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In this issue:



Good day!

It certainly seems like 2016 has been the year of differing opinions. Much of it was rooted in the nation's political scene and, as the most heated election seasons ever progressed to November, the nation seemed even more divided and angry. Even in the aftermath of the election, it is not uncommon to see tremendous divergence of opinion and focus on what divides us. Lifelong relationships among family and friends have been strained over acute differences in opinion.

In our own ranks here at Care New England, the past year has seen many differences in the way we view important issues at work and the way we advocate for what we believe in.

One of the most obvious arenas for playing out oftentimes differing views is the bargaining table. It is a place where arguments are made, emotions can run high and passions come to the fore. Sometimes it can accentuate all that divides us. Other times it can bring us together. But, in nearly every case, it is a forum where well-intentioned individuals from both sides can advance their views and work toward what they believe will be a better future for the workplace.

Last week one of these dramas played out. At approximately 3 a.m. on Friday, December 16, Women & Infants and SEIU 1199 New England came to terms on a tentative contract agreement. It will need to be ratified by the union membership before it can be final. But, we are hopeful that this will occur.

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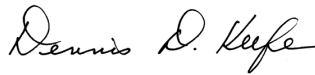
Indeed, there were issues at stake that many felt were pivotal. But, I have also heard stories of the caring people at Women & Infants who were reminded of the underlying truth of what is most important. That is, the focus on doing what is right for the patient.

So, particularly as we begin holiday week, let us take a moment to meet on common ground and to share in the belief in the work we do. It is a time where the hands that extend the caring touch to our patients and their families can reach across the divides and join in a handshake—or even a hug!

In this most special time of year, let us wish each other well, let us find times of peace and joy, let us reach out to those who struggle, let us all reflect the gentle spirit of love.

Please accept my every best wish for you and your families. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa, and **Happy Holidays!**

Sincerely,



Dennis D. Keefe
President and Chief Executive Officer

Memorial research: Socioeconomic disadvantage may genetically lead to mid-life obesity

Previous research has connected hardships and poverty during children with obesity in adulthood, but a new study performed at Memorial Hospital's Clinical Studies Center in the Center for Primary Care and Prevention with a Brown University team, reveals that the association is likely made through regulation of genes called epigenetics.



Charles B. Eaton, MD, MS, director of the Center for Primary Care and Prevention at Memorial, was one of several principal investigators of the study that led to the publication "Epigenetic Mediators Between Childhood Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Mid-Life Body Mass Index: The New England Family Study" in the professional journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*. This sub-study of a large birth cohort study has men and women from before birth through the age of 47 and is aimed at identifying risk factors that may have epigenetic and early developmental childhood origins. One hundred and forty seven participants in the study were examined at Memorial and had fat biopsies and body fat and carotid artery atherosclerosis measured.

"The objective of this recently published research was to evaluate whether an individual's socioeconomic struggles in childhood alter his or her DNA methylation, a process that determines which genes are expressed in different cells or tissues," Dr. Eaton explains. "Both histones and methylation are processes that regulate gene expression and determine whether a cell is a muscle cell, brain cell or fat cell. The pattern of methylation has been shown to be associated with the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and becoming obese.

"Epigenetics appears to play a central role in fetal development, and we know that early childhood is a sensitive period during which external environmental stimuli can have considerable influence on the establishment of epigenetic patterning," he says, adding that this appears to be particularly true for women.

In the Memorial study, three genes were found to have associations with both socioeconomic disadvantage and obesity in women and one gene in men. A review of the medical literature showed that 70 percent of studies evaluating women show a connection between childhood disadvantage and obesity in adulthood, compared with only 27 percent of studies evaluating men.

"There has been some research that examined this alteration through changes in white blood cells, but we analyzed both white blood cells and fat tissue samples taken from study participants as we were interested in obesity," Dr. Eaton notes. "We found only associations in the fat tissue."

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In identifying the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage, a topic Dr. Eaton says will be pursued through further research, the team hopes to spark the creation of interventions to change the eventual outcomes.

The Center for Primary Care and Prevention, a collaboration between Memorial and Brown University, is dedicated to promoting research, knowledge enrichment and improving practice in primary care and prevention. Its research aims to help providers in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of various illnesses and their risk factors.

In addition to his research, Dr. Eaton sees patients in Memorial's Family Care Clinic. For an appointment with him, call (401) 729-2769.

Women & Infants Breast Health Center earns accreditation from National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers

The Breast Health Center at Women & Infants has again received three-year, full accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.

According to Drs. Robert Legare and Jennifer Gass, co-directors of the Breast Health Center, best practice designation was received for eight standards including our Women's Intimacy and Sexual Health (WISH) Center and our Cancer Genetics and Prevention Program. The reviewer also noted that Women & Infants' multidisciplinary tumor board was "one of the best conferences that I have ever attended." Clinical trial accrual was described as "outstanding."



Kent adds to community discussion on opioid crisis

On Thursday, December 1, more than 75 people joined Kent Hospital and the East Greenwich Drug Program for an opioid forum at the Westminster Unitarian Church in East Greenwich.



This free forum was open to the community to address the growing concerns of opioid use throughout Kent County and the nation. An array of speakers and panelists from Rhode Island shared their knowledge on this freighting epidemic. Kent's own Ehsun Mirza, MD, critical care specialist, was the moderator. Michael J. Dacey Jr., MD, president and chief operating officer, and Christopher P. Zabbo, DO, emergency medicine physician, were opioid forum speakers.

The panel consisted of the following experts:

- Lisa Marzilli, PharmD, adjunct professor, University of Rhode Island, and nationally recognized speaker.
- Kelly Matson, PharmD, member, Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group, professor, University of Rhode Island School of Pharmacy.
- Michelle McKenzie, MPH, senior projector director, Miriam Hospital, director of Preventing Overdose and Naloxone Intervention.
- Reinhard Straub, MSW, clinical and business liaison, American Addiction Centers.
- The Honorable Brian P. Stern, superior court justice, chief of staff for former Rhode Island Gov. Donald Carcieri.
- Thomas Raimondo, MD, pulmonary disease specialist, intensive care unit, Kent.
- Special thanks to event coordinator Robert L. Houghtaling, MEd, director, East Greenwich Drug Program, CEO, Academy Foundation.



The Providence Center partners with Thundermist for Health Home program

Two weeks ago, The Providence Center (TPC) opened an Integrated Health Home program at Thundermist Health Center's South County health center in Wakefield. The program is focused on adults enrolled in Medicaid and dealing with serious and persistent mental illness.

The Health Home model is a team-based clinical approach that provides coordination of services and a specialized treatment plan based on a client's individual needs.

TPC's Thundermist Health Home team includes:

- Therapists.
- Nurses.
- Psychiatrists and/or nurse practitioners.
- Case managers.
- Recovery specialists.
- Peer mentors.



The location at Thundermist allows Health Home clients to easily access other important treatment options like primary care and dental services.

"Working side by side with the providers here is giving us the ability to give our clients the best multi-disciplinary care possible," said program Manager Katie Richards. "We look forward to continued growth and greatly appreciate the warm welcome and support from Thundermist." This is TPC's second partnership with Thundermist this year. Anchor Recovery Center provides meetings and services at their location in West Warwick. There may be other partnerships to come. For more information on the program, please contact Richards at KRichards2@provctr.org.

CNE Wellness announces results of 'Nutrition Challenge'

The results of the 2016 Flex for Life Fall Nutrition Challenge are in! Congratulations to team "Lettuce Turnip The Beet" who are the winners! The goal of this team challenge was to reinforce healthy eating with a fun, friendly competition. The goal for each member of the team was to include three vegetables and two fruit servings to each day's meal plan. Our CNE wellness experts say eating a colorful variety of vegetables and fruits every day is a delicious recipe for better health and well-being. From juicy blueberries and tomatoes, to savory Brussels sprouts and pumpkins, putting produce first can reduce your risk of obesity, heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, and hypertension while increasing energy.

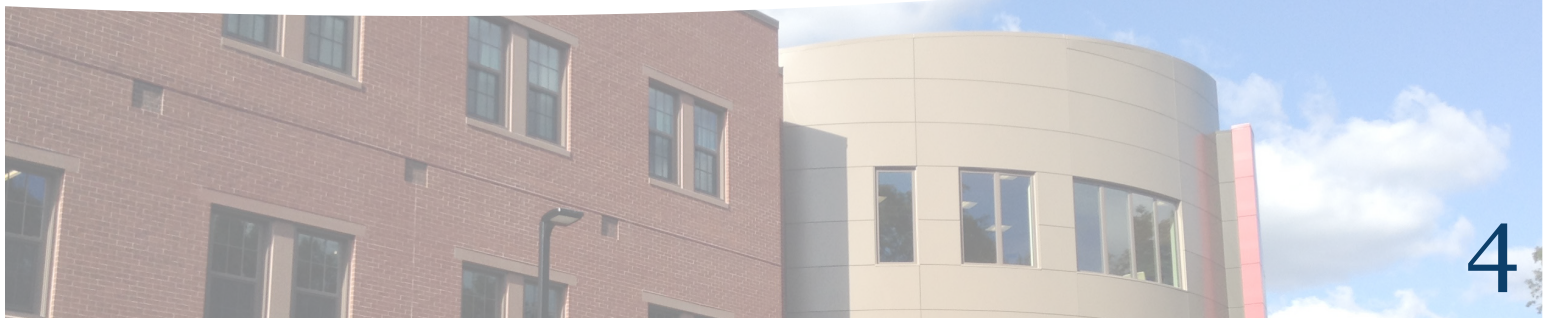
From Team Captain, Eric Tirrell:

"Laughter, teamwork, and motivation were the primary driving forces which allowed us to succeed in the Care New England Colorful Choices challenge. It is often a struggle to be fully mindful of the food choices we make with our busy lives, but through a combined effort this was achievable. As team captain, it was my responsibility to encourage the use of healthier food options in promoting an overall healthier lifestyle. Little did I know, my efforts extended beyond my direct reach. Dr. Audrey Tyrka and Polly Gobin, both mothers, incorporated these habits at home with their families on a routine basis. Nicole Desrochers, an inspiring nurse, and Elizabeth Shackelford, a current nurse at Butler Hospital, utilized the tips and suggestions to help enable their patients to follow a similar path. For me, it was a privilege to facilitate this new beginning and watch it unfold to others. Lastly, I would like to thank the other teams across Care New England who participated and recognize their hard work and efforts toward the same goal of making healthy choices. And in this sense, we are all winners."



Pictured from left to right: Nicole Desrochers, Dr. Audrey Tyrka, Eric Tirrell (team captain), Polly Gobin, and Elizabeth Shackelford.


Each member of the team received four Showcase movie tickets! If you would like more information about incorporating healthy foods into your diet you can contact Jennifer Fine, on-site health coach at jfine@provanthealth.com, or call and make an appointment with a registered dietitian at the CNE Wellness Center to meet at (401) 732-3066.



Community health needs assessment focuses on statewide health priorities

The statewide community health needs assessment, conducted by the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) and Care New England along with other participating hospitals, has revealed three priority areas for Rhode Island's health care system to address. As reported last week, HARI and its hospital members undertook a coordinated statewide effort and worked alongside the Rhode Island Department of Health and local community partners to collect health data, gather feedback on regional and local health needs, and develop coordinated plans to address priority health needs across the state. The 2016 assessment follows research conducted in 2013 that identified mental health and substance abuse, heart disease and diabetes as priorities at that time.



Visit http://hari.org/uploads/track_dec16.pdf to read more of this month's issue of HARI's *Tracking Trends* to learn more about the process and the work ahead. 



Care New England

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
of Rhode Island