metropolitan
familyhealth
network
Healthwise
September/October 2026
www.MetropolitanFHN.com

A Message from the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

This September marks Metropolitan Family Health Network's 20th Anniversary! It is a privilege – our great honor – to have provided our community with compassionate, quality care for the past two decades.

On Thursday, October 15, 2026, we will celebrate this anniversary with a gala fundraising event to mark this milestone and to thank those who have embraced our mission and supported our efforts. We want to extend a special thanks to our patients, providers and staff, without whom we could not exist.

As we begin our 21st year, we urge everyone for whom we care to keep up-to-date on their preventive health care – physical exams, screenings and vaccinations – as well as their dental care.

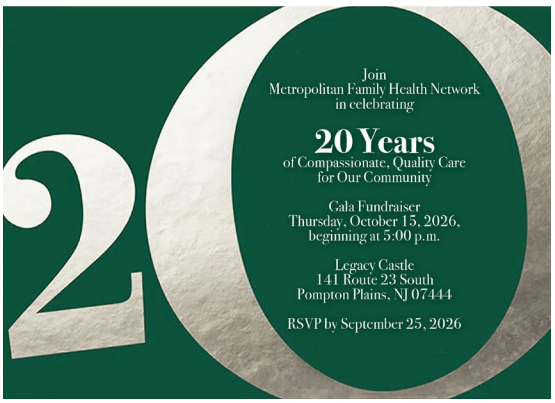
We look forward to continuing to serve the people of Hudson County, New Jersey and are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all.

Sincere thanks and best wishes!

Sincerely,

Joan Dublin

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



Go to MetropolitanFHN.com/gala for full details.

Jersey City Major James Solomon Visits Metropolitan Family Health Network

On Wednesday afternoon, August 12, 2026, MFHN President and CEO Joan Dublin, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jason Elliston, Board Chair Darrell Laval and Trustee Rochelle Myers-Hoffman welcomed Mayor James Solomon to MFHN. The MFHN team met with the Mayor to acquaint him with the services we provide and then toured our Garfield Avenue center.

MFHN Celebrates National Health Center Week

Although this year's festivities were somewhat scaled down from those of the past, MFHN proudly welcomed several of our community partners and Jersey City Council President Denise Ridley and Councilperson-At-Large Rolando R. Lavarro, Jr. and National Association of Community Health Centers Chief Education Officer Gina L. Capra, MPA, and New Jersey Senator Angela McKnight on Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

Our neighbors from the community enjoyed music, snacks, bags of food, clothing and shoes, and giveaways as well as health screenings.

Defy Aging Stereotypes

Typically, aging individuals are portrayed as those with aching joints, frailty, loneliness, memory loss, and an inability or unwillingness to adapt to change. However, although health issues like arthritis or dementia are more common in people over age 55, myths about growing older are challenged every day.

September is Healthy Aging Month. Here are a few "to-dos" to enjoy optimal health and wellness.

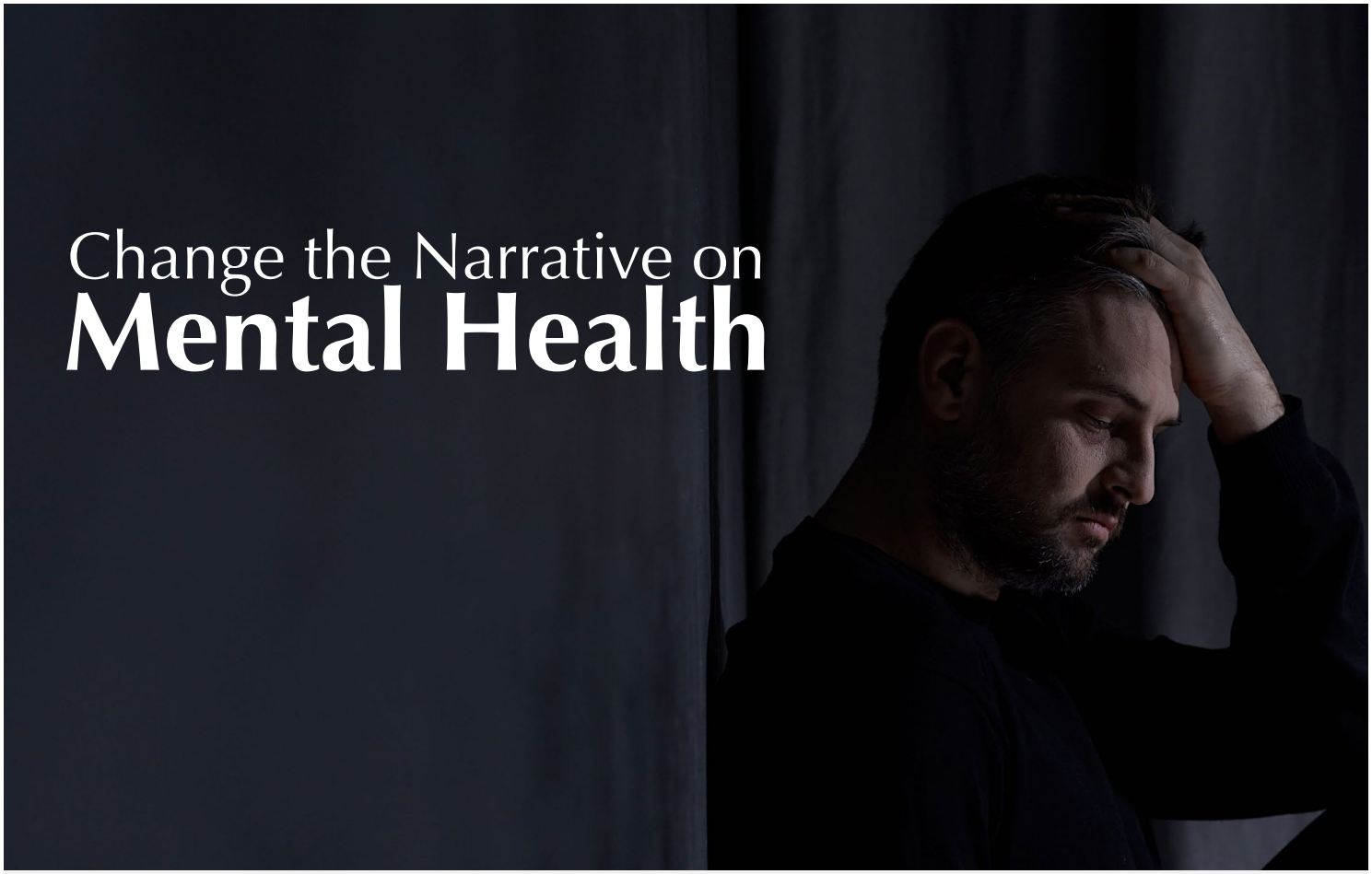
Embrace your comfort zone. Identify and prioritize personal goals and establish a flexible daily routine. Maintaining a balance is a must. Manage time wisely by learning how to politely turn down invitations, organize social gatherings, and devote time and energy to your most meaningful commitments and tasks first.

Cultivate friendships. Many older adults suffer from isolation and depression. An active social life improves mental health, protects brain function, and lowers the risk of physical illness. Stay connected by joining social groups like book/library clubs, hobby workshops, church and civic groups, video chats, helping young people, and skill-building activities.

Move Your Way®. The National Council on Aging established guidelines for seniors to strengthen muscles and lower fall risks. Workouts can be approached in just 10-minute intervals, including walking, dancing, cleaning, and gardening. Physical activity helps to keep up with grandchildren, carry groceries, maintain independent living, boost your mood, reduce aches and pains, and lower disease risk. Check with your provider before starting a new exercise plan.

Nurture nutrition. Focus on nutrient-dense foods packed with protein for muscle and strength, fiber for digestion and heart health, and calcium for bone density. Drink enough water to prevent dehydration. Eat smaller, more frequent meals if your appetite is low. Consult our nutritionist for help with weight loss/maintenance, menu planning, and food prep.

Keep medical appointments. Schedule your annual physical exam, bloodwork, hearing test, and eye exam with screenings for cataracts, glaucoma, and vision changes as well as semiannual dental checkups and teeth cleanings. Review your immunization record and ask about boosters for pneumonia, shingles, and flu. Continue with cancer screenings including your colonoscopy, Pap/mammogram or prostate tests, and more.



Change the Narrative on **Mental Health**

"Toughen up." "Hide your weakness." "Put on a brave face." These phrases are often used to inspire people to get through a minor setback to a major crisis. We think of great leaders who project strength by showing calm to reduce panic and project control. But did you know Abraham Lincoln and James Madison struggled with depression and Woodrow Wilson suffered from anxiety?

From presidents to everyday citizens, hiding emotional pain and mental turmoil may prolong suffering and mask deeper issues. Loved ones may say they never saw trouble coming. Their friend, family member, classmate, or co-worker did not show signs of distress or suicide risk.

The silence and stigma surrounding mental health struggles may prevent someone from seeking treatment. Taking one's life is often called a permanent solution to temporary problems. Those who choose suicide may feel that this action is their way to take control in the face of unbearable suffering. Those most at risk include men (especially older white men), LBGT youth, and veterans. Factors may include severe chronic illness, recent personal loss, financial distress, or abuse/trauma.

September is Suicide Prevention Month. Here are ways to support emotional wellbeing:

Be the change. Support open and honest dialogue to help society move away from the silence and stigma associated with mental health struggles.

Recognize the silent symptoms. Not everyone exhibits rage, mood swings, sleeplessness, and hopelessness, or discusses taking their life or wanting to disappear. Other signs may include giving away belongings, lack of personal hygiene, isolation from friends and family, and partaking in risky behavior like alcohol/drug abuse and reckless driving.

Identify buffers. Social connections such as family, community, and faith can help reduce suicide risk. Encourage loved ones to stay connected in ways that uplift and promote a purpose for living.

Seek professional help. Professional counseling goes a long way in helping learn coping skills, build strong social connections, solve problems, and deescalate. Our licensed counselors help people get and stay emotionally healthy in a supportive, caring environment, built with trust and open communication. Call 201-478-5848 to schedule an in-person or Telehealth appointment. All information provided is confidential and private, as per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

If you or someone you know are struggling with thoughts of suicide or are going through a crisis, call 9-8-8.

Solving the **Prostate Cancer** Puzzle

The size of a walnut in a young man or a golf ball in a middle-aged man, the prostate gland sits under the bladder and in front of the rectum. It supplies the fluids needed for sperm to survive after they leave the testes.

An estimated 333,830 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, and the disease disproportionately affects Black men.

Most prostate cancers grow slowly and remain dormant for a lifetime. Others turn into fast-moving killers. More than 80% of prostate cancers are detected when the cancer is in or near the prostate.

Early prostate cancer has no symptoms. When they do appear, symptoms may include frequent urination, weak/interrupted urine flow, burning or pain with urination, blood in urine or semen painful ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, numbness or weakness in legs and feet, loss of bowel and/or bladder control, and pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs.

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Here are ways to protect your prostate:

Know Your Risk. When caught early, prostate cancer is 99% curable. Start with a digital rectal exam. Ask your provider about getting a blood test for prostate cancer, starting between ages 40 to 50 for those with family history of prostate, ovarian, breast, endometrial, colon, or pancreatic cancers.

Discuss Treatment. It may include close monitoring in low-risk cases or radiation therapy and surgery in more aggressive cases.

Reimagine Sex. It will no longer be spontaneous after prostate cancer. Many find challenges maintaining an erection and experience "dry" orgasms. Ask your provider about medication to increase blood flow to the penis during sexual stimulation. Explore other avenues of touch and intimacy with your partner.

Embrace Support. Emotional turmoil and pride over how prostate cancer will affect sexual function and bathroom habits often prevents men from sharing their diagnosis. Making informed decisions with one's doctors and partner can ease fears about treatment and recovery. Support groups can help men as well as their partners. Our licensed counselors can help. Call 201-478-5848 to schedule an appointment.

No Cavities Does Not Mean All Clear

Just because you do not show symptoms of a cavity does not mean you should skip a trip to the dentist. Trouble lurking in your mouth may include gum disease, enamel wear, and hidden issues. Finding and addressing problems early may lead to better outcomes.

October is National Dental Hygiene Month. Here are our suggestions for protecting your smile:

Brush and floss teeth regularly. Brush at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, and don't forget your tongue. Floss once daily to remove food between teeth and gums. Falling behind on oral hygiene can lead to cavities, gum disease, and tooth loss. Good oral hygiene helps remove plaque, the clear and sticky layer of bacteria on teeth. Once plaque hardens into tartar, it can only be removed by a professional dental cleaning.

Keep regular dental appointments. Your oral health can change quickly. Don't wait until you have swollen gums, blood during brushing, sensitivity to hot or cold drinks, or a toothache. Schedule twice-a-year dental exams and cleanings.

Eat healthfully. Foods that are good for your teeth contain calcium, folic acid, vitamins A, C, D, and K, fiber, and more. They stimulate saliva production, act as natural abrasives to scrub your teeth, and provide the nutrients for a healthy mouth. Eat a balanced diet. Foods that are especially good for teeth include carrots, celery, nuts, leafy greens, fatty fish, and cheese and yogurt.

Be mindful of acidics. Citrus fruits, fizzy drinks, jams and jellies, sour candies, tomato sauce, vinegar, and red wine are highly acidic, and can cause tooth decay, sensitivity, and discoloration. Drink water to rinse your mouth after eating acidic foods. Use a straw to limit acidic beverages' contact with teeth. Wait at least a half hour before brushing to give acidic-softened tooth enamel a chance to harden.

Don't chew ice or use your teeth as a tool. These actions put extreme stress on teeth. The thermal shock from chewing ice may create micro cracks in teeth or damage fillings and crowns. Opening a package, tearing a tag, or holding a metal object with your teeth may cause chips, cracks, jaw strain, and injury to lips and gums.

Your oral health is a window to your overall health. Protect your smile with dental care at MFHN. Your exam includes an oral cancer screening.

Youth Sports: Protecting Bones and Joints

Youth is associated with energy and strong bodies. Bones stop growing in the teen years, and peak bone strength occurs by age 30. Younger bodies are ideal for competitive sports because their bones have remarkable healing potential from fractures. However, a child's developing skeletal system can be impacted dramatically by intensive sports training. Sports injuries affect growing bone and soft tissues, and could result in lifelong damage, according to the National Library of Medicine.

Adolescents building strength and flexibility are vulnerable to injuries. These include ankle sprains, jammed fingers, stress fractures, shin splints, shoulder, elbow, and knee injuries, and more.

October is Bone and Joint Health Awareness Month. Here are a few tips to help young athletes protect their musculoskeletal system:

Schedule a pediatric exam as your child prepares for football, baseball, basketball, track, gymnastics, or other sports.

Make sure they stretch before any physical activity to help loosen muscles and tendons and reduce risk of growth injury.

Be ready for common injuries that may include pain, swelling, bruising, and limited range of motion. Basic treatment recommendations are rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Your school district's athletic trainer can also make recommendations.

Kids need rest. Overuse injuries represent about 50% of all pediatric sports injuries. Rest reduces recovery time, improves performance, and decreases injury risk. Delay specializing in one sport as long as possible. Take three months off from your sport each year. Limit weekly training hours by age (Example: maximum of 10 hours a week in one sport for a 10-year-old), according to the National Athletic Trainers' Association).

Encourage healthful eating. Being overweight is hard on joints. Good nutrition helps young people perform well and recover quickly. Focus on lean proteins, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables. Limit sugary snacks, deep fried/battered food, and beverages. Stay hydrated with water.

Don't ignore kids' persistent pain. Pain from growth, injury, and overuse is normal. However, if the pain increases, includes a lump or swelling, or interferes with daily activities, it should be assessed by your provider.

Kids' Corner: Breathe Deeply

Your lungs are like two balloons inside your chest. They let in fresh air when you breathe in through your nose and then push out used air when you breathe out. This gives your body the oxygen it needs to grow big and strong.

When you breathe in fresh air, it slides down your windpipe and enters your lungs' "bronchi" or branches. Then your blood delivers the fresh air throughout your body. When you breathe out, your body keeps the oxygen it needs and removes a waste gas called carbon dioxide.

October is Healthy Lung Month. Here are tips to protect your lungs:

Go outside. Being outdoors and breathing fresh air is good for your lungs.

Make sure you have play time. You need to move at least an hour a day to keep your body healthy. Running, jumping, bicycling, and other activities help move oxygen into your muscles and improve how well your lungs work.

Manage asthma. If you have asthma, make sure you have the right inhaler and emergency plan, and make sure your school knows about it.

Get to know our pediatricians. They want to know that you are growing up strong. They will check your height and weight as well as your heart, lungs, and overall health.