



Leonard McCulloch

## Holiday stress: A common malady

The holidays are upon us. Amid the joy and celebration, amid the office and family parties, and amid the traveling and shopping, there can be stress.

Everyone is vulnerable. Many life events, such as holidays, are difficult, if not impossible, to pull off without stress. Sources of year-round stress include relationships, parenting, work and life changes. The holiday period can exacerbate such stress and bring on more of its own.

Symptoms can be psychological, physical or both; irritability, worrying, headaches, poor sleep, gastrointestinal distress, and high blood pressure are just a few of the many symptoms that stress can cause. Some people deal with stress better than others and some have learned to identify stressors or triggers (things that cause stress). Unfortunately, many of us do not deal effectively with the stressors in our lives.

### MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

In addition to identifying sources of stress, it is important to learn to anticipate times that you will be finding yourself under stress. Anticipation of an event is the first step toward gaining management or control over it.

Anticipation needs to be accompanied with an optimistic mindset such as: "I know the work of taking care of all the details of the family party on Christmas is going to be stressful, but I also know it will be temporary and I will manage it." This attitude is important and one must remember the difference between "a person having stress vs. stress having a person."

In addition to anticipation and acceptance, using common sense regarding diet, exercise and sleep is very important. Moderation is the key. Too much or too little can aggravate stress. Listen to your body and get proper rest.

### CONTROLLED BREATHING

Normally, when we breathe, we only use the top third of our lungs. By doing "abdominal breathing" the entire lungs are put into work and much more oxygen reaches the brain quickly.

Just put your hand below your navel. Take a few slow, regular breaths and then exhale completely as long as you can. Your very next breath will automatically come from your abdomen and you will feel your belly move in and out. Keep this breathing rhythm going and you may find it quite relaxing, quite quickly. Practice it whenever you can.

Next, you can learn to train your muscles from head to toe to become more deeply relaxed than by just sitting down to take a rest. Pick a quiet place and an uninterrupted 20 minutes and concentrate on tensing your feet and then relaxing them. Then do the same with your lower legs and your upper legs, your abdomen and lower back, your upper torso, neck and head and finally the arms and hands.

PLEASE SEE MCCULLOCH, C5



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Nurse midwife Joan Lynn cradles a baby girl she delivered in the birth care unit the day before.

## Simple as ABC

### Providence offers family-oriented comfort for mothers-to-be

BY MARY MCDONOUGH  
STAFF WRITER

There are Jaccuzzi tubs, televisions, CD players, and a bed for two covered with a colorful, cozy quilt.

But this is not a hotel room, it is a room in Providence Hospital's new alternative birth care (ABC) unit.

The unit is part of the new family care wing of the Southfield hospital and is expected to open in mid-December.

It is one of the only centers of its kind in Metro Detroit, and replaces the former birthing center building, which closed 18 months ago.

Mother-to-be who utilize the unit have a more natural, intimate and family-oriented birth process, said Joan Lynn, a nurse midwife at Providence.

"It's a family event. We don't just look in the uterus and say, 'There's a baby in there.' We look at the family and the social

issues," said Lynn.

### LOW TECH, HIGH TOUCH

Aside from pain medication, mothers who opt to use the center are not given epidurals or dripping IVs and can move about freely, because they are not strapped to monitors or machines.

They are allowed eat or drink and to squat or stand in whatever position is comfortable when the contractions come. Often they spend the majority of their labor in the Jaccuzzi tub, with the fetal heartbeat monitored at regular intervals.

"Mother Nature is a great teacher," said Lynn, who delivered Marybeth Perrot's daughter in the temporary unit on Nov. 26.

"This is low-tech and high-touch. The mothers in this unit get a lot of TLC." Perrot, of Farmington Hills, gave birth to her son, Sean, two



In a room in Providence Hospital's new Alternative Birth Care Unit, Ed O'Hare watches his newborn daughter sleep.

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Joan Lynn  
nurse midwife

years ago in a traditional labor and delivery room. When delivering her newborn daughter, Perrot was in the ABC unit was, "a wonderful experience."

"Oh my God, I feel so completely different," said Perrot the morning after the delivery. "I feel much more normal today than I did after the birth of my son."

The nurse midwives provide general gynecological care and prenatal care throughout the pregnancy, so by the time labor starts, a strong bond has been formed with the mother, Lynn said.

After birth, the newborn stays in the room with mother and the rest of the family is encouraged to stay overnight as well.

"I had two girls help me deliver their sibling. They were very prepared and the sat on the bed with me and handed the baby to their mother. They came to all the prenatal appointments," said Lynn. "That's not for every kid. They were homeschooled and did this for their science project. They even came to the appointments with little clipboards."

In the ABC unit, mother and baby are discharged one or two

days sooner than after a traditional labor and delivery. Three days after coming home, they get a visit from a nurse at home. And there are follow-up phone calls from the nursing staff.

"It helps the mother feel connected to someone who knew her during the birth," said Lynn.

The ABC unit is no place for twins, cesarean sections or other risky births. And Lynn admits, the all-natural way is not for everyone.

If complications arise, the mother can be whisked off to a traditional room or an obstetrician can be summoned.

The three-bed center serves about 300 mothers a year.

For more information on the alternative birth care unit, call (248) 849-3919 or visit Providence's Web site at: [www.providence-hospital.org](http://www.providence-hospital.org)

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## Karmanos struggles under fund-raising burden

BY KURT KUBAN  
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"You have cancer." It is one of the most devastating statements a person will ever hear from a doctor.

And for good reason, considering the deadly disease's knack for decimating lives and uprooting families.

In America, hundreds of thousands die from the various forms of cancer each year, while many more undergo painful treatments.

It is from such pain and suffering that the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute was born in 1995, when Comparative grant Peter Karmanos donated \$15 million to fund it in honor of his wife, who died of breast cancer at the age of 45 in 1989.

Ever since, the cancer treatment hospital and research facility has been on a mission to reduce the likelihood others would have to endure the misery cancer can inflict, by seeking a cure to the disease and offering support programs for its victims and their families.

Among its centers is Weisberg Cancer Treatment

Center in Farmington Hills, which offers outpatient cancer treatment.

Such lofty goals come with a price tag, however. The burden of raising the money to fund all the research and community outreach programs falls upon the non-profit Karmanos Cancer Foundation in Lathrup Village.

The foundation's 25 employees have the difficult task of raising the \$10 million annually it takes to operate the Karmanos Institute.

"They must convince both philanthropists and corporations that donating money to the organization is a worthy cause."

Sometimes, however, it isn't very difficult to get the message across, because so many people have been touched by the horrors of cancer.

### A GREAT TRIBUTE

Take, for example, Bloomfield Hills resident Leslie Devereaux. Last year, she donated \$500,000 to the foundation with the specific intention of helping the institute develop a lung cancer screening program.

Devereaux didn't just randomly choose the Karmanos Institute for her philanthropy. Her father, Richard C. Devereaux, died of lung cancer back in the early 1970s.

Had his disease been detected earlier, Devereaux feels her father might have survived.

"The institute has used her gift for a unique mobile lung cancer screening lab that travels throughout Metro Detroit to test people for the disease. Named after Devereaux's father, the program's goal is to catch the disease at the earliest most treatable stage, which is important because lung cancer is the deadliest of all the cancers."

More than 160,000 people each year die from it nationwide.

"I thought this would be a great tribute to my father," Devereaux said.

"This program is a wonderful way to reach people, especially those who don't want to go to a hospital for testing. It's a perfect way to eliminate this horrendous disease."

According to the institute's Dr. Harvey Pass, the mobile program, which he helped

develop, is just one of the community outreach programs that makes the Karmanos Institute unique.

### AFTER 9/11

Karmanos also has 15 outreach centers throughout Metro Detroit. It also offers a number of educational programs, such as on the hazards of tobacco use, to schools and other organizations.

"We are supposed to be a community-based cancer center. So we need to reach out to the communities, rather than have the communities come to us," said Pass, head of thoracic oncology at the institute.

Unfortunately for the Karmanos Foundation, and every other non-profit group for that matter, these aren't the best of times for charities.

According to Karmanos Foundation spokeswoman Amy Pugliese, fund-raising efforts this year have been hurt by the weakened, post-Sept. 11 economy.

"The state of the economy has affected all non-profits," she said.

"At this point, we're only at

about 60 percent of our target amount for the year. The holiday season is where we raise most of our money, but it appears we're going to fall short," she said.

Less money means the institute is limited in what it can accomplish, especially when it comes to research.

But Pugliese said the foundation will keep plugging away to make sure the public knows there are so many people struggling with cancer.

"You just have to keep telling people that cancer is always out there, and there are cancer patients who need help, and many who are dying as a result of cancer," she said.

"You have to put the names and faces of the patients out there to the community and make sure they know there is a reason we are doing what we're doing."

Individuals interested in donating to the Karmanos Cancer Institute should contact the foundation at (248) 443-3800. Donations can also be made online at [www.karmanos.org](http://www.karmanos.org).

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