

Health, Beauty & Fitness

JANUARY 2026



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE WASHINGTON MEDICAL CENTER

PAGE 10

The experts with the spine neurosurgery team provide comprehensive care for patients in need of brain, back and neck surgery — providing healing and hope for patients receiving advanced care close to home.

Long-Term Senior Care PAGE 4

Why you should not wait until “down the road” to plan for the future.

Estate Planning PAGE 7

Protect against risk and ensure continuity when life changes.

Peripheral Artery Disease PAGE 15

PAD results in plaque buildup in the arteries over time.

How Do You Know When It's Time For Cataract Surgery?

Allan Rutzen, MD
Rutzen Eye Specialists
& Laser Center



When your vision can no longer be adequately corrected with glasses, cataracts may be the underlying cause.



As we get older, almost everyone develops cataracts. This is a normal part of aging that occurs when the eye's natural lens becomes cloudy over time.

In the early stages, cataracts usually cause mild blurry vision. Many people notice they need brighter light for reading or that their glasses don't seem quite right anymore. At this point, a simple change in eye-glass prescription may be enough to improve vision, and surgery is usually not necessary.

As cataracts progress, the clouding of the lens has more effect on vision. Vision may be blurry even with updated glasses or contact lenses. When your vision can no longer be adequately corrected with glasses, cataracts may be the underlying cause.

In addition to blur, people often notice other symptoms. Glare and halos around lights, especially at night, are common complaints. Colors may appear dull or faded. Some people feel their depth perception is off, making it harder to judge distances or navigate steps and curbs.

One of the most telling signs that

cataracts are becoming a problem is when blurry vision starts to interfere with daily activities. A frequent concern is driving. Patients often describe difficulty with glare from oncoming headlights, trouble seeing street signs, or feeling less confident behind the wheel — particularly at night or in unfamiliar areas. Other patients struggle with reading, using a computer, watching television, or recognizing faces.

Modern cataract surgery is safe, effective and commonly performed, but the decision on the best time to undergo surgery is personal. If you suspect that you have cataracts, you should have a conversation with your eye doctor.

It's important to know that there is no pressure to have cataract surgery. Cataract surgery is considered elective, meaning the timing

is largely up to you. Unlike emergencies, cataracts do not require immediate treatment, and waiting does not usually harm the eye. The decision is based on how much vision changes are affecting your quality of life.

Eye doctors can assess the presence and severity of cataracts during an exam, but the most important factor is how you are functioning day to day. Two people with similar cataracts may make very different choices depending on their lifestyle, work demands, and personal comfort.

Modern cataract surgery is safe, effective and commonly performed, but the decision on the best time to undergo surgery is personal. If you suspect that you have cataracts, you should have a conversation with your eye doctor. They can assess your vision and eye health to look for other causes of blurry vision in addition to cataracts.

If you do have a cataract, ask yourself: Is my vision limiting my ability to do the daily activities that I want or need to do? If the answer is yes, it may be time for cataract surgery. ■

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Don't Delay In Planning Ahead For Long-Term Care

Jennifer McAndrews

Owner and Elder Care Advisor

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Medicaid. For some this is what is assumed to be the fallback if they run out of money at some point in their later years. A distant worry that does not require any action until it is needed, something "down the road" to think about. Unfortunately, it is just not that simple.

For those who meet the financial requirements, the Home and Community-Based Options Waiver program may be available. This option is something to learn about and apply for before a crisis happens. Reaching out to the Anne

Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities at www.aacounty.org/aging-and-disabilities or 410-222-4257 is recommended to learn about eligibility and wait lists. These types of programs are not implemented quickly, no matter the situation.

An option for some individuals is a long-term nursing facility. There are requirements to be met, including maximum amounts of income and assets. A medical or level-of-care need is also necessary to be a candidate as a long-term resident at one of these facilities. If all requirements are met, there is the potential for Medicaid to cover the costs. Again, this is something that cannot always happen as quickly as may be needed.

There is also the factor of availability. Even if someone were to

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Stem Cells Offer Real Rejuvenation:

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Lucy Guevara, MD, MPH

Owner and
Medical Director
Optimal
Longevity MD



How Stem Cell Therapy Works

A promising type of regenerative medicine is stem cell therapy. It can provide treatment for a variety of ailments by utilizing your own body's natural repair mechanisms to restore damaged tissues and decrease inflammation. Here is what you should know about stem cells.



What Are Stem Cells?

The human body is made up of a multitude of cell types and stem cells are necessary for building and maintaining the body. They have the unique ability to go from a generic cell to a more specialized cell, such as muscle, bone or nerve cell. Additionally, they can also indefinitely divide and create new stem cells. This is a self-renewing capacity that makes stem cells special.

Some different stem cells include embryonic, mesenchymal and induced pluripotent. Embryonic stem cells are found during the earliest stage of embryonic development, and they have the ability to develop into nearly any type of cell in the body. Mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) are found in adult tissues that include umbilical cord, fat

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Japanese Head Spa: The Ultimate In Scalp Therapy

Silvia Campana

Owner
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Japanese head spa is capturing the attention of those seeking a luxury spa experience combined with proven scalp therapy. From a relaxation perspective, scalp massage is a powerful way to calm the body and the mind. Scalp massage loosens muscles and soothes the central nervous system, which creates a sense of comfort, leading to a slower heart rate, easier breathing, and mental rest.

This Japanese philosophy is centered on a cultural belief that inner health is reflected by hair and scalp health, which in turn supports energy and mental balance.

This unique, healing, relaxing experience typically begins with a scalp health analysis. A healthy scalp is the basis for hair growth. A magnified picture of the scalp is taken and analyzed by a trained specialist to identify any underlying issues such as hair loss, blood flow, excessive oil or flaking.

The deep cleansing, intrinsic to this treatment, removes excess oil and product buildup, and increases blood flow. Increased circulation delivers more oxygen and nutrients to hair follicles, creating stronger roots and a better foundation for healthy hair growth.

A treatment protocol is discussed with your service provider, and then the bliss begins! Depending on the treatment, deep cleansing and exfoliating or detoxifying products are applied to remove buildup of product, sebum or flaking. Acupressure techniques are used to massage the scalp and neck to stimulate circulation and relieve tension. Micro mist

is applied to open hair follicles, allowing treatment ingredients to penetrate and treat any underlying scalp issues.

This is followed by hair masks, serums and tonics focused on hydrating, nourishing, and strengthening the scalp and hair. It is the ultimate way to take care of your scalp, mind, body and spirit.

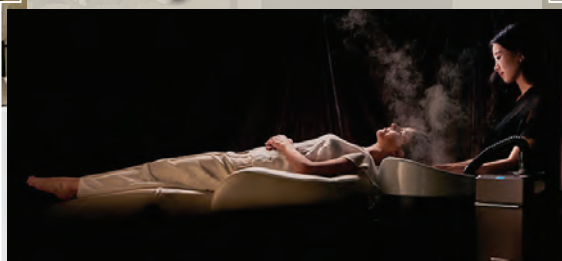
There are different protocols used in head spa treatments, including massage of neck, arms and hands, along with light facial treatments. The overall effect of this service, lasting 45 to 90 minutes depending on the chosen treatments, results in improved scalp health, reduced anxiety, increased hair growth, lowered cortisol, and improved mood.

The ritual, which can reduce the intensity and frequency of headaches and migraines along with improving sleep, concentration and mental clarity, is often incorporated into a health and wellness routine. Regular sessions can help to achieve a toned scalp and facial muscles.

The combination of soothing massage, a quiet spa environment, and the effects of the treatment, which increases circulation and scalp and hair health,

Continued on page 14

Body Treatments



Moor Mud Body Treatment - Benefits include: detoxification of the skin, deep skin hydration, soothes skin conditions, reduces inflammation and revitalizes your body and skin for radiant wellness.

Aromatic Salt Glow Treatment - full-body exfoliation ritual where mineral rich salts are blended with essential oils and massaged into the skin to gently remove dead skin cells, improve circulation, and leave skin smooth, radiant and deeply relaxed.

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Estate Planning Is Financial Health And Fitness: A Lifelong Legacy Strategy



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Good financial health isn't just about earning, saving or investing — it's about being prepared.

Estate planning plays a critical role in financial health and fitness at every stage of life because it strengthens clarity, protects against risk, and ensures continuity when life changes. For families with young children and for adults age 55 and older, estate planning is one of the most responsible and stabilizing financial actions they can take.

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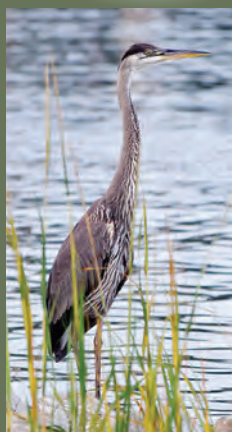
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When Winter Weighs Heavy: Learning To Support The Body, Not Push Through It

Meredith Baker
PNP-AC, FNP-C
Owner / Founder
Skinlogic



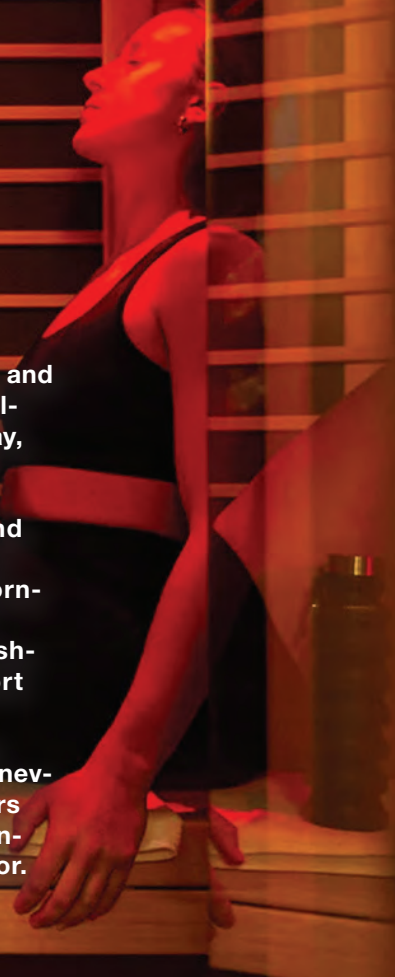
Winter has never felt natural to me. Living in Maryland, I have always loved the rhythm of the seasons. Spring brings dew and cool air, summer stretches into long days on the water, and fall arrives with crisp mornings and cozy sweatshirts. Then winter comes, and something shifts.

As daylight fades and temperatures drop, my body responds in ways that become hard to ignore. I feel heavier, tired and dull. My energy drains more quickly, and thoughts grow louder and harder to organize. The resilience I carry through brighter months slowly slips away, replaced by a low-grade tension I cannot quite shake.

Each year, I convince myself that this will be the winter I finally outsmart it. I draft ambitious plans and reach for every tool I know: light therapy, consistent exercise, carefully structured routines, and early mornings carved out for quiet time. For a while, it works. Then, slowly, I slip back into a familiar pattern of pushing through by overworking and overdoing, as if effort alone might carry me to spring.

What none of these strategies truly address is the deeper issue. Even when resting, my nervous system never fully shuts off. My mind keeps running, my shoulders stay tight, and my breathing remains shallow. I am constantly bracing, even when there is nothing to brace for.

Continued on page 14



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MEREDITH BAKER
CPNP - AC, FNP-C
Owner/Founder of Skinlogic



Aging Reimagined: *Connection, Community And Care In 2026*

Winsome Brown

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Gone are the days when aging was viewed as a dreaded journey marked by decline, isolation and loss of independence. For today's seniors and the generations walking alongside them, aging is being redefined. As we look ahead to 2026, older adulthood is increasingly shaped by choice, connection and the opportunity to live fully at

every stage of life.

I remember watching my own mother move into the later chapters of her life. What she wanted most was not to be managed or relocated but to remain in her home, keep her routines, and stay connected to the people and memories that mattered most. Her desires reflect what research continues to confirm. Nearly 90% of adults ages 65 and older want to remain in their homes for as long as possible, according to findings from AARP's Home and Community Preferences Survey. Independence and familiarity remain central to healthy aging.

Continued on page 19



As we look ahead to 2026, older adulthood is increasingly shaped by choice, connection and the opportunity to live fully at every stage of life.

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Neurosurgery Experts At The University Of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center Offer Advanced, Personalized Surgical Care



Clifford Solomon, MD (right), performed Marc Womeldorf's (center) L5S1 fusion in 2021. In July of 2025, Charles Sansur, MD, performed a sacroiliac joint fusion for Womeldorf with assistance by Joshua Olexa, MD (left).

By Meredith Winter

For 50 years, Marc Womeldorf lived with terrible back pain that radiated down his legs and made it excruciating to sit in a chair.

Womeldorf's spinal symptoms presented when he was just 16 years old, cutting lawns and hoisting heavy mowers into the back of his parents' station wagon. Swimming and exercise brought temporary relief, which launched his professional interest in the field of physical therapy.

Initially, Womeldorf avoided spinal surgery, despite working at several health care organizations and being familiar with advances in treatment. That changed when he came to the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM BWMC), a member organization of the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), which brings academic medicine and the latest care advances closer to people across the state. After observing the consistently positive outcomes and compassionate bedside manner of neurosurgeon Clifford Solomon, MD, he decided to move forward with surgical care.

In 2021, Womeldorf had his first spinal

surgery, an L5S1 fusion, performed by Solomon in his lower back.

"The recovery was a piece of cake compared to what I was even dealing with," Womeldorf said. "(I) didn't think I could feel that good."

Solomon shared that for Womeldorf's surgery, his team developed a focused approach with the least invasive way to perform the procedure and used computer-assisted navigation to perform the surgery.

"He did great, and that just made me feel wonderful," Solomon said of Womeldorf's outcome. "To see him at work walking around, looking taller because he wasn't bent over. He didn't have this look of pain on his face anymore. He came up and gave me a big hug and said, 'I can't thank you enough.' That's better than any payment in the world, helping somebody like that."

Womeldorf's world expanded after the surgery: with his daughter, he split a nine-mile ocean swim that included a kayaking segment he said he could never have done before. He later split a 12.5-mile swim around Key West.

Within a couple of years, however, a slight discomfort emerged in Womeldorf's

pelvic area. Solomon referred him to Charles Sansur, MD, vice chair of neurosurgery and director of spine surgery at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC), the flagship hospital of UMMS. Sansur is a nationally renowned expert in fusions pertaining to the sacroiliac (SI) joint, the location of Womeldorf's new pain.

In July 2025, Womeldorf underwent his second spinal surgery to fuse his SI joint, which connects the sacrum to the pelvis. The procedure was performed locally at UM BWMC by Sansur with assistance by Joshua Olexa, MD, a neurosurgeon who completed his residency at UMMC and is now a full-time neurosurgeon at UM BWMC.

"In Marc's case, we knew that L5S1 was successfully treated, so it was pretty easy to figure out that his residual symptoms were coming from the SI joint," Sansur said.

The SI joint procedure has advanced significantly in recent years, thanks to minimally invasive techniques that create smaller incisions. For patients, that means shorter hospital stays and fewer complications after surgery.

Sansur added, "Performing an SI joint fusion through minimally invasive techniques can really improve SI joint pain. Marc was interested in the procedure, and he was a good candidate as he had benefited well from previous joint injections in that site."

Again, Womeldorf had excellent results. "My pelvis went (from) feeling like a bag of bones, just unstable, to being solid," he shared. "I never knew what a normal back and pelvis felt like, until now."



A Tapestry Of “High-Tech, High-Touch:” Interweaving Cutting-Edge Technology With Compassionate Care

Womeldorf’s surgical success is just one of many stories of healing and hope for patients receiving advanced care close to home at UM BWMC, supported by UMMS.

The experts with the University of Maryland spine neurosurgery team provide comprehensive care for patients in need of brain, back and neck surgery — diagnosing and treating the full spectrum of brain and spine conditions, from tumors to herniated discs and sciatica.

Solomon, who has operated for 37 years as a neurosurgeon, emphasized that UM BWMC and UMMS have created a culture that resembles a “tapestry of high-tech, high-touch.”

“Everyone here has the mentality of really wanting to make a difference,” Solomon said of his colleagues throughout the hospital and across UMMS.

Patient care is paramount for Olexa and Sansur as well.

“One of my favorite things about this job is the connection I make with patients,” Olexa said. He shared that he became interested in

Olexa (left) and Solomon (right) highlighted the cutting-edge technology used at UM BWMC.

neurosurgery because he was first a patient himself: He underwent surgery for a herniated disc in his lower back in college, and again when he re-herniated the disc training for a marathon while in medical school.

“I can truly empathize with a lot of (patients) because I’ve been there. I enjoy that aspect of being able to see how the surgery helped them and then how they’re getting better. I feel as though I can walk with them through their journey,” he said.

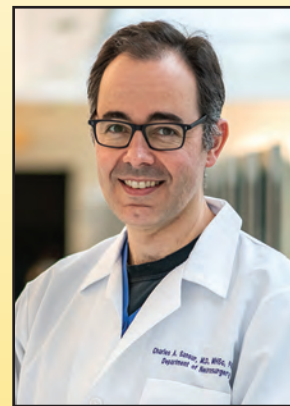
Sansur emphasized that the neurosurgery department’s connection to academic medicine and use of leading technologies enables UM BWMC to take the best possible care of patients closer to home.

“I think what makes the University of Maryland spine neurosurgery team stand out is that we have all facets of neurosurgery very well represented here,” Sansur said. “Within the spine division, we treat a broad range of concerns from single spinal fusions to complex deformities and cancer tumor surgery. Thanks to the advanced technology capabilities, many of these offerings can be performed with smaller incisions, producing better outcomes and faster recovery for our patients.”

He added, “When it comes to brain disease, we have an incredibly experienced and talented team treating brain tumors. Across UMMS, we have cutting-edge approaches to address cerebrovascular disease including aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations as well as a leading functional program that uses focused ultrasound to treat movement disorders. It’s an exciting time to practice neurosurgery, and we’re thrilled to offer these comprehensive services to more Marylanders.” ■



Clifford Solomon, MD



Charles Sansur, MD



Joshua Olexa, MD



(L-R) Womeldorf, Olexa and Solomon reviewed Womeldorf’s imaging.



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UM BWMC is located at 301 Hospital Drive in Glen Burnie. To learn more about the University of Maryland spine neurosurgery services available at UM BWMC, visit www.umms.org/spinesurgery2.

How Hospice Social Workers Create Everyday Moments That Matter



Chris Gooding
LCSW-C
Social Worker
Hospice of the
Chesapeake



There are many moving stories about how a hospice social worker helped a patient get married or take that one last trip to the ocean. These are impactful, memory-making moments that go a long way to honor the patient's final wishes while helping a family heal after they're gone.

But I'm not going to share those kinds of moments.

I'm going to share moments like helping the patient make a phone call to an estranged

family member — or giving them permission to not make that phone call. Counseling a daughter whose mother no longer knows who she is due to dementia. These are moments that matter, everyday moments, that are nurtured by a hospice social worker.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Families can be messy. For many people, creating moments that matter means reconciling grudges or misunderstandings. A social worker might start some conversations with the patient to explore the history of the rift and what the difficulties are. Then, there can be a family meeting where the social worker is a third-party intermediary to guide a conversation about extending or asking for forgiveness.

The moment that matters

Continued on page 14



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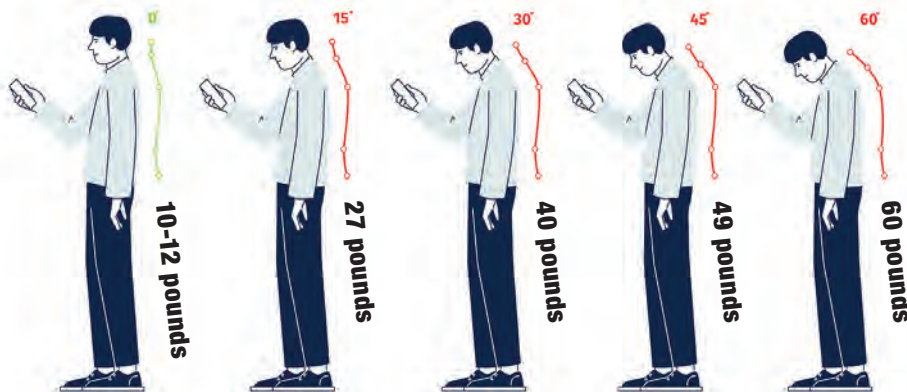


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Screen Time And Posture:

What We're Seeing In Our Community's Youth



"Tech neck" causes strain depending on the angle at which a screen is viewed.

Patricia M. Beall, D.C.
Peak Potential
Chiropractic and
Physical Therapy



Over the past decade, smart-phones, tablets and laptops have become an everyday part of life for children and teens. While technology brings educational and social benefits, local health professionals are noticing a growing concern: the effect of increased screen time on young people's posture.

A New Kind of Growing Pain

Families in our practice report that more children are experiencing symptoms once largely seen in adults: stiff necks, rounded shoulders, mid-back tension and headaches. The root cause often comes back to long hours spent looking down at screens.

"Tech neck," a term used to describe the forward-head posture commonly seen while using devices, places extra strain on developing muscles and joints. Even small changes in posture can add significant stress on the spine when held for long periods.

Why Kids Are More at Risk

Children and teens are still growing, which means poor posture can influence musculoskeletal development. Extended sitting also reduces physical activity and core strength, two factors that help maintain a healthy spine.

In conversations with local families, many parents say they struggle to balance screen time with schoolwork, socializing and downtime. Remote learning during recent years increased device use even further, creating habits that have been hard to reverse.

Continued on page 16



WHAT WE CAN HELP WITH?

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When Winter Weighs Heavy

Continued from page 8

When you live this way long enough, it becomes your normal. You stop noticing how tense you are until something finally allows you to soften.

When I was first introduced to contrast therapy, I was hesitant. It was presented like another wellness trend, amplified by social media and celebrity endorsements, destined to fade as just another fad. I was not interested in chasing extremes. I simply wanted to feel better. In times of desperation, my skepticism faded.

I began with infrared heat, and unlike traditional sauna exposure, the warmth felt deeply penetrating without being overwhelming. It quickly became clear how tightly I had been holding myself together physically and emotionally.

Following the infrared sauna, I stepped into a cloud of eucalyptus-scented air. Each inhale felt intentional, each exhale longer than the one before it.

It took courage to enter a cold plunge. In seconds, it felt like my breath had been taken away. I stepped out and this rush of complete calm and focus came over me.

The last step was the vibrational sound bed. I laid down, headphones on and vibration engaged, and something happened that I was not expecting. My mind stopped. It was absolutely silent. There was no internal dialogue, no to-do list, no inner critic, no replaying conversations or anticipating outcomes. My heart rate dropped, my breathing deepened, and for the first time in what felt like forever, I was fully present.

I walked to my car feeling different. It was still dark and cold, barely past 5:00pm, but the dread that usually followed me felt more manageable. The shift was not dramatic, but it was undeniable.

While this experience felt deeply personal, it reflects patterns increasingly supported by scientific research. During winter, reduced light exposure affects serotonin, dopamine and melatonin levels, which play critical roles in mood, motivation and sleep. Colder temperatures and

shorter days can place added strain on the body and nervous system.

Many people experience increased muscle tension, slower circulation, lower energy, and a sense of being stuck in a heightened stress state.

I have now learned that contrast therapy and sensory-based wellness practices assist in guiding the body through intentional cycles of stimulation and recovery.

Infrared sauna therapy encourages circulation, supports detoxification, and reduces inflammation. The nervous system shifts toward a parasympathetic, or “rest and restore,” state. Regular use has been associated with improved sleep, reduced inflammation, and cardiovascular support.

Eucalyptus steam therapy supports deep respiration and muscle relaxation, while its warmth and aromatic properties help calm the nervous system.

Cold plunge exposure provides a brief but powerful stimulus, prompting the release of dopamine and norepinephrine, neurotransmitters that support mood, focus and stress resilience.

Vibrational sound therapy adds another layer by combining low-frequency vibration with sound to gently influence brainwave patterns associated with relaxation and emotional regulation.

Winter has taught me that resilience begins with regulation, not force, and that the seasons of heaviness we experience are often periods of nervous system dysregulation. My own journey became the catalyst for expanding Skinlogic. Experiencing the profound impact of intentional regulation transformed the way I understand wellness and made it clear that this approach needed to be shared beyond my own experience.

Meredith Baker, PNP-AC, FNP-C, is the founder and owner of Skinlogic, a Severna Park-based medical spa elevating aesthetic medicine through an integrated, whole-body perspective. Skinlogic offers thoughtfully designed contrast and vibrational therapies. Learn more at www.skinlogic.org. ■

Japanese Head Spa

Continued from page 6

all contribute to reduced anxiety and mental exhaustion. Anyone interested in self-care can incorporate Japanese head spa treatments monthly and look forward to better scalp and hair health, along with decreased stress and anxiety and improved rest. It is a structured way to care for your scalp, your hair and yourself!

Image Creators is located at 568 Ritchie Highway in the Park Plaza shopping center in Severna Park. For more information on Japanese head spa and other services, call 410-544-8852 or visit www.imagecreatorssalonandspa.com. ■

Moments That Matter

Continued from page 12

here is to give healing to all involved before the patient dies and they've lost the opportunity. For the patient, this unfinished business could cause extra stress at the end of their life, leaving behind unresolved issues.

FINDING PEACE

Sometimes a patient is not able or willing to reconcile. Then social workers become a support for the family to help them find, in some other way, the peace they hoped would come before their person died.

Memory-making events like going to an Orioles game or making a big birthday party happen can be a challenge for social workers that leads to an important moment for everyone. But I also help make moments that matter each time that I am with a patient who shares how great it is to watch “Jeopardy!” with their family or who asks to help them call a long-lost relative to say “I’m sorry.”

JUST BEING THERE

Some moments that matter are even simpler. A family once asked that I visit their father every week, which I did for three months while he was in our care. On a few visits, I had to complete about five minutes of paperwork. The rest of the time was just being there — to listen, to talk. Each week, I knew I made a difference. Each week, I knew I had made moments that mattered.

Hospice of the Chesapeake is Maryland's largest independent not-for-profit organization that is caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties. Its affiliated programs include Chesapeake Supportive Care and its bereavement services, Chesapeake Life Center. For details, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org or call 410-987-2003. ■

Peripheral Artery Disease: How Do Your Arteries Hold Up Over Time?

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Vascular Surgery
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Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a slow disease process that results in plaque buildup in the arteries over time. It can affect the arms and legs. However, the legs and feet tend to be where this disease is most recognizable. This disease is common in patients who smoke or have a history of smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. There are other risk factors associated with PAD, but these are some of the primary contributors.

What Symptoms Can Develop?

PAD can manifest as pain in the muscles that are supplied by the arteries beyond the blockage. Imagine a dam across a large river with all of the gates open. If these gates were to begin to close one by one, less water would get downriver. If the muscles cannot get the blood flow that they need to function properly, they will begin to suffer, and this is initially demonstrated by fatigue or pain with walking.

As this process progresses, patients will experience what is referred to as "rest pain," and this manifests most commonly at night. Due to the blockages and the distance from the heart, blood cannot properly get to the feet, resulting in pain. Lastly, wounds can be affected or develop from peripheral artery disease. If healthy tissue does not get proper blood flow, it can prevent sores from healing or result in sores. Many recognize this latter process as gangrene.

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Screen Time And Posture

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Common Signs Parents Are Noticing

- More frequent neck or upper back complaints
- Slouched posture when standing
- Difficulty sitting up straight for long
- Headaches

While these symptoms are usually mild, they may indicate that posture habits need attention.

Encouraging Better Posture at Home

The good news is small changes can make a big difference. Recommendations include:

- Raising devices to eye level to reduce downward head tilt
- Using chairs with proper back support
- Taking movement breaks every 30 minutes
- Utilizing a properly fit pillow at night
- Adding daily stretching and/or strengthening exercises

Even simple awareness, such as reminding kids to sit tall or relax their shoulders, can help.

Screens are here to stay, but helping young people develop healthier habits now can protect their posture for years to come. Encouraging outdoor activities, sports and regular physical activity helps counterbalance long periods of sitting.

As screen use continues to rise, it's worth recognizing the physical effects alongside the academic and social benefits. With small adjustments, families can support better posture and teach lifelong habits for healthier technology use. A chiropractor can evaluate you and your child. Proper advice and management are key in long-term changes.

Patricia M. Beall is the owner of Peak Potential Chiropractic and Physical Therapy, located at 650 Ritchie Highway, Suite 106, in Severna Park. Learn more about the practice by calling 410-421-5544 or at www.peakpotentialchiropt.com.

Don't Delay In Planning Ahead For Long-Term Care

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qualify, is there an available bed when needed? Another consideration is that if there is an available bed, where is it located? Having a family member who has lived nearby and counts on regular visits now being an hour's drive or more away is usually not going to work well for a long-term situation.

Families should investigate whether either of these options — the Home and Community-Based Options Waiver program or a long-term nursing facility — are even on the table for consideration for a loved one. Too many people assume they are a candidate, only to find out while in a dire situation that they are not.

Understanding a loved one's financial situation sooner rather than later is ideal. Bringing these topics up can be difficult and it is easy to keep pushing down the road. That road will eventually end at some point, though, and a situation will arise that forces it to be addressed. As life sometimes happens as it does, this time will most likely

come at an inopportune moment — during the holidays, vacations, job changes, etc.

Another option to consider is Veterans Affairs benefits. Even for veterans who qualify, this is again not something that is sorted out on a quick turnaround. Anyone in a crisis is not going to find a solution by just beginning the process of the documentation and other steps required by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

As you have probably noticed by now, the message being sent is that action needs to be taken. If there is any concern that a loved one is unable to finance whatever situation they may find themselves in when "down the road" comes, address it now. Reach out to the Department of Aging and Disabilities, contact a long-term nursing facility, and investigate whether VA benefits are a possibility.

Learn about the services for seniors provided by Assisted Living Locators of Annapolis at www.assistedlivinglocators.com/care-advisor/annapolis or by calling 410-507-4490.

Peripheral Artery Disease

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How Is PAD Diagnosed?

The initial diagnosis can be identified by a patient's story. The next step involves an ultrasound or doppler study to better evaluate the blood flow. This is a noninvasive study that can give a provider an idea of the degree of circulation compromise, which may contribute to the symptoms. A CT angiogram may also be necessary to give additional information.

What Can Be Done To Prevent Or Limit PAD?

Lifestyle modifications such as not smoking, exercise, and management of medical issues with assistance of a primary care provider are always the initial treatments to reduce a patient's risk and limit disease progression. Exercise can promote collateralization. This process is our body's natural way to combat peripheral artery disease by developing smaller arteries around the blockage.

If these lifestyle modifications do not help, other options can involve medications that can widen or dilate the vessels in an attempt to get more blood flow beyond the blockage.

Lastly, surgical management can play a role. This involves a minimally invasive outpatient procedure called an angiogram where a small puncture is made in the artery and wires, as well as catheters, can be used to not only identify but also treat significant arterial blockages to get more blood flow to affected areas. There are times when these "endovascular" procedures cannot treat the blockages and more invasive surgical options may be necessary as well.

If you are developing leg pain with walking, pain in your feet at night, or sores on your legs or feet that seem to take a long time to heal, it may be worth discussing peripheral artery disease with your primary care provider or contacting a vascular surgery provider to further evaluate this.

For more information, go to www.vascularsurgeryassociates.net or call Vascular Surgery Associates at 410-946-6402.

Senior Isolation A Quiet Challenge In Our Community

Collette Campbell

Severna Park Community Center



As we age, our social circles often become smaller. Friends move, spouses pass away, health challenges increase, and driving may no longer feel comfortable or safe. For many older adults, these changes can lead to something rarely talked about but deeply felt: isolation.

Senior isolation isn't just about being alone. It's about losing daily points of connection — casual conversations, shared routines, and the sense of being seen. Research shows that prolonged isolation can affect both mental and physical health, increasing risks for depression, anxiety, cognitive decline and even heart disease.



In suburban communities like ours, isolation can be especially easy to miss. Seniors may live independently, appear fine on the surface, and hesitate to ask for help. Yet many quietly crave connection, purpose and belonging just as much as they did earlier in life.

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As a community, we all have a role to play. Checking in on an older neighbor, encouraging participation in local programs, or supporting spaces that foster connection can help ensure our seniors feel valued and included.

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- Try something new this winter with a wide variety of classes designed for all ages, families, and fitness levels. Whether you're looking to stay active, learn a new skill, or spend quality time together, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

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**SEVERNA PARK
COMMUNITY CENTER**

www.spcommunitycenter.org
410.647.5843

Stem Cells Offer Real Rejuvenation

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or bone marrow. These cells generally go on to become the same cells they were derived from, such as blood, cartilage or bone cells. MSCs are the main stem cells used in regenerative medicine because they play a significant role in tissue restoration and regeneration, immune system repair mechanisms, and for their anti-inflammatory properties. Induced pluripotent cells are also adult cells that are actually programmed to act like embryonic stem cells.

What Are The Benefits Of Stem Cell Therapy?

Stem cell therapy offers an innovative approach to medicine for four key reasons:

- » Treatment can be provided directly at the site of injury via injection versus surgery, meaning it is minimally invasive.
- » These cells are already in our bodies and thus allow a person to use their own body's repair mechanisms or natural healing.
- » It is highly versatile and can address orthopedic, neurologic, autoimmune, cardiovascular, and/or aesthetic goals all in one clinic setting.
- » The reduction in recovery time is twofold: on one hand it can be offered as an alternative to surgery, or in the event surgery is needed, they can be used as a pre- and post-surgical therapy to reduce recovery time.

Stem cell therapy has provided hope for patients experiencing a variety of conditions, whether that be orthopedic injuries, neurologic disorders, autoimmune diseases, or sexual function.

If you are interested in the opportunity to experience healing and real relief, contact Optimal Longevity MD to discuss benefits, risks, and suitability for your specific condition. Call 301-978-6015 or schedule a consultation online at www.optimallongevitymd.com.



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Senior Isolation: A Quiet Challenge In Our Community

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Small moments can make a big difference. A regular class, a walking group, a shared meal, or simply knowing there is a place to go where you'll be welcomed by name can restore a sense of routine and meaning. Community spaces play an important role in creating those opportunities — places where seniors can engage at their own pace and comfort level.

Locally, organizations such as the Severna Park Community Center provide programs and gatherings that bring people together, offering chances for movement, creativity and con-

versation. Often, it's not the activity itself that matters most but the relationships that form around it.

As a community, we all have a role to play. Checking in on an older neighbor, encouraging participation in local programs, or supporting spaces that foster connection can help ensure our seniors feel valued and included.

To learn more about programs and opportunities for older adults in our community, visit www.spcommunitycenter.org. Because no one should feel invisible — and connection, at every age, is essential to well-being. ■

SEVERNA PARK VOICE

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1981

Publishers

Dianna Lancione
Lonnie Lancione

V.P., Operations

Brian Lancione

V.P., Business Development

Jonathan Katz

Editor

Zach Sparks

Assistant Editor

Meredith Winter

Editorial Assistant

Jaina Peveto

Staff Reporter

David Bashore

Sales Account Executive

Larry Sells

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spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com

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Aging Reimagined

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Aging In Place With Pride And Possibility

One of the most promising trends shaping 2026 is the continued growth of aging in place. Safe and supportive home environments are strongly associated with better physical health, fewer hospitalizations, and improved emotional well-being for older adults.

Home-based care allows seniors to remain active participants in their own lives rather than passive recipients of care. Personalized support with daily activities, mobility, meals, and companionship creates stability while preserving dignity and autonomy.

Generations Come Together

Another powerful shift taking shape in 2026 is a renewed emphasis on intergenerational connection. In some families, this coming together is intentional. In others, it is shaped by economic realities such as rising housing costs and adult children living at home longer. In practice, it is often a blend of both.

As generations grow more connected, a key question comes into focus: can independence be preserved while living more closely together? The answer, increasingly, is yes.

When the right support is in place, intergenerational living becomes a source of strength. Younger generations gain empathy, patience and perspective through shared experience rather than obligation. Caregivers often serve as steady bridges, allowing relationships to deepen

without pressure or burnout. As a result, seniors experience reduced loneliness and renewed sense of purpose.

More Meaningful Social Connection

Loneliness has long been one of the greatest challenges facing older adults. In 2026, we are seeing a growing emphasis on companionship and meaningful relationships. Seniors are seeking deeper connection through community activities, faith-based gatherings, and one-on-one companionship at home.

These relationships have a direct impact on emotional well-being and overall quality of life, reinforcing that connection is not optional in aging well. Caregivers are increasingly viewed not simply as helpers but as trusted companions.

Relationship-centered care aligns with research showing that consistent caregiving

relationships reduce stress, support emotional health, and enhance overall quality of life for seniors.

A Future Worth Looking Forward To

The future is not something to fear. For today's seniors, 2026 holds promise, possibility and the comfort of knowing support is always within reach. Aging is not a loss. It is a continuation of a life still rich with value, connection and meaning.

At Lean On Dee Senior Home Care Services, this vision of aging guides everything. As they step into 2026, the team remains committed to helping seniors and their families move forward with confidence, peace of mind, and the reassurance that no one has to navigate this season of life alone. For more information, call 410-449-4538. ■

Estate Planning Is Financial Health And Fitness

Continued from page 7

At its core, estate planning creates financial clarity. It requires individuals and families to take inventory of assets, debts, beneficiaries and goals. This awareness reduces stress, prevents costly oversights, and keeps financial decisions intentional — much like regular health checkups help maintain overall wellness.

For families with young children, estate planning is especially vital. A properly drafted will allows parents to name trusted guardians, ensuring children are cared for by the people they choose rather than leaving the decision to a court. Trusts help manage how and when children receive money, protecting assets until they are mature enough to handle them responsibly. Estate planning also includes powers of attorney and health care directives, allowing trusted adults to manage finances and medical decisions if parents are incapacitated. These measures reduce financial chaos and allow caregivers to focus on what matters most: the children.

Estate planning also minimizes finan-

cial strain during emotional times. Clear instructions and access to funds help cover child care, education, housing and daily expenses without delays, legal battles or confusion. In doing so, estate planning protects both family relationships and financial stability. All young families should have a child protection plan.

For people age 55 and older, estate planning supports long-term financial strength and independence. As retirement approaches or begins, planning helps ensure income continues, bills are paid, and assets are managed smoothly even during illness or incapacity. Financial/durable powers of attorney and health care directives act as preventive care, keeping decision-making out of the courts and in the hands of trusted individuals.

Estate planning at this stage also improves financial efficiency. By coordinating beneficiaries, trusts and tax strategies, individuals can reduce probate costs, administrative delays and unnecessary taxes — preserving more wealth for spouses, family members or charitable causes. It also allows for

intentional legacy planning, including support for blended families, long-term care considerations, and meaningful giving. A proper asset protection plan is a key component of solid retirement planning.

Like physical fitness, estate planning is not a one-time task.

It requires regular updates as families grow, finances change, and laws evolve. When done well, estate planning strengthens financial resilience, protects loved ones, and keeps individuals in control, making it a cornerstone of lifelong financial health and fitness.

Karen M. Authement, Esquire, grew up in Anne Arundel County, has been practicing law for over 21 years, and is the owner of KMA Law Office. Call 410-777-8646 today to discuss a child protection plan or asset protection plan. KMA Law Office will help you set up a proper estate protection plan for your family. The office is located at 540 Ritchie Highway, Suite 201, in Severna Park. Learn more by emailing info@kma-law.com or going to www.kma-law.com. ■



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- **Diabetics**
- **Cancer Survivors**

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