

Population and Community Health News

# Advancing Health

MedStar Harbor Hospital



## Food as medicine.

Innovative program promotes better overall health.

**INSIDE:** Addressing the link between diabetes and heart disease. | Connecting with our community.

# Letter from the President.



Here at MedStar Health enhancing health outcomes through care that emphasizes prevention, builds awareness, and fosters independence—especially in underserved communities adversely impacted by disease, health disparities, and socioeconomic barriers—is critical. Community education and partnerships have long been essential to achieving this goal.

In this issue of *Advancing Health*, we illustrate our ongoing journey to do so through our population health programming.

You'll read about Food Rx, a unique initiative designed to ensure that individuals living with chronic medical conditions, particularly those impacted by food insecurity, have easy access to fresh, healthy food tailored to their individual needs. Through this program, we are able to supply patients and their families with the type of meals that will help keep their conditions under control...at no

cost, thanks to the support of our many partners.

We also feature a new program called Know Diabetes by Heart™ recently launched in the Baltimore region to raise awareness of the dangerous link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Research has shown that many people living with diabetes do not understand the impact the condition has on their overall health...especially their cardiovascular health. The goal of this program is to empower individuals with diabetes to take charge of their health by giving them knowledge and resources.

We remain privileged to serve and contribute to the health and well-being of our communities and hope you enjoy reading about our efforts. While supporting a healthier community benefits each of us, it's also about living our promise—*It's how we treat people*.

In good health,

**Jill Donaldson, FACHE**

President, MedStar Harbor Hospital

Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

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At MedStar Health, we offer easy access to great health care in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., via our 10 hospitals and more than 300 other care locations.

We're also committed to advancing your care by continuously learning and applying new knowledge. We help our patients and their families feel understood, appreciated, and confident in their care. MedStar Harbor Hospital is proud to be part of MedStar Health. **It's how we treat people.**

Population and Community Health's mission: *Bridging gaps in health care by connecting the populations we serve with resources to enhance their health and wellbeing.*

**On the cover:** Pictured is Nancy Rozgony, RD, LDN, CDCES, a registered dietitian and diabetes care and education specialist with Food Rx at MedStar Harbor Hospital.





# Food as medicine.

Three years ago, MedStar Health set out to challenge conventional practices regarding the most effective way to help patients living with chronic conditions better manage their health through a program called Food Rx, a first-of-its-kind in Maryland.

Initially launched at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital, the Food Rx program had the goal of ensuring that patients managing chronic diseases, particularly those impacted by food insecurity, have easy access to fresh, healthy food tailored to their individual needs.

Since then, the program has been expanded throughout the Baltimore region to MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and MedStar Harbor Hospital. The expansion has changed the landscape of food as medicine and informed other like-minded local and national programs on innovative ways to improve clinical outcomes for chronic disease while addressing social determinants of health and other drivers of health inequity.

"Food plays a huge role in a person's overall ability to be healthy," says Nancy Rozgony, RD, LDN, CDCES, a registered dietitian and diabetes care and education specialist with Food Rx at MedStar Harbor. "Eating the 'right' balance of food types is particularly important for individuals with conditions such as diabetes, for example. This program, based on an evidence-based model, has proven to result in marked reductions in patient blood sugar levels, emergency room usage, and total costs of care."

Unfortunately, a lot of patients with these conditions have tight budgets and cannot afford the nutrient-rich foods they need. Plus, many patients have limited access to supermarkets



**Nancy Rozgony, RD, LDN, CDCES, a registered dietitian and diabetes care and education specialist with Food Rx, talks with a patient about healthy food choices.**

and other locations where healthy food can be obtained.

"Food Rx is an integrative solution that increases food access, improves chronic disease management, and helps to address unmet social needs through strategic community partnerships," says Rozgony.

Led by MedStar Health's Care Transformation Baltimore region team, Food Rx is designed to integrate medical, social, and behavioral care. The program uses a comprehensive approach that brings together a consortium of community partners including the American Heart Association, Community Assistance Network, First Fruits Farms, Franciscan Center, Hungry Harvest, Maryland Food Bank, McCormick and Company, Pompeian, Sodexo, and the Y in Central Maryland, among other community-based organizations.

"Through this initiative, we are able to 'prescribe' and supply patients with the type of foods that will help keep their disease under control," Rozgony

says. "Based upon each patient's condition and needs, they receive a 2-week supply of food bi-weekly for a minimum of 6 months at no cost. This supply includes enough food to feed the patient as well as his or her household."

Food Rx is stocked with a wide variety of non-perishable food as well as healthy frozen food options. In addition to their food supply, patients are provided with comprehensive diabetes self-management education, a welcome kit including measuring cups and spoons, recipes, and nutrition education materials to use at home. Currently, MedStar Harbor is distributing an average of 2,500 meals per month through Food Rx.

Food Rx is one of several services offered through MedStar Harbor to patients that screen positive for food insecurity. Depending on individual circumstances, patients may be linked to Harvest Rx—which delivers boxes of fresh produce and other items to their homes, or resources such as SNAP, Meals on Wheels, and Movable Feast.

If you are a MedStar Health patient and would like to learn more about Food Rx, call our Community Health Advocate at **443-651-0901**.

# Addressing the link between diabetes and heart disease.

Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for people living with type 2 diabetes? It's true. In fact, people living with type 2 diabetes are two times more likely to develop and die from cardiovascular disease, such as heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure, than people who do not have diabetes.

Yet according to a recent survey, only about half of people ages 45 and older with type 2 diabetes understand their increased risk for developing heart disease or have discussed their risk with their health care team. Considering that more than 37 million Americans have diabetes, it's a problem of epic proportions. Unfortunately, what's true nationwide is also true in Maryland where 11.9% of adults have been diagnosed with the disease.

Hoping to reverse these alarming trends, MedStar Health has joined with the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association, along with other healthcare organizations across the country to raise awareness of the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease through a groundbreaking initiative called Know Diabetes by Heart™.

"Heart disease should be on the minds of all people living with type 2 diabetes," says Tracy Holcomb, MSN, RN, program manager for Population and Community Health at MedStar Harbor Hospital and a certified diabetes health education specialist. "The good news is that the lifestyle changes a person can make to keep their heart healthy, can also help them manage their diabetes and prevent heart disease."

MedStar Health is one of 10 organizations in the United States and the only one in Maryland to be awarded a community grant to implement the Know Diabetes by Heart program through a wide range of outreach efforts aimed at reducing cardiovascular deaths, heart attacks, heart failure, and strokes in people living with type 2 diabetes. The outreach is particularly focused on engaging Black and Latino populations, which experience higher rates of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke than non-Hispanic white populations.

"It's important for everyone to stay on top of their heart health, but it's especially important for people living with diabetes," Holcomb notes. "Creating a network of support



**Karen Polite-Lamma, MSN, RN, program manager for Population and Community Health at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center (right) leads a diabetes education class at the Eastside Shelter assisted by Tracy Holcomb, MSN, RN, her counterpart at MedStar Harbor Hospital.**

for exercise, diet, and diabetes management can help people be heart healthy and avoid complications."

Diabetes is associated with a buildup of plaque that can clog arteries, leading to a heart attack, stroke, or heart failure. People living with type 2 diabetes often have risk factors such as high blood pressure, unhealthy levels of cholesterol, obesity and lack of physical activity, which all contribute to their risk for developing cardiovascular disease.

Holcomb and her colleagues are utilizing a variety of diabetes and cardiovascular disease education materials and resources provided in English and Spanish through the initiative to conduct community outreach at senior centers, community health clinics, homeless shelters, and other sites. Participants are presented with specially designed Care Kits to keep as a reference.

"We are empowering these individuals to take charge of their health," Holcomb adds. "Know Diabetes by Heart wants people living with type 2 diabetes and their loved ones to know heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure are not inevitable. There are simple steps individuals can take to change and avoid this heart-breaking complication. Through these education and outreach efforts, we are helping people live longer, healthier lives."

For more information about Know Diabetes by Heart outreach efforts being conducted through MedStar Harbor, email [tracy.a.holcomb@medstar.net](mailto:tracy.a.holcomb@medstar.net).



# Connecting with **our community.**

Population and Community Health teams throughout the Baltimore region are dedicated to connecting neighbors with programs and services. Whether it's providing health information about tobacco cessation, diabetes prevention, or mental health—printed in English and Spanish—or sharing resources that can help with food disparities, legal services, or housing, our teams are bringing support to your neighborhoods.

Below are some of our recent outreach events.



▲ Team members from Community Health's Hospital Responders program recently attended the Black History and Mental Health Speaker's Series hosted by the Young Black Scholars Institute at Baybrook Elementary/Middle School. Along with our partners, Safe Streets and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), our team provided violence prevention outreach and resources.



▲ The Care Transformation team from MedStar Harbor Hospital attended Benjamin Franklin High School's annual BenFest along with other community partners. Programs offered included blood pressure screenings, Wellness Wheel, Community Health advocacy resources, and maternal/infant outreach.

► Later this year, MedStar Health will expand its community-based healthcare services across the Baltimore region with the addition of a second Mobile Health Center. The new clinic will make it possible for even more people in traditionally underserved communities to better access critically important healthcare services right in their neighborhoods. Primary care, chronic disease management, women's health, vaccines, mental health, wound care, health screenings, and a few urgent care services are available for patients. The Mobile Health Center has an interdisciplinary team to help patients with medical and social needs. For more information, visit [MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter).



# Community class schedules.

At MedStar Health, we care about the health and wellness of our community. One of the ways we try to keep you healthy and active is by offering a variety of free and low-cost special classes, events, and screenings at our local MedStar Health hospitals. They include the following:

## CANCER PREVENTION

### Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings

Free mammograms, clinical breast exams, PAP and HPV testing for women ages 40 and older who live in Baltimore City.

Free PAP and HPV testing for women between ages 21 to 39 who live in Baltimore City.

Call **410-350-2066** for details.



### Colon Cancer Screening

Free colon cancer screenings for uninsured men and women ages 45 or older, or younger with symptoms or family history, who live in Baltimore City, or Anne Arundel, Baltimore, or Howard counties.

Have Medicaid or Medicare?  
We can pay your out-of-pocket costs and help you get screened.

Call **410-350-8216** (in English) or **410-350-3444** (in Spanish) to learn more.

### Lung Cancer Screening

Free lung cancer screenings for uninsured women and men ages 50 or older, who currently smoke or have quit in the past 15 years, and live in Baltimore City or Anne Arundel County.

Call **410-350-8216** (in English) or **410-350-3444** (in Spanish) to learn more.

## DIABETES PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

### Diabetes Education

If you have diabetes, our educational classes can teach you about self-management of your disease, medical nutrition therapy, continuous glucose monitoring, and more. Virtual appointments are available.

Call **443-777-6528** for MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center; **443-444-4193** for MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital; and **410-554-4511** for MedStar Union Memorial Hospital appointments.

### Gestational Diabetes Education

In-person and virtual classes will assist gestational diabetic women with blood sugar control, diet, exercise, and medication instruction for a safe pregnancy. Call **443-777-6528** for details.

## HEART AND LUNG HEALTH

### Cardiac Rehabilitation

### Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Call **443-444-3397** for more information.

### Phase III General Exercise Program

Call **443-444-3881** for more information.

### Congestive Heart Failure Clinic

Call **443-444-5993** for details.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Contact the emails below to see if the group is virtual or in person.

### Amputee Support Group

Email [jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net](mailto:jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net) for details.

### Aphasia Support Group

Aphasia is a language disorder due to illness.

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

### Concussion Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

### Diabetes Support Group

Email [debbie.kavanagh@medstar.net](mailto:debbie.kavanagh@medstar.net) at MedStar Franklin Square for details and [melissa.a.santini@medstar.net](mailto:melissa.a.santini@medstar.net) at MedStar Good Samaritan.

### Stroke Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

## WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

### Tobacco Cessation

Learn to quit smoking with support from our certified tobacco cessation experts.

Free virtual or in-person classes.

Call **855-218-2435** or visit [MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking).

## PARKINSON'S DISEASE FITNESS

### Aquatics for Parkinson's Disease

### Parkinson's Exercise Class

### Rock Steady Boxing

Call **443-444-4600** for details.



## BIRTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Birth and family services are offered in the MedStar Health, Baltimore region at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and MedStar Harbor Hospital.

Take our birthplace virtual tours by scanning this QR code with your mobile phone camera feature and scrolling to the bottom of the page.



## IN-PERSON CLASSES AT MEDSTAR FRANKLIN SQUARE MEDICAL CENTER

### Prepared Childbirth Classes

Preparing mother and her birth partner for labor and childbirth. Offered 1 full day or as a 4-week series (1 night/week).

### Breastfeeding: Facts, Myths, and Techniques

Taught by a board-certified lactation consultant, this course is designed to prepare pregnant couples to get breastfeeding off to a great start.



### Infant Care and Safety Class

This class is designed for expectant and new parents, grandparents, and babysitters. Learn bathing, diapering, and other skills to care for your baby.

### Infant and Child CPR

Ideal for expectant parents, daycare providers, and loved ones caring for your baby.

### Infant and Child First Aid

Classes cover allergic reactions, sudden illness, head, bone and joint injury, wound care, shock, burns, and more. Classes can be taken separately or together with CPR (discount applies if taken at the same time).

Classes meet the State requirement for daycare providers.



### Moms, Babies, and Breastfeeding Support Group

Facilitated by breastfeeding specialists, these groups provide clinical support to new moms while providing a place to build relationships with other new moms. Professional baby scale for weigh-ins available. FREE lunches provided (first-come, first served).

**Virtual and in-person support groups held weekly.**

**Virtual support group:** First Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11 a.m.

**In-person support groups**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at these locations:

Tuesdays in Brooklyn - The Transformation Center

Wednesdays in Essex - Essex Library

Thursdays in Edgewood - EPICENTER

Contact [susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net](mailto:susanna.k.derocco@medstar.net) for details.

### NEW eCLASSES hosted by MedStar Health

We are excited to have partnered with InJoy Health Education to provide a variety of online eClasses to help our communities and our patients prepare for pregnancy, labor, birth, and caring for their newborn. Classes include:

- Multiples
- Your Newborn
- Cesarean Section
- Grandparenting
- Childbirth
- Breastfeeding
- Natural Childbirth
- Fatherhood

For details on classes, tours, support groups, and eClasses, scan the QR code with your smart phone or visit [MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses).

For questions on any of these classes, contact [beth.kegley@medstar.net](mailto:beth.kegley@medstar.net).

To register online, visit: [MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthandFamilyClasses) or call 888-746-2852.

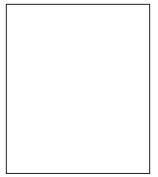




MedStar Health

5601 Loch Raven Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21239

**MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth**  
**855-218-2435**



# New **988 National Crisis Lifeline.**

## Expanded network of centers to help people in emotional distress or experiencing a mental health crisis.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health, suicide-related or substance-use crisis, call or text **988** to reach the national Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also chat **988lifeline.org** for support.

Moving to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code will provide greater access to life-saving services. By dialing **988**, you can now be connected to free, confidential mental health crisis resources. The number **988** operates out of the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which has been strengthened and expanded around the country with more than 200 local, independent, state-funded crisis centers. Dialing **988** serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.



Need help for emotional distress or a mental health crisis? Call and text: **988** | Chat: **988lifeline.org**.

For non-urgent mental health needs, call Behavioral Health Services—Outpatient Treatment and Partial Hospitalization Outpatient Program intake line at MedStar Harbor Hospital: **410-350-7550**.