

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Mobility loss study

Forty-nine million Americans have limited ability to perform an activity basic to daily life. Mobility loss — difficulty walking — is the leading cause. While the physical aspect of new disabilities get much attention, less is given to the social and long-term experiences. A new National Institutes of Health study seeks to learn about the meaning and experiences of mobility loss in order to better understand, manage and treat this problem. Volunteers are needed age 45-65 who use a cane, walker, brace, wheelchair or scooter. Participants receive \$35 for completing interviews. There are no invasive tests. All information is kept strictly confidential.

For information or to volunteer, call Wayne State University, Institute of Gerontology, at (313) 993-7320.

It's apple cider time

With 200 cider mills in Michigan, chances are you'll enjoy some tasty apple cider this fall.

"People should keep in mind that sweet cider is often unpasteurized," says Henry Ford Heart Smart dietitian Beth Thayer.

While the risk of foodborne illness from unpasteurized juice is small, there is still the potential for people to become sick. Children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with an already weakened immune system are especially susceptible. Thayer notes that cider mills take measures to thoroughly clean their apples before making cider to ensure as safe a beverage possible. The best way to ensure the cider is safe is to heat it to boiling for a few minutes before serving. Find a Heart Smart recipe for spicy, warm cider at henryford.com.

Spine care

October is Spinal Health Care Month. In Michigan, Dr. Charles Hobbs of Michigan Specific Chiropractic Clinic in Canton suggests the following tips for keeping your spine in alignment and free of pain:

- While at the office, take frequent stretch breaks from working on your computer.
- While working on your computer, sit with your knees at approximately a 90- to 120-degree angle. Using an angled footrest to support your feet may help you sit more comfortably.

- Make sure your chair fits correctly. Allow for two inches between the front edge of the seat and the back of your knees.
- Avoid twisting and turning motions. Always bend from the knees, not your waist, when lifting anything heavier than 10 percent of your body weight, such as a child or heavy box.

- Warm up and stretch before any physical activity, including sports, raking, gardening and shoveling snow. Allow your body and muscles time to cool down after such an activity.

- Remember to get a good night's rest. Choose a comfortable supportive mattress as well as a pillow that supports the weight of your head, reducing the risk of back or neck pain.

Contact Dr. Hobbs at (734) 416-2442. Call the Michigan Chiropractic Society at (800) 949-1401.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer noteworthy information including Medical Databook (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsmakers (appointments/new hires in the medical field) and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies). We also welcome noteworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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In tune

Music therapy for the mind, body

By MAUREEN MCGERTY

"Hope is the thing with feathers —
That perches in the soul —
And sings the tune without the words —
And never stops — at all —"
— Emily Dickinson, No. 254, stanza 1, c. 1861

Every three weeks, Diana Knoll gathers herself to spend what amounts to an entire workday at Oakwood Hospital's Cancer Center in Dearborn.

Fighting the good fight to outwit, overwhelm and outlive ovarian cancer, she settles into a comfortable easy chair to take her "cocktail" of Taxol and Carboplatin. Undergoing infusion, she endures physical and mental side effects of this standard treatment as she works through myriad thoughts and feelings about the sudden detour she has been forced to take.

It's not easy, but Knoll, 55, of Canton is not without hope. Diagnosed in January, she remains humbled, not by her illness, but because of the tremendous ongoing support shown by her fiancée, family, friends and even the kindness of a stranger who likes to make music.

Helping to bolster hope among cancer patients like Knoll is volunteer Ron Cieri of Dearborn. Each Wednesday near lunchtime, he leaves his desk at Young & Rubicam, drives to the center and plays his acoustic guitar for an hour or so in support of those taking chemotherapy.

Agreeing to give his time and talent to Oakwood's Tree of Life program came easily to Cieri, a classical guitarist whose gigs include mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church as well as social settings. But even reassurance from his wife, a nurse, didn't prepare Cieri for the impact of the medical setting where people are fighting for their health.

"I was taken aback at first," Cieri said. "After playing there, and my wife said this would happen, the sense of appreciation was just tremendous. It wasn't even necessarily what people said or did, but I sensed people felt comforted. When you reach people like that, it's a tremendous reward."

Healing power

Known through the ages for its healing power, music has been integrated with outpatient cancer treatment. It lends a new dimension to traditional care at Oakwood and other area cancer centers.

"It was so beautiful to be able to listen to them play," said Knoll, who also heard Cieri's 11-year-old daughter, Veronica, play her violin. "It's very calming and very peaceful. It takes your mind off things. I can understand why it's used for many different illnesses. It's very soothing."

"We all know that if we look at a piece of art or hear some music, it elicits some kind of a feeling or inner experience," said Dr. Clinton Greenstone of Oakwood's Complementary and Alternative Medicine Center in Westland. "Illness is associated very closely with what we think, feel and believe. Our inner lives can be disrupted in a setting of illness. Music has a potential capacity to bring some calm, some ease, some harmony, some balance into disrupted inner life."

Greenstone also encourages his patients to play a musical instrument or sing as a way to re-order the disruption of inner life.

Music is also an essential healing tool at Angela Hospice in Livonia. A range of instruments — harmonica, harp and keyboard — help to comfort terminally ill adults at the hospice or in their homes. "I use my harmonica quite often as a vehicle to get close to the patients and their families," said the Rev. David Bevington of Livonia, Protestant chaplain at Angela Hospice. "I ask them what type of music they like, secular or religious. Many like



Music for healing: Guitarist Ron Cieri and his daughter, Veronica, are a regular duet for cancer patients receiving chemotherapy at Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn. Shown with them is patient Diana Knoll of Canton.

Local music therapy resources

■ Oakwood's Tree of Life Program, provided jointly by the center and the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Department, is a component of the Oakwood Healthcare System. For information, call (800) 843-WELL (800-543-9365).

■ Every six weeks, Angela Hospice offers a memorial service for families and friends of deceased patients. The next one-hour, non-denominational service is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 7, at 2 p.m. Here, Bevington plays a medley of popular hymns such as "How Great Thou Art" for 30 minutes before the service begins. For more information, contact Angela Hospice at (734) 464-7810.

■ An hour-long live music performance on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11 a.m. on Level B-1 of the University of Michigan Cancer Center inspires spiritual healing along with a six-week meditation class and a wellness and spirituality group. The center is located at 1500 E. Medical Center Drive in Ann Arbor.

■ On Wednesday, Oct. 10, the center's Fall Lecture Series features a 90-minute presentation, "Music as a Healing Therapy" by Roberta



Dedicated: Ron Cieri tunes his guitar before a music session for chemotherapy patients.

Justice, a board-certified music therapist and faculty member at Eastern Michigan University. "She'll talk about how music helps relieve anxiety, reduces nausea and vomiting and promotes relaxation," said Ann Arbor resident Suzanne Mahler, M.A., who directs the Mind, Body, Spirit Program. "My dream is to bring in a music therapist to work one-on-one with patients. I think people need to have music written specifically for them."

The free lecture begins at 6 p.m. and is open to the public and will be held in the McAuley Cancer Care Center at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital's second-floor Community Room, 5301 East

Huron River Drive, in Ypsilanti. For information about the Mind, Body, Spirit Program, please call (734) 764-8492 or log on to www.cancer.med.umich.edu.

■ To learn more about music therapy or to locate a board-certified music therapist, contact the American Music Therapy Association, 8455 Coleville Road, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 589-3300 or www.musictherapy.org. Send e-mail to findMT@musictherapy.org.

"Amazing Grace" and tunes of that nature. For others, Stephen Foster is just great."

Every Thursday, he plays keyboard and harmonica during the hospice's weekly tea given for patients and their guests. A retired minister, he has been at Angela Hospice for four and a half years.

"Music soothes the families and friends in preparation of the service," said Bevington. "We include all faiths in this service."

Benefits

Patient feedback shows that music and complementary medicine approaches not only round out treatment for cancer patients at the University of Michigan's Comprehensive Cancer Center in Ann Arbor, but also reduce anxiety in the outpatient setting.

Ann Arbor resident Suzanne Mahler directs the center's Mind, Body, Spirit Program, now starting its second year. "The program integrates healing of the mind, body and spirit," she said. "Patients feel less tense. If you read about what music therapy does for people, studies have shown it helps to reduce anxiety and pain as well as nausea and vomiting. It also helps with compliance in taking medication and following through with treatment." There doesn't seem to be any one particular type of music that has more power than another, she said. "I've seen some 14-year-olds listening to hip-hop. It seems to provide an opportunity for self-expression and self-esteem." She also noted that drumming circles boosted patient self-esteem.

The Mind, Body, Spirit Program is held in conjunction with St. Joseph Mercy Hospital's McAuley Cancer Care Center in Ypsilanti. It addresses emo-

tional healing through courses in art therapy, life transitions, journaling and reading, as well as a family retreat.

"It's a supportive reading group," Mahler said. "We read other peoples' stories about character and coping and what they teach us about life and ourselves. It's an opportunity for discussion and self-reflection."

Working on the physical plane, patients engage in healing and prevention through guided imagery, pain management, diet and nutrition forums, and gentle movement class called qi do.

"We offer music as a healing therapy," Mahler said. "We have a baby grand piano by the pharmacy. We bring music to our patients. They're captive in the sense that people who come to have an examination, diagnosis or check-up are pretty tense. People who are in the Infusion Center receiving their chemotherapy are hooked up to their drugs, and they so appreciate our bringing music directly to them. It allows them to relax and to find some emotional relief."

Volunteer musicians include Julie Hussar, who plays harpichord and harp. Dr. Joe Graziano, a pediatric cardiology fellow, plays piano. Scientist Rod McDonald, who works in a U-M lab, provides music on guitar.

Hussar is one among a group of Midwest professionals who've taken special training to work with patients in an outpatient cancer care setting.

"There are others who are professional musicians who feel they get so much pleasure from performing for cancer patients," she said. "They interact with patients. Some come over to sit down and talk with them or move their seats around so they can be closer."

Therapy program took root in Michigan

What is Music Therapy?

Historically, Michigan — particularly Michigan State University — put the profession of music therapy on the national map in 1950.

Today, Eastern Michigan University and Western Michigan University also offer degree programs that help music majors cut a professional path to board certification.

According to the American Music Therapy Association, music therapy is an allied health profession similar to occupational therapy and physical therapy. Among its nearly 5,000 members nationwide, 150 work in various settings in Michigan and belong to the Great Lakes Region chapter. Music therapy, as practiced by board-certified music therapists, uses many types of music to help people with physical and mental challenges.

"Music is a form of sensory stimulation that pro-

vides responses due to the familiarity, predictability and feelings of security associated with it.... Research results and clinical experiences attest to the viability of music therapy even in those who are resistant to other treatment approaches," says the AMTA.

"Music therapists literally work with every aspect of life from birth to death," said Roberta Justice, a board-certified music therapist with 30 years of clinical experience. She also teaches at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. "My work has been in psychiatry, developmental disabilities and geriatrics. I do advanced music psychotherapy and guided imagery, stress and pain management and relaxation work.... There's lots of different reasons why a person would seek out a music therapist."

Please see MUSIC D5

Positive effects of music ...

According to the American Music Therapy Association, research supports the calming, healing effects of music therapy on patients with physical and mental illnesses. Outcomes may include:

- Anxiety and stress reduction
- Non-pharmacological management of pain and discomfort
- Positive changes in mood and emotional states
- Active, positive patient participation in treatment
- Emotional intimacy with families and caregivers
- Positive verbal and non-verbal expression
- Improved concentration and attention span
- Conflict resolution