surgical notes. He has a gentle and kind manner. I appreciate his thoughtful evaluation.”

Dr. Chen is now accepting new patients. Make an appointment today! Call 301-475-1555

Frank Chen, MD MedStar Medical Group ENT at St. Mary’s 25480 Point Lookout Road Leonardtown, MD 20650 MedStarHealth.org/DrChen

“It’s a door-opener.”

Community health advocates connect patients with critical resources

A world of support can begin with just one search. The AccessHealth team, part of the Population & Community Health department, works with recently discharged MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital patients who have social barriers to care. Community health advocates (CHAs) now serve patients throughout St. Mary’s County.

“Our community health advocates consider the many factors that could impact patients being able to access a full spectrum of care,” said Brenda Wolcott, MPH, director of Population & Community Health, MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital. “They could be uninsured or underinsured, and maybe need help with the insurance application process. They might be without reliable transportation, or experiencing homelessness. Our role is to connect them with resources that can help them improve their quality of life, which has a clear and direct impact on health.”

As part of the post-discharge process, AccessHealth—comprised of three full-time CHAs and a driver—now conducts social needs screenings through Findhelp.org. Based on the patient’s responses, they will be linked to one or several of the verified 1,800-plus free or reduced-cost programs available via local and national partners.

“It’s a door-opener—it provides more opportunities to help patients with support we might not have known was available,” said Brenda. “We have outstanding local resources, but we can get very siloed by considering only resources in our immediate area. Findhelp has expanded our network and even helped us to book some appointments for patients faster.”

Nearly 700 patients were contacted by CHAs between July 2020 and June 2021. And help isn’t limited to St. Mary’s, or even just the State of Maryland—a CHA was recently able to link a relocating patient to services in Florida ahead of their move. “We once worked with a military veteran who was experiencing homelessness. He wanted to work, but couldn’t, because he had no fixed address,” Brenda shared. “One of our CHAs asked him about his time in the military, which he dismissed as ‘just four years’ of service. He wasn’t aware that he was entitled to veterans’ benefits.”

The advocate drove the individual to the Veterans Administration herself, where the patient received housing assistance that ultimately led to gainful employment—all thanks to that first conversation.

This is just one example of many, Brenda shared. Over the years, the Population & Community Health department has developed a strong reputation as a trusted resource. “We were 411, back when there was 411,” she joked. “Community members still often call us and say, ‘I know you’re not the right one for this, but do you know where I can find . . .?’ Maybe it’s grief support, primary care, transportation. Whatever they need, we are happy to help. That’s why we’re here.”

The AccessHealth team includes, from left, Vivian Mills, certified community health advocate; Marissa Kelsh, community health advocate; Katie Buchholz, transportation; and Deidra Carroll, medical assistant/community health advocate.

Keep up with the latest classes, clinics, and more through our Population & Community Health team. Turn to page 18 for our summer calendar, or call 301-475-6019 to learn more.
Anand Nath, MD, board-certified gastroenterologist, MedStar Medical Group Gastroenterology at St. Mary’s. "When there is a disturbance somewhere along the route, uncomfortable symptoms result. It’s our job to look at the puzzle pieces and determine why there is an upset, then work on a treatment plan to get patients back to functioning optimally."

Befriend fiber
Fiber is crucial to good digestive health, adding bulk to stools so they pass more easily. It’s naturally available in many vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains and legumes. High-fiber options include avocados (1 cup raw: 0.6 grams), raspberries (1 cup raw: 4.1 grams), lentils (1 cup cooked: 13 grams), and black beans (1 cup cooked: 8 grams).

"Needs vary, but a good goal is 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed daily," said Dr. Nath. If your diet doesn’t cover it, over-the-counter supplements can provide consistency and frequency of bowel movements.

Stay hydrated
Water breaks down food and softens stools to prevent constipation. A healthy adult woman should aim for a daily fluid intake of 92 ounces, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. When to see a specialist
If your symptoms aren’t helped by consistent lifestyle changes, reach out to a gastroenterologist. Medical care is needed to address certain conditions, including but not limited to Crohn’s disease, celiac disease, gallstones, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Ditch the sugar
Cutting back or decreasing intake of simple and processed carbohydrates (such as sucrose, zero calorie sugars and high fructose corn syrup) can help improve symptoms of gassiness, diarrhea, and acid reflux. Try replacing these with natural, complex carbs such as those present in whole grains and certain vegetables (peas, cucumbers, carrots, sweet potatoes, etc.).

Add in activity
Regular exercise encourages regular bowel movements. Most healthy adults should aim to get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity (biking, swimming, brisk walking), or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity (running, aerobic dancing) weekly, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Try mini-meals
Rather than the standard three meals, consider five or six small portions spread throughout the day. "Eating more frequently and in smaller quantities helps prevent the digestive system from getting overburdened," said Dr. Nath. "A very full stomach can cause acids to travel into the esophagus. Eating more frequently also boosts the metabolism, which helps promote overall digestive health." Avoiding laying flat for three hours after dinner may significantly help with acid reflux symptoms.

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Summer 2022 calendar

Visit MedStarStMarys.org/Calendar to learn more about community classes and support groups.

Support groups

Bariatric Support
Meetings are currently online only June 1, July 6, Aug. 10 a.m. Call 301-475-6019.

Breast Cancer
Meetings are held in person on the last Monday of each month June 27, July 25, Aug. 29 6 to 7 p.m., MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute, Outpatient Pavilion Call 240-695-6904 or visit Facebook.com/groups/ MedStarBariatricHealthProgram for support.

Lactation (Breastfeeding)
Weekly on Wednesdays, two sessions: 10 and 11:15 a.m.
Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Registration currently required as space is limited; call 301-475-6019. Search and join the “MedStar St. Mary’s Lactation Support Group” on Facebook.

Parkinson’s
Second Tuesday of each month June 14, July 12, Aug. 9, Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Call 301-475-6019 for details.

Stroke Survivors
Third Tuesday of each month June 21, July 19, Aug. 16, Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Call 301-475-6019 for details.

Senior wellness & events

Senior Gold Card Luncheon
Currently on hold. Call 301-475-6019 for updates.

Cancer care
Cancer support group
Currently meeting first and third Wednesday of each month. In-person options may also be available. Call 240-434-7241 to register and provide your email address to be sent an invite. Search and join “MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital Cancer Support Group” on Facebook.

Diabetes education
Take Control of Diabetes with Education
MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital offers one-on-one appointments with our registered dietician. A provider’s order for diabetes education is required. Services may be covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans. Call 301-475-6019 for more information.

Living Well with Diabetes
Beginning Sept. 12, 6 p.m., Health Connections. This six-week workshop can help individuals with diabetes manage this condition, carry out normal activities, add healthy activities to their lives, and manage emotional changes.

Simple Changes (Pre-diabetes)
Begins Oct. 5, 5:30 p.m. Participate in our free, year-long class designed to eliminate possible diabetes risk factors by making simple, healthier changes in your life. Program includes free body composition screenings, handouts, giveaways, and support between sessions. This one-year program is a combination of weekly and monthly sessions. Call 301-475-6019.

Childbirth & family education
Classes are held in Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital.

One-day Parents-to-Be workshop
In-person sessions and online options available. June 4, July 16, Aug. 6, Sept. 17 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Health Connections, $100/couple

Exercise, nutrition & weight management
Bariatric information sessions
Learn more about weight loss surgery through a free online seminar. Required for those pursuing surgery. Visit MedStarStMarys.org/WeightLoss or call 240-434-4088.

Body composition analysis
By appointment only, Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Screening includes an in-depth look at body composition. Cost is $15. Call 301-475-6019.

Pulmonary Tobacco Cessation Program
Eight-week, virtual program to help participants quit using tobacco products through behavioral modifications, stress management, and other techniques. Visit SMCHD.org/ Tobacco for dates and registration.

Join in the Juneteenth Celebration!
The 2022 Juneteenth Celebration will return to an in-person event on Saturday, June 18, at Lexington Manor Passive Park, 21675 Coral Drive, Lexington Park. A day of celebration and reflection, the annual community event will feature entertainment, a variety of food vendors, and activities for the entire family. The event is coordinated by the United Committee for Afro-American Contributions. Visit UCACONLINE.org/Juneteenth for more information.

Are you at an increased risk for colon cancer?
Research has shown new cases of colorectal cancer are occurring at an increasing rate among younger adults. Why? Colon cancer typically affects adults. Why? Colon cancer typically involves in the colon. Could help save thousands of lives in this country every year. Take our free colon cancer risk assessment to learn whether you may be at an increased risk for colon cancer or eligible for a colon cancer screening. It’s simple and takes only a few minutes—text COLON to 410-680-3337 or scan this code.

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When accidents happen, we are here to help.

The fact is accidents happen. And when they do, the team of expert surgeons at MedStar Orthopaedic Institute in Leonardtown is dedicated to making sure you and your family receive prompt, compassionate care. We will help you recover from whatever life throws at you as quickly as possible whether it is a sports injury, accident, or age-related illness or joint pain.

MedStar Orthopaedic Institute in Leonardtown
Davis Professional Park
23503 Hollywood Road
Ste. 101
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Call 240-847-6746 or visit MedStarHealth.org/OrthoTeam for more information or to request an appointment.

We are a part of MedStar Orthopaedic Institute, the area’s largest and most experienced group of fellowship trained orthopedic surgeons, with a network of more than 35 physicians at 14 locations throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.