metropolitan familyhealth network

Healthwise

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www.MetropolitanFHN.com

A Message from the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

We hope you are enjoying this summer. Although we must still be vigilant in our battle against COVID-19 – wearing comfortable, well-fitting masks for close indoor and outdoor situations, making sure everyone in our household is fully vaccinated, washing hands frequently, staying home when sick – we seem to be able to get together and enjoy one another more.

National Health Center Week is August 7 – 13! This annual celebration shines a light on the important roles community health centers like Metropolitan Family Health Network play in providing top-quality, compassionate preventative and primary care for the people of our community.

We hope you will join us for our special National Health Center Week event on Tuesday, August 9th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at our 935 Garfield Avenue center. COVID-19 has left many of our neighbors in need. So, on that day, we will hold a Food Drive and a Clothing Drive. Many of our community partners will join us, and there will be giveaways and more.

We are very proud to play a vital role in making lives healthier and better. We applaud all our providers, staff and partners, as well as the children, women, and men we are honored to serve.

Best Regards,

Joan Dublin

Joan Dublin, RN, MPA, ACHE
President & Chief Executive Officer

Know How to Safely Enjoy Long Summer Days

Sunlight helps the body naturally produce vitamin D for strong bones, but any more than 15 minutes of unprotected sun exposure more than twice a week can cause skin cancer. Approximately 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer each day in the United States. Gardening, team sports, working in construction trades, sunbathing, and other outdoor activities increase risk. Even a trip to the store can lead to sun damage. Long- and short-term sun exposure causes premature aging and wrinkles long before cancer develops.

Enjoy sunshine safely this summer by following these tips:

Apply a broad-spectrum, SPF 30 sunscreen. Slather it on 15 minutes before going outside. It blocks both UVA and UVB rays. Zinc oxide or titanium oxide are budget-friendly, mineral sunscreens. Put sunscreen on every exposed body part, starting with your face, ears, and hands. Reapply every two hours and after swimming and sweating – even if the sunscreen is sweat-proof and water resistant.

Cover up the kids too. Their skin burns more easily. Keep babies younger than six months old out of direct sunlight.

Dress for comfort and safety. A wide-brimmed hat keeps the head cool and protects the scalp, face and neck. Sunglasses with UVA/UVB protection shield the eyes, which lowers risk of retina damage. Long sleeve and loose clothing in natural fabrics like cotton provides coverage and allows the skin to breathe.

Take a time out. The sun's rays are more intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Limit your sun exposure during these hours to minimize sunburn risk.

Check yourself. Anyone can get skin cancer, including those with brown and black skin. On people of color, symptoms tend to show up on lower legs, palms, bottoms of feet, groin, and on toes or fingernails. Examine your skin from head to toe once a month. Look for dark brown, purple, gray or black spots or bumps; moles with abnormal color, size or shape; sores that won't heal; rough or dry patches; and dark lines underneath or around nails.

If you spot something, say something. Schedule an appointment with your MFHN provider if you spot a skin growth or any changes to existing moles. Call 201-478-5800.

July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

People of color have long demonstrated resiliency and courage in fighting oppression and reducing inequities. Strengthening the collective voices of these cultures helps reduce disparities in health care, especially mental health care.

While 43% of American adults with a mental illness receive treatment or counseling, 31% of Blacks and Hispanics and 22% percent of Asians received services, compared to 48% of whites.

Barriers to treatment include accessibility issues, stigma, and lack of cultural understanding from providers. This results in under-diagnosis and misdiagnosis, chronic stress, lower life expectancy, and preventable death.

Young minority individuals are at an even deeper disadvantage in receiving treatment or counseling. Compared with white youth, minority teens are more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system rather than to specialty care. In 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Black and Asian young people 15 to 24 years of age, and Hispanics 15 to 34 years of age. Black high school girls were 60% more likely to attempt suicide compared to non-Hispanic white females of the same age. Suicide attempts for Hispanic female high school students were 30% higher than for non-Hispanic white girls.

Minority men are also disproportionately affected. Hispanic men are 50% less likely to receive mental health treatment compared to non-Hispanic whites. The death rate for Hispanic and Black men was four times the rate for Hispanic and Black women in 2018.

Minority Mental Health Awareness Month was created in 2008 to bring awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face in regard to mental health conditions like anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression, eating disorders, dissociative disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These illnesses affect how a person thinks, feels, and behaves, and deeply impact families, jobs, social connections, and education.

The MFHN Adult Care and Integrated Behavioral Health Care professionals can help Hudson County residents manage the stress of mental, behavioral or emotional disorders. MFHN accepts all patients, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or ability to pay. Our providers effectively address the needs of people with diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and values.

If you or a loved one is struggling with a mental health condition, call 201-478-5800 to schedule an appointment.

August is National Breastfeeding Month

Raising Healthy Children with Breast Milk

Breastfeeding helps keep babies healthy by protecting against obesity, Type 1 diabetes, allergies, asthma, diarrhea, vomiting, cancer, severe respiratory and ear infections, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

For mothers, breastfeeding decreases risk of Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and breast and ovarian cancers. Breastfeeding moms return to their pre-pregnancy weight sooner and may pause menstruation for up to a year.

Only one in four babies is exclusively breastfed by the time they are six months old. Some women are uncomfortable with breastfeeding, while others have physical problems that prevent them from breastfeeding. Common breastfeeding problems include sore nipples, low milk supply, plugged milk ducts, engorgement (tender, full and hard breasts), fungal infection, and exhaustion.

Human breast milk adapts to a baby's growth rate, and contains proteins, fatty acids, and antibodies that fight infections. It provides the nutrition and protection babies need to develop a strong immune system. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for about the first six months. Mothers should continue breastfeeding and introduce appropriate other foods for one year or longer.

Babies should be breastfed often in the early weeks. The amount of milk babies need changes as they grow, and mothers' bodies will adjust.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Breastfeeding 101" web page includes educational tools such as how to hold the baby during feedings, getting a good latch, and more: https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/breastfeeding-101.

If you are pregnant or recently gave birth, the MFHN OB/GYN providers can offer guidance and referrals for breastfeeding. Call 201-478-5800.

Get Kids Back-to-School Ready with Immunizations

The past two years have taught us to appreciate and protect family and friends by making health a priority. Nobody wants to keep living with face masks, social distancing, severe illness and hospitalizations. There have been more than 1 million deaths, and around 82 million infections in the United States due to COVID-19.

Americans are fortunate to have some of the world's top scientists who developed vaccines that help prevent unneeded suffering from many diseases. MFHN medical professionals follow guidance and recommendations from state and federal agencies that have wiped out diseases. Through the decades, viruses – like polio, which at one time disabled more than 35,000 individuals each year – have been eradicated. Polio was the most feared virus in children in the 1950s because it could lead to permanent paralysis and death.

Vaccines have saved the lives of children from polio, as well as measles, chicken pox, influenza, diphtheria, HPV, mumps, and a host of other viruses that resulted in permanent disability or death. We've come a long way with immunizations. Most daycares and schools require that children are up-to-date with their immunizations.

As we have learned, viruses are more easily spread in crowded areas like buses and trains, shopping centers, convenience stores, theaters, churches, and schools – all places where children and adults frequently go. Children who are vaccinated are less likely to be infected by a sick classmate, and thereby help stop viruses from spreading. That's called herd immunity. The more children vaccinated, the stronger we are as a community.

As children prepare to go back to school, ask your MFHN pediatrician about your children's vaccination schedule. We're here to listen and provide answers to your health questions.

Anyone who is nervous about having their children vaccinated should speak with our pediatricians. The MFHN Pediatrics Department provides all the care children need to grow healthy and strong. Call 201-478-5800 now to schedule back-to-school checkups. Sign in to the Patient Portal and download the healow app on our website to check your child's vaccination records.

Best Wishes to Our Physicians on Their New Appointments

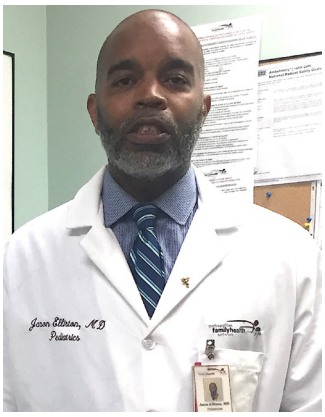
Dr. Ralph Pellecchia, M.D., Chief Medical Officer

Throughout his career, making certain that women receive the care and treatment they need and deserve has been Dr. Pellecchia's top professional priority. That is one of the reasons his patients are so devoted to him. Now making sure that women, men, and children get the best care possible is precisely why he will be successful in his new post as Chief Medical Officer.

Dr. Pellecchia holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from State University of New York-Binghamton, and a medical degree from Albany Medical College, where he was presented with the Kenneth M. Archibald Prize for Outstanding Achievement. He completed his residency at University of Medicine and Dentistry-New Jersey Medical School, and received the Residents Research Award while there.

After completing his residency, Dr. Pellecchia established a private practice. In 2000, he came to Jersey City Medical Center and served as New Margaret Hague Faculty Staff Attending Physician. In 2002, he was named Director of Women's Health Services for the Family Health Center of Jersey City Medical Center, and in 2006, Dr. Pellecchia became the Clinical Director of Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN) here at Metropolitan Family Health Network. In 2019, he was named Clinical Chief of MFHN's Department of OB/GYN.

Dr. Jason T. Elliston, M.D., Deputy Chief Medical Officer



Dr. Elliston has provided care for MFHN's youngest patients since September 2006. In 2019 he was named Clinical Chief of MFHN's Dept. of Pediatrics. "It is my privilege to serve the children of my community," he states. He brings that same regard for patients of all ages to his new role as Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

Dr. Elliston earned a Bachelor's degree at Johns Hopkins University, and medical degree from University of Medicine and Dentistry New Jersey-New Jersey Medical School, where he served his residency. He also completed a fellowship in Allergy and Immunology at UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School's Division of Allergy, Asthma, Immunology and Rheumatology.

He was Team Physician for Jersey City Athletics, School Physician for Jersey City Public Schools, Assistant Medical Director for Successful Encounters, Pediatric House Physician at Holy Name Hospital, and Attending Physician/Director of Pediatric Grants at Jersey City Family Health Center.

Dr. Elliston is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, and American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. His community work includes the Maintenance Asthma Therapy for Urban Pediatric Asthma Population outreach project. Fluent in English and Spanish, he also serves as a mentor and motivational speaker.

SAVE THE DATE!
2022 National Health Center Week Celebration

Join Us Tuesday, August 9th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
At our 935 Garfield Avenue Center (right by the Garfield Avenue Light Rail Station)

Our very special event will include:

- FREE bags of food
- FREE gently used clothing and shoes for men, women, and children
- Educational materials on health and wellness
- Information from our partnering health care organizations
- Giveaways

Food, clothing, and giveaways will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. Limit one bag of food per family. Social distancing and masks are required. Please enter from Union Street.

Make Sure Your Kids Have Healthy Smiles – Join MFHN's 'A Healthier Me = Fruits & Veggies for FREE!'

Our Dental and Pediatrics Teams will help make sure 6 to 11 year-olds have good oral health care and good nutrition with **FREE** fresh fruits and vegetables. Call 201-478-5875 and schedule an appointment to enroll today!

It's Back to School Time!

Now's the time to make sure your children have all their vaccinations – including COVID-19! Schedule their back-to-school physicals and shots now: phone 201-478-5800.

Kids' Corner:
A Back-to-School List for Health and Wellness

By now, you may have started getting ready to go back to school. Maybe you checked on your clothes, sneakers, backpack, pencils and pens, crayons, and notebooks.

Going into the next grade is exciting! You will likely see many of your old friends, and new friends too.

Here is what you can do for the new school year:

Go through your closet and drawers. Make three piles: one with clothes that fit, one with clothes that don't fit, and one with clothes that fit but you no longer wear. Put the stuff you outgrew or don't like into a bag for donations.

Practice starting your school day. When you are prepared, you won't be as nervous about going back to school. Pick a few days to set your alarm, wake up, brush your teeth, comb your hair, get dressed, and check your backpack.

Don't share drinks, combs, hats, or lip balm. They can all spread germs that may make you sick. If someone wants a sip of your drink, pour some into a cup instead.

Respect personal space. Give your classmates at least an arm's length distance in between you.

Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you can't find one, use the inside of your elbow.

Wash your hands often, especially before eating, and after playing and using the bathroom.

Remember the Golden Rule. Be kind and respectful. Treat others as you would like them to treat you.