

THE GOOD LIVING MAGAZINE FROM MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

MONMOUTH

health & life

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016 | \$3.95
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WELCOME LETTER

OUR OBJECTIVE: TO KEEP YOU HEALTHY

I HOPE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ENJOYED A wonderful holiday season, and that as the clock counted down to the New Year, you felt good about the past year and excited about what is ahead.

As we move further into 2016, I am especially looking forward to the work we will do to care for our patients, our communities and each other in new and inventive ways. Here at Monmouth Medical Center, we are proud to support our system's vision and the belief that, by integrating with our communities to improve their populations' quality of life, we can make a positive and lasting impact on the health of New Jersey.

At Barnabas Health, we believe that "life is better healthy." And we want to help you improve your health throughout this year—and beyond.

An important way Monmouth Medical Center helps to keep you healthy is by offering hundreds of health education events to our community. In fact, spotlighted in this issue of *Monmouth Health & Life* is our inaugural WEforum, a daylong conference designed to provide an opportunity for conversation, interaction and education with the goal of promoting health for all by targeting women. The event, which will be held on April 20th from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Ocean Place Resort & Spa in Long Branch, will feature a host of workshops led by experts from medical and health-related disciplines. Make sure to visit barnabashealth.org/Monmouth-Medical-Center/Events to learn about all of the events, groups, classes and programs we offer each month aimed at helping you develop strategies for improving your health.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2016, Monmouth Medical Center wishes you good health and happiness.

Sincerely,



FRANK J. VOZOS, M.D., FACS
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER,
THE UNTERBERG CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
AND MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER,
SOUTHERN CAMPUS

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OUR WEBSITE AT BARNABASHEALTH.ORG/MONMOUTH-MEDICAL-CENTER.



Monmouth Medical Center
Barnabas Health

presents



Women's Health & Wellness Conference

April 20, 2016

To purchase tickets or for more information:
WEforumGroup.org

**When you educate a woman, she empowers her family,
and together WE can evolve a community.**

**LECTURE TOPICS
INCLUDE:**

- Meditation and the Power of Positive Thinking
- Your Brain on Sugar: The Bitter Truth
- Best Non-surgical Options for Looking Youthful
- Caring for Our Aging Parents
- It's Not You. It's Your Hormones!
- Reactivation Energy Healing
- How to Fix Your Leaky Gut
- Inflammation Testing to Reduce Cardiology Risk
- Food Politics, Big Business and many more topics...

**topics subject to change*

**VENDOR FAIR
FEATURING:**

- Local medical practices, businesses & health care facilities in fitness, food, cosmetics and wellness fields
- Products for mind, body and soul
- Free giveaways & raffles

PROCEEDS:

- Proceeds will support free educational health and wellness programs and services developed by Monmouth Medical Center to make vital health care information accessible to the entire community.

ADMISSION:

- \$99 Early Bird Special (by March 15th)
- \$125 Regular Admission
- Visit WEforum.org for tickets
- Nursing Contact hours to be awarded. See notation*

**ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION:**

- Sponsorship and vendor opportunities call Davina Feingold at 732-923-7521 or by email at dfeingold@barnabashealth.org.

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New Forum Aims to Promote Health for All by Targeting Women

Lisa Becker, a WEforum Committee Member, was afflicted with a chronic disease at the tender age of 13. Now, an inspiring role model, she speaks across the country helping others affected by Crohn's disease.

More than 100 Monmouth County women volunteers are making a deep impact by raising well-deserved dollars to change the health care paradigm and help their community become healthier.

The result, a year in the making, is a partnership with Monmouth Medical Center announcing it's inaugural WEforum Women's Health and Wellness Conference on April 20th. The daylong event will feature 30 workshops for women on a gamut of health and wellness issues by renowned medical experts in various specialties.

WEforum targets women because **"when you educate a woman, she empowers her family, and together WE can evolve a community,"** the group says in its motto.

"Women spend more health care dollars than men do, they suffer from several chronic illnesses at staggering rates higher than men do, and most importantly, they are the primary decision makers as it relates to health care for their entire family," says Carolyn C. DeSena, WEforum's Chair and Board Member of the Monmouth Medical Center Foundation. "It's thrilling to bring this inspiring group of speakers together to let women know how they can achieve their best health and that there is an incredible community of experts eager to support them every step of the way."

Speakers include doctors from Monmouth Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson, Mount Sinai and Princeton University to name a few. Many specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, female cardiology, alternative health practices, neurology, chiropractics, nutrition and psychology. All share a passion for preventative approaches to health and wellness.

"This is an all-star team of speakers" says Abby Kelly, WEforum's Director of Program Development. "The chosen topics are most pertinent to our current health care concerns and have the potential to make the largest impact," she adds. "There is something in this conference for women in all stages of life."

Dr. Nidhi Kumar of Robert Wood Johnson, University Medical Center will discuss her holistic approach to patient care in the cardiology practice she shares with her father, which includes counseling patients on the power of meditation and positive thinking.

"The road to well-being does not end at the physical body," Dr. Kumar says. "Many of us are perfectly 'healthy' but feel depleted. This is because we are severely malnourished from the mental and spiritual standpoint."

80%

The percentage of health care decisions in households that are made by women.

*Source: Beckers Hospital Review
April, 2015.*

Dr. James Proodian, a chiropractic physician and health educator, will address "the cost of chronic illness" in his workshop. "The cost is not only quantified in terms of its financial impact, but most importantly, the cost of lives," Dr. Proodian says. "The message is important for not only bringing the subject matter front and center, but using education in a way to motivate and inspire audience members to take action in their lives and communities."

**To purchase your tickets or for more info:
visit WEforumGroup.org or
call Davina Feingold at 732.923.7521**

we
FORUM
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INGOODHEALTH

MEDICINE + TECHNOLOGY + PATIENT CARE AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER



Patient Marie McHose (standing) is shown with, from left, Anthony Squillaro, M.D., Deb LaRusso and Frank J. Borao, M.D. She's grateful for her treatment and feels better than she has in years.

Fixing a dangerous **Hiatal Hernia**

USING MINIMALLY INVASIVE TECHNIQUES, TWO TOP SURGEONS COLLABORATE— WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS.

MARIE MCHOSE OF MONROE TOWNSHIP, NOW 75, STARTED feeling the effects of a hiatal hernia about a decade ago. She felt pressure and pain in her chest, and a computed tomography (CT) scan in 2006 revealed the problem. A hiatal hernia is common, but in some instances, as with Mrs. McHose, it can progress to a rarer and more dangerous condition known as a paraesophageal hernia. When hers did so, she needed surgery to repair the potentially fatal disorder. Fortunately for her, minimally invasive techniques have rendered this once difficult surgery much easier for older patients, who make up most of the cases, to weather successfully.

In a hiatal hernia, the stomach pushes through the hiatus, an opening in the diaphragm through which the esophagus passes as it connects to the stomach. Usually only the top section of the stomach, where it joins the esophagus, slides through. If the hiatal opening stretches, though, more of the stomach can push through—that's known as paraesophageal hernia. It can cause more severe symptoms, including severe acid reflux, chest pain, upper abdominal pain, shortness of breath and difficulty swallowing. There is also a risk for stomach obstruction or ischemia, in which blood supply to the stomach is cut off. That requires emergency surgery.

Mrs. McHose had no idea of this as she tried to live with her symptoms for years. "I took a lot of Tums and Pepcid," she says. But her condition grew worse, and over the past three years she would feel heaviness in her chest and pain radiating to her left shoulder after meals—once it was so severe she was tested for a heart attack. A pulmonary specialist treated her breathing problems with inhalers, with no success. Finally, he ordered another CT scan.

"He said, 'No wonder you are having trouble breathing—your stomach is pressing on your heart and left lung!'" she recalls.

She spoke to several surgeons, including Frank Borao, M.D., chief of Esophageal and Bariatric Surgery at Monmouth Medical Center. "He was my second opinion, but because of his enthusiasm and knowledge and the fact that he does a lot of these surgeries, I thought he would be the surgeon for me, even though he is an hour away from where I live."

Another important factor in her decision is the fact that Dr. Borao is the most experienced surgeon in the state of New Jersey for paraesophageal hernia repairs. He works in tandem with Anthony Squillaro, M.D., a thoracic surgeon. "Having two surgeons working together made a big difference to me," she says. "And both were very good about answering my calls and questions."

Dr. Squillaro and Dr. Borao work together on more than 90 percent of each other's patients. "It's a two-man operation—he helps me and I help him," Dr. Squillaro says. "That's a big factor in keeping operative times down and in achieving the good results we get." So is the fact that they have performed more than 800 of these surgeries since 2002, which he says is probably the largest

on the East Coast and among the most in the country.

Another big factor is the development of laparoscopic techniques for this procedure. "In the old days, we had to cut people open with big incisions," says Dr. Squillaro. "Most of these patients are elderly, so that was very hard on them. Also, the diaphragm is very thin and weak at the hiatus, so the rate of recurrence after repair was around 30 percent. As a result, primary care physicians used to discourage this surgery."

Now, however, surgeons need to make four tiny incisions of 5 millimeters, and one of 12 millimeters, to insert ports for their instruments. They use "long, skinny tools," he says, to pull the stomach back through the diaphragm. Then they stitch the opening closed and reinforce it with a bio-mesh that encourages the body's own cells to grow onto it, further reinforcing the closure. The next step is a procedure called fundoplication. The surgeon wraps the upper part of the stomach entirely around the esophagus. "This acts as an extrinsic sphincter to stop reflux, because the natural sphincter has been damaged by having a hernia for so long," he says.

The entire procedure takes about an hour and a half and is performed with the patient under general anesthesia. The patient is kept in the hospital for two days so that the doctors can run gastrointestinal tests to ensure that everything is working properly.

Recovery at home involves a week or so on a liquid diet, then a week or two on soft food purees. "We want a slow progression to solid food, because we don't want vomiting," says Dr. Squillaro. That could damage the repairs. Heavy lifting or putting pressure on the diaphragm is discouraged for about two months for the same reason. "It takes that long for everything to heal inside," says the doctor. "Once we get past that time, most patients don't have a recurrence." Indeed, these two surgeons have a recurrence rate of less than 15 percent.

Marie McHose had her procedure September 10, and by the end of November reported that she felt "much better than I have felt in the last five years." She can eat whatever she wants, has more energy and appears noticeably healthier to her husband Joe, 78, and their many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. "I am very pleased with both doctors and what they did," she says.

"The public and area physicians need to know that there is a better way to fix this now," Dr. Squillaro says. "There are a lot of people out there who could benefit from this surgery. They need to know that the problem can now be treated much more effectively than it was before."

"There are a lot of people out there who could benefit from this surgery. They need to know that the problem can now be treated much more effectively than it was before."

—ANTHONY SQUILLARO, M.D.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE GASTROINTESTINAL SURGERY PROGRAM AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, CALL [732.923.6070](tel:732.923.6070). TO SHARE THIS ARTICLE WITH A FRIEND OR TO RECOMMEND IT ON YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE, VISIT MONMOUTHHEALTHANDLIFE.COM.



A farewell to PAIN

AFTER DECADES OF INTENSE DISCOMFORT, A MONMOUTH COUNTY MAN FINDS RELIEF THROUGH SPINE SURGERY.



Following successful spine surgery, Middletown resident Joe Pascarella can lift his grandchildren once again: Ella Curtis, 4; and Cole Curtis, 15 months.

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, JOE PASCARELLA OF Middletown had been experiencing neck and shoulder pain. While he initially saw a doctor and was diagnosed with a pinched nerve, the now 61-year-old turned down the suggestion of surgery.

“Not being a medical person, I wasn’t sure I wanted to have an operation,” he says.

But after two decades of pain that was getting progressively worse, Joe—a financial adviser with LPL Financial and grandfather of three—decided he needed to take action.

“I was up moaning and groaning at night,” he says. “Turning my head to the left or the right or even turning back to put my seat belt on was bad. It was difficult to lift my arms above shoulder height to hold my grandkids. The pain simply got to be unbearable. I couldn’t stand it anymore.”

A surprising diagnosis

When Joe decided it was time to see a doctor, he made an appointment with Jason D. Cohen, M.D., FACS, orthopedic surgeon and chair of Orthopedics at Monmouth Medical Center. Dr. Cohen diagnosed Joe with herniated discs, radiculopathy and spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal column)—all of which can cause pain.

“It had been 20 years since I last had an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging scan], so I needed a new one. I was shocked when Dr. Cohen reviewed the new test and told me I now had three pinched nerves,” Joe recalls.

Dr. Cohen suggested he undergo a three-level anterior cervical discectomy and fusion from the zones doctors refer to as C4 to C7 to remove the discs and relieve the pressure on the nerves. Once the discs are removed, an implant would be inserted into the disc space, which would then be filled with the patient’s own bone to facilitate the fusion and create the environment for the body to heal the space as a solid bone. A titanium plate would be placed alongside the spine—in Joe’s case from C4 to C7—to secure the spine and aid in healing.

“This procedure, completed through a small incision in the front of the neck, is the gold standard for cervical disc herniations and is an option for the majority of people with neck and arm pain with very good results,” says Dr. Cohen.

“It all sounded as if it was going to be a big deal, and it was a little scary,” says Joe. “But Dr. Cohen, a nurse named Nicole and the entire



Pascarella (right) is pictured with the surgeon he credits with changing his life, Jason D. Cohen, M.D.

staff at The Spine Center at Monmouth Medical Center were able to mitigate my fears by explaining everything to me through the entire process, from the consultation and spine test to pre-admission testing to right before I went into surgery.”

Surgery is a success

Despite his fears, Joe made it through surgery with flying colors. “Before I knew it, I was in recovery with a neck brace on—and that was it,” he says.

While Joe says wearing the brace was a little uncomfortable, when he was able to remove it a week after surgery, he was amazed.

“I’d suffered for so many years, and in a week’s time, the pain was gone—it was a miracle!” he says. “I was very afraid, but through the whole experience Dr. Cohen and everyone I met with were very professional, courteous and nice. From soup to nuts, it was fantastic.”

Now, after dealing with decades of pain, Joe credits Dr. Cohen with changing his life.

“It’s very ugly to be suffering as I was, but today I feel like new person,” says Joe. “I can do all of the handiwork and repairs around the house that were difficult before, and I can even pick up both of my grandchildren. After what Dr. Cohen did for me, I tell anyone who will listen about him.”

THE REGION’S MOST COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR THE SPINE

The Spine Center at Monmouth Medical Center has one of the state’s foremost spinal care programs, offering patients the most advanced options—both surgical and nonsurgical—for the relief of neck and back pain and related conditions. Its patients receive truly world-class care from a team of orthopedic spine specialists and neurosurgeons who work together to provide leading-edge treatments, making effective use of minimally invasive reconstructive procedures and innovative therapies for all forms of spinal disease, including:

- disc disease
- spinal stenosis
- osteoarthritis of the spine
- scoliosis

- rheumatoid arthritis of the spine
- herniated or ruptured discs
- osteoporosis
- spinal trauma or spinal injuries
- spinal cord tumors or malformations

The Spine Center is dedicated to clinical excellence. From nonsurgical treatment using the latest therapies for spine pain to complex spinal reconstruction and multi-level spinal fusion, Monmouth’s coordinated team approach provides patients with outstanding results.

For more information on The Spine Center, or to make an appointment for consultation with a Monmouth Spine Center specialist, please call 732.923.7666.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR YOU OR YOUR FAMILY AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, PLEASE CALL 888.724.7123. TO SHARE THIS ARTICLE WITH A FRIEND OR TO RECOMMEND IT ON YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE, VISIT MONMOUTHHEALTHANDLIFE.COM.

