

HEALTHY LIVING

TO YOUR HEALTH

Parkinson's group has monthly lunch, numerous programs

The Parkinson Association of Southwest Florida holds exercise, speech, dance and art therapy classes at multiple locations in Naples, Marco Island and Bonita Springs for those who have a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.

A monthly "Lunch Bunch" social gathering as well as support programs for families and caregivers are also offered, and various opportunities are available for volunteers at PASFi headquarters, in the Hibiscus Center, 2950 Tamiami Trail N.

The next Lunch Bunch will be a potluck meal at the PASFi office beginning at noon Wednesday, Sept. 14.

The first meeting of Widows and Widowers of PD is set for 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 7, also at the PASFi office. Facilitator Jayne Keil says the group is also for those whose late spouses had other movement disorders.

Another new group is Sons and Daughters of PD. Naples resident Pattie Place, whose father had Parkinson's disease, is organizing the group and will post each meeting's discussion online for out-of-town family of local Parkinson's patients. For more information, e-mail Ms. Place at bubbamom34119@gmail.com.

For caregivers who cannot leave the home to attend a support group, PASFi partners with Jewish Family Services of Collier County and the Heil Luthringer Foundation for MS to provide a telephone conference call facilitated by a licensed mental health professional.

For Lunch Bunch reservations or more information about PASFi classes, programs and volunteer jobs, call Executive Director Ruth Hubing at 417-3465, e-mail pasfied@aol.com or visit www.PASFi.org. ■

Program about diagnosing and treating dementia

The Mental Health Association of Southwest Florida presents Naples psychiatrist Daniel Deutschman with a lecture about "Delirium/Dementia Diagnosis and Treatment" at 7 p.m.

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New treatments and techniques for knee and hip pain

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Millions of Americans live with pain in their hips and knees caused by arthritis, and many mistakenly believe that little can be done to relieve that pain. But advances in treatments and new minimally invasive surgical procedures are restoring many joint pain sufferers to a full active, pain-free life.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, arthritis is the number one cause of physical disability in the United States. It is estimated that one in five Americans has the disease and two-thirds are women.

"This is a big problem, especially here in Florida where we have a disproportionate number of cases,"



ZEHR

says Dr. Robert J. Zehr, a board certified orthopaedic surgeon at Physicians Regional Healthcare System with more than 20 years of experience in complex joint reconstruction surgeries and rehabilitation.

There are more than 100 types of arthritis but they all have a defining characteristic: inflammation of the joint as evidenced by warmth, swelling and redness, which result in dysfunction and pain.

Osteoarthritis is the most common form, in which joint cartilage is destroyed due to "wear and tear" over the years. Because it is a long drawn-out process, it affects mostly people 50 years and older. In some cases, the patient may also develop painful bony outgrowths, known as bone spurs, which add to deformity and pain.

The origins of arthritis are largely unknown, said Dr. Zehr. However, there are a number of risk factors that contribute to the development of the disease, including age, gender, genetics and joint mechanics. A main cause of excessive wear and tear, he said, is obesity.

"Extra weight puts more pressure on the joints. For every 10 pounds of excess weight you carry, you are exerting 50 pounds of force on your knee," said Dr. Zehr. "Weight loss can help a lot. It does not have to be a heroic amount of weight loss. Even just small



amounts can provide significant relief."

To help keep weight down, patients should maintain a healthy diet and combine flexibility, strengthening and cardiovascular exercises. "Exercise also helps build up your pain tolerance," he said.

Before rushing into surgery, Dr. Zehr recommends trying other treatments, from over the counter anti-inflammatory medicines, to dietary supplements, to the use of external braces. Many patients find relief with corticosteroid injections. "Your goal is to keep your own body parts for as long as possible," he said.

When all else fails, surgery should be considered. Patients should ask their orthopaedic surgeon about realistic outcomes and be willing to put in the hard

SEE PAIN, A23 ►

STRAIGHT TALK

Accreditation success

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For healthcare professionals, accreditation by the respected Joint Commission is equivalent to the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval."

Last week, The NCH Healthcare Group — which consists of 67 physicians, 14 nurse practitioners, nine physician assistants and 325 colleagues — experienced its first Joint Commission survey. It was a great success. So successful, in fact, I'd like to take two "Straight Talks" to expand on what the Joint Commission surveyors found. Here is part one of the story.

In advance of the survey, our practice managers received valuable education from Rodney Judd, director of compliance; Mark Milner, director of clinical outcomes management; Karen Sandrick, compliance coordinator and Diane Wor-

man, director of operations. Two physician surveyors with many years in private practice and Joint Commission experience between them conducted the survey. They visited more than half of our 17 locations and found that — while not perfect — our facilities and procedures were nonetheless in admirable condition. For example:

■ **Internal Medicine at Veterans Park - Beth Perz, practice manager**

This first survey stop showcased excellent performance. Helen McMannus and Dr. David Sommerfeld demonstrated best practices and a thorough knowledge of the EMR. Helen was relieved by FP colleague Damia Champagne so that she could spend three hours with the surveyors, who were duly impressed with her knowledge and preparation.

■ **Anticoagulation Clinic at Veterans Park - Miriam Means, director**

With Miriam on vacation, Kathy Hebert took the helm, interviewed while she consulted a patient and trained a new

employee. Talk about stress. Kathy was confident, knew the dose response software well, practiced patient ID and infection prevention skillfully, did medication reconciliation, and e-prescribed a refill without a hitch. Again, the surveyors were impressed.

■ **Cardiology - Med Plaza - Linda Cifani, practice manager**

Linda and Dr. David Axline spent a good deal of time explaining the merger and migration to the EMR. Elaine Cellino then took over to discuss office processes and safety standards — all more than satisfactory.

■ **Pulmonary - Debbie Auclair, practice manager**

Surveyors interacted with Drs. Larry Albert, Barry Hertz and Doug Harrington who discussed the challenge of learning a new system. Susan Garcia, medical records, discussed maintaining two systems, paper charts and EMR and the opportunity of going paperless. Kathy Kady, a new registered nurse in the

office, demonstrated her facility with the NextGen system. Debbie prepared her staff well by developing a Joint Commission learning guide, which has been shared with other offices.

■ **Rheumatology, Gastroenterology - Creekside - Kim Hochman and Susan Sullivan, practice managers**

Kim artfully explained process improvement. Susan Sullivan and Patricia Treggia explained very well the GI process, meds storage, EMR use, and use of the Cyacom phones for translation. Virginia Hennes, LPN, helped explain the infusion workflow process. The variance reporting system was demonstrated, and the physician surveyor was again pleased. I personally had the pleasure of watching this group in action.

The importance of outpatient prevention and quality care for the overall health of the community cannot be overstated. Next week, tune in for Part Two about this auspicious first survey accreditation for The NCH Healthcare Group. ■

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Thursday, Sept. 22, at MHA headquarters at 2335 Tamiami Trail N. Mental health professionals can earn one CEU. Attendance is free. Registration is required and can be completed by calling Brian Follweiler at 261-5405 or e-mailing bfollweiler@mhaswfl.org. ■

Help replenish blood supplies

Community Blood Center has experienced a bigger than usual drop in summertime supplies, and donors are urged to give. Types O+ and A+ are especially needed. All donors become eligible to win the summer grand prize of four adult, two-

day passes to Busch Gardens and an overnight stay at Wingate by Windham, Tampa. Community Blood Center in Naples is at 311 Ninth St. N., on the first floor of the NCH Medical Plaza Building, next to the NCH Healthcare System parking garage. Valet parking is offered from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday. The center is closed on Thursday. Call 436-5455. In Bonita Springs, Community Blood Center is in Sunshine Plaza at 9170 Bonita Beach Road. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Friday (closed for lunch from 12:15-1 p.m.). The center is closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Call 495-1138. Donors can give blood every 56 days. Minimum age to give blood is 16 with a parent present; there is no upper age limit. For a list of upcoming bloodmobile locations, visit www.givebloodcbc.org. ■

Mental health expert to speak in Fort Myers

Award-winning journalist and nationally known mental health advocate Pete Earley will be in Fort Myers Friday, Oct. 7, to discuss the need for mental health reform at a luncheon hosted by Hope Clubhouse of Southwest Florida. The presentation, in observance of Mental Health Awareness Week, will be at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, 1380 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers, at noon. Mr. Earley, who is the author of 13 books, also will be available for book-signing immediately after his presentation. He is best known as the author of "CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness," which was one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize. Tickets are \$35 and available at Hope Clubhouse at 267-1777 or can be purchased online at www.hopeclubhouse.org. ■

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time post-surgery as there will be painful but extremely necessary physical therapy involved. Patients also should do their research on orthopaedic surgeons and focus on those who perform more than "just one or two knee or hip replacements per month," said Dr. Zehr. High volume joint surgeons will typically be skilled in the latest techniques and achieve the best results with the least complications. For example, hip replacement surgery is conventionally performed from the

back of the hip, with an incision of up to 8 inches in length and requires cutting through and detaching major muscle groups. Patients having this form of surgery usually experience significant pain, require several months of rehabilitation, and must limit the flexing of their new hip to 90 degrees but never cross their legs again. Fortunately, newer procedures and equipment have been developed for a direct anterior approach through the front of the hip. It can be accomplished with a 3-inch incision, and the muscles are merely pushed aside instead of cut or detached. A special operating table is used for the procedure along with brief but important X-ray images to assure accuracy in

placing the components. Patients are up walking with full weight bearing on the hip on the same day of surgery and have a much faster recovery with no limit to their flexibility. Fewer than 5% of U.S. orthopaedic surgeons are trained in this procedure, and Dr. Zehr is one of the most experienced. Understanding arthritis, making lifestyle changes designed to slow the progress of the disease, and choosing the best approach to surgery when surgery is required will help patients enjoy life again. Physicians Regional Healthcare System is comprised of two premier hospitals in Collier County with 201 private rooms, an affiliated multi-specialty physician group, and a medical staff of more than 300 physicians. ■

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