

Autumn 2021

thrive

Appreciate Health. Enjoy Life.

Fit to the Finish

Stepping up
for a Healthier
Community

Welcome to the Family

Quarantine
Companions

Fallin' for Pollen

How to Cope With Seasonal Allergies



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A Note from the President

Dear Friends,

Thank you for embracing *thrive*! We're happy to deliver this second issue, which is filled with the stories you wanted to see about striving to be healthier, taking time for self-care, committing to being more active and changing perceptions associated with mental health.

An important part of our Mission is being active members of our community. We want you to know that we're here to support you in whatever ways we can to improve your overall quality of life. In this issue, you'll learn more about:

- Preparing for your next appointment in "Check-up Checklist"
- Participating in Commit to Get Fit in "Fit to the Finish — Stepping up for a Healthier Community"
- Acknowledging the need for accessible behavioral health care in "Supporting a Shift in Thinking"

We hope *thrive* inspires you to *Appreciate Health* and *Enjoy Life*. Thank you for your support.

Steven C. Jorgensen
President, St. Mary's Health System and
Senior Vice President, Covenant Health

10 Prevention and Detection

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Scan this QR code with your mobile device and schedule your screening today.

On the Cover

Gypsea, a goldendoodle and certified therapy dog, provides comfort to St. Mary's patients. Barbara Mandy, her owner, has worked at the hospital for 20 years.

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100 Ames Pond Drive, Suite 102
Tewksbury, MA 01876
(978) 312-4300

Vice President Corporate Communications **Karen Sullivan** / Vice President Marketing **Michelle Marshall**
Editor **Suzanne Dumaresq** / Creative Director **Sharon Elwell** / Executive Publisher **James Y. Davis**
Contributing Writers Chelsea Chambers, Suzanne Dumaresq, Rachel Evensen, Lindsey Grossman, Cheri Hinshelwood, Cherry Odom, Robert A. Poarch **Marketing Directors** Jason Gould, Bethany McKnight, Tim McMahon
Contributing Photographers Séan Alonzo Harris, Meg Moore, Jason Paige Smith



To make an appointment with **St. Mary's Orthopedics**, call **207.333.4710**, or visit **stmarysortho.com**. For an appointment with St. Mary's Center for Physical Rehabilitation, call **207.753.3070**.

A Firm Foundation

Six Ways to Prevent Common Injuries

By Lindsey Grossman

Autumn means pumpkin spice, vibrant foliage and a fresh season for favorite outdoor pastimes, but touchdowns and trail switchbacks can have their setbacks. At this time of year, Director of St. Mary's Center for Physical Rehabilitation, Dawn Gilbert, PT, MSM, said that her team sees a lot of sports-related injuries, specifically ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injuries in young female soccer athletes, a variety of musculoskeletal football injuries and concussions. Whether you're playing a sport for the first time, conditioning for the start of a new season or activity or tackling a tough hike to get a bird's eye view of fall foliage, Gilbert's tips for preventing injuries will help keep you safe and healthy this fall.

- 1 Stretch, and stretch some more.** A good stretching regimen both before and after any activity is key. "Sometimes the older we get, the longer we should take to stretch."
- 2 Condition properly.** Preparing for the activity with exercises that target the right muscles will help prevent some significant injuries. For students, athletic trainers can help direct athletes toward exercises appropriate for a specific sport.
- 3 Ease into it.** "If you've never biked or haven't biked in months, you don't want to go out and bike 30 miles. Or, if you're not an avid hiker and you have had a relatively sedentary lifestyle, you don't want to head straight to Mount Katahdin."
- 4 Safety first!** Appropriate safety equipment like helmets, pads and footwear combined with proper technique can often help protect you from an injury.
- 5 Hydrate.** "The fall tends to be cooler, but it still can get hot, so proper hydration is very important."
- 6 Talk to your doc.** Make sure you're medically safe to participate in strenuous activity. If you have a preexisting condition, consult your doctor before trying a new activity. "If you have high blood pressure and you're going to start hiking, it might be good to get some instruction from your primary care physician beforehand."

If you do get injured, St. Mary's Center for Physical Rehabilitation can help. In most cases, patients are first evaluated by a primary care or specialty provider. With the provider's evaluation and referral, the Rehab team is able to conduct an evaluation, assessing balance, looking at strength and range of motion, medical history and then work with the patient to devise a plan for rehabilitation and recovery.

Local Flavor

Food Access and St. Mary's Nutrition Center

By Cherry Odom, BSN, RN, NPD-BC



The vibrant and diverse neighborhoods of the downtown Lewiston-Auburn area face a food insecurity challenge alongside a strong advocate. For many years, St. Mary's Nutrition Center has led the way in bringing people together to help build a just food system and healthy community.

Work, Food and People

"We do all kinds of work around food, but it's really about people," said Director Kirsten Walter. "We distribute over 450,000 pounds of food annually." The center also offers urban community gardens, cooking education and gardening for children and adults, youth leadership and food access partnerships. The Nutrition Center is the lead partner in building a Community Food Center, as part of a \$30 million HUD grant.

History and Community Needs

The Nutrition Center was founded in 2006 to consolidate the work of programs begun

in 1999. Part of St. Mary's Health System, the downtown Nutrition Center addresses community health in neighborhoods facing multiple barriers.

Poverty, language barriers and lead poisoning affect residents, many of whom are immigrants, who struggle to put food on the table. Lewiston's school district educates children where 34 languages are spoken and familiar foods for these community members are hard to find and often expensive. "The Nutrition Center is now providing some culturally preferred foods, which is helping the population," said Walter.

Meaningful Work

She added, "Our team is amazing. We are surrounded by compassionate people, which include our staff and partners as well as neighbors, who really care about each other. Together, we make a real impact."

Sambusa — Beef

Somalian Fried Egg Rolls

This recipe comes from Mumina Isse, who has been involved with the Nutrition Center, helping to manage the food pantry and offering interpreting support in our community gardens and beyond. She is an advocate for her immigrant neighbors and a skilled community organizer.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 1 cube vegetable bouillon (crushed)
- 1 cup of water
- 1-2 chopped onions
- ½ Tsp. cumin
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 chopped jalapeño pepper
- 1 package of egg roll wrappers
- 2 cups olive or vegetable oil

Preparation

Add ground beef, vegetable bouillon cube and water to a frying pan and cook over medium heat. When meat is cooked through, mix all other ingredients into the pan and cook for one to two minutes. Remove pan from heat and let cool for five minutes. Spoon one ½ tbsp of mixture into the egg roll wrapper, folding over edges and wetting them so they stick together in a triangle shape. Deep fry in oil until brown. Makes 18-20 sambusas.



The Mindful Five

Tap Into Your Five Senses This Fall

By Suzanne Dumaresq

The onset of fall in New England offers an inviting opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, cooler temperatures and brilliant foliage. Be sure to take it — and enjoy a brisk walk in the autumn air to boost your mood and energy level as well as reduce stress and anxiety. Make the most of your stroll by silencing your phone. Focus on tapping into your five senses. Begin by focusing on your breath. Then, gently shift your concentration to one sense at a time, as though each is new to you.

Gaze around your surroundings. **SEE** the colors, shapes and textures. Is there anything special or refreshing about what you see?

Listen to the sounds in the air. What do you **HEAR**? Can you make out sounds that are new or interesting to you?

As you walk, contemplate the air's **SMELL**. Is it fresh? Is it pleasant? Does it bring to mind a particular feeling or memory?

Turn your attention to your mouth. Feel your tongue against your teeth. Do you **TASTE** anything?

Stop walking for a moment. **TOUCH** a tree or flower — maybe a leaf or blade of grass. How does it feel? Is it familiar or unfamiliar? Rough or smooth?

As your walk comes to an end, take a moment to truly appreciate the season's splendor. Draw in a deep breath and exhale. Finally, schedule a bit of time for yourself to be mindful each and every day.



Check-up Checklist

Preparing for Your Appointment

By Suzanne Dumaresq

Maybe you feel fantastic and you appreciate your good health. Maybe you're ill, not feeling quite right and you're in search of some answers. Either way, your appointment is on the calendar and right around the corner. In the past, you tended to "wing it." However, now that you're older — and wiser — you understand the importance of being prepared and making the most of the visit with your provider.

No matter how old you are, it's important to cultivate and maintain a relationship with your provider. Especially as you age, your need for care changes. Here are a few simple steps to help you take an active role in your appointment.

Prepare Yourself

Don't wait until you're sitting in the waiting room. Take the time to prepare a list of medications and the doses you're taking — include supplements and vitamins, jot down any symptoms you're having or specific questions you'd like to ask. And, of course, be ready to discuss your medical history.

Share Details

Be forthcoming about what you're thinking and how you're feeling. The more insight and information you provide about your history and what you're experiencing, the better position your provider is in to advise, treat and care for you.

Ask Questions

Remember, your goal is to have a collaborative, productive visit. Be an active participant. Don't hesitate to interact with your provider. Ask questions or voice concerns as they come up during your visit. Write down responses and suggestions as you get them to refer back to later.

Ask for a Referral

Some symptoms may require evaluation by a specialist. Typically, providers welcome this type of collaboration and are happy to refer patients to an appropriate specialist for further evaluation.

Recap Your Visit

Before departing the provider's office, spend a few moments with your doctor recapping your visit. Make sure the two of you are on the same page in regard to a referral, diagnosis, medications, treatment, next steps and follow-up.

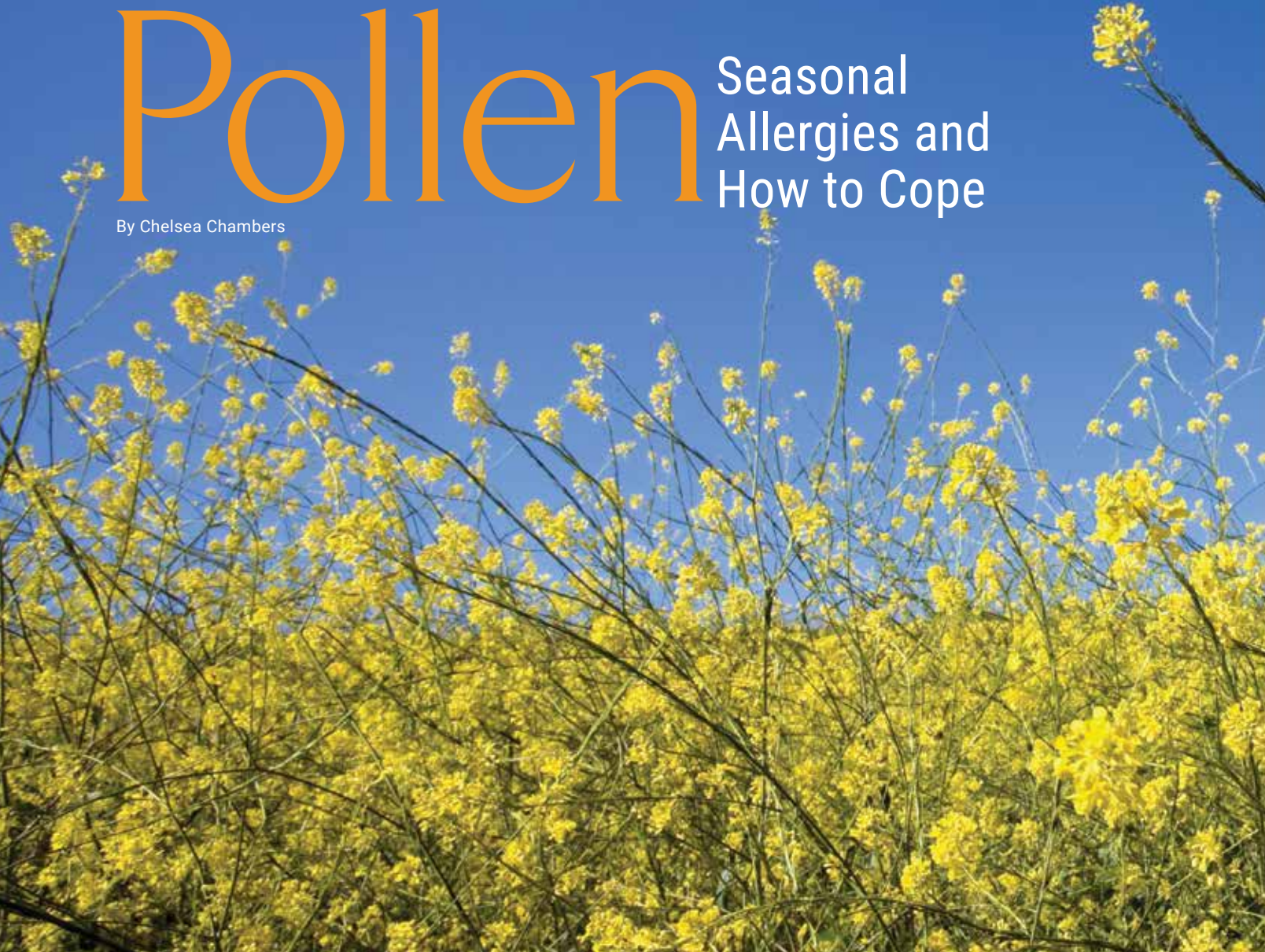
These five simple steps also apply to a virtual health visit, which became a more popular option during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are scheduling time with your provider virtually, you'll need to take one additional step — be sure you test the conferencing or video technology you plan to use prior to your visit.

Fallin', for

Pollen

Seasonal Allergies and How to Cope

By Chelsea Chambers



The seasons are changing, the leaves are ablaze with color, and the air turns cooler with each passing day — it is truly a beautiful time of year in New England. Despite the natural beauty, for the estimated 50 million Americans suffering from fall allergies, it's a whole different story.

What can cause fall allergies?

The primary culprits of seasonal allergies can persist well into frost season — namely, mold and pollen. Mold can be found anywhere, anytime, indoors and out. Tree pollen, such as those from maple, oak

and birch, can spread throughout the growing season. Grasses and low-to-the-ground weeds may also be a cause for concern.

Perhaps the biggest allergen of all is ragweed. This plant produces tiny yellow flowers with extremely high levels of pollen. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America estimates that between 10% and 20% of the American population (more than 40 million people) have an allergic reaction to ragweed specifically. And because ragweed pollen is so small and light, it can travel hundreds of miles by air. So even if you aren't in close proximity, the allergy-riddled plant can still make its way into your home, eyes and sinuses.

What are the symptoms of allergies?

Allergy symptoms vary from person to person, which is why it can often be difficult to diagnose without proper testing. But on average, most people experience the following symptoms:

Most common symptoms may include:

- Sneezing
- Runny, stuffed or clogged nose
- Itchy, watery eyes that may be red in color
- Shortness of breath or chest tightness

- Cough
- Swelling of the face, tongue, eyes or lips
- Dark circles around the eyes
- Dry, cracked skin
- Headaches

Other less common symptoms may include:

- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Poor sleep quality resulting in grogginess

What can be done?

If you've already ruled out COVID-19 and can confirm your symptoms are allergy-induced, then there are options to find relief. Aside from a discussion with your health care provider and finding the right allergy medicine for you, there are a few things to try to reduce the impacts of seasonal allergies.

- Keep track of pollen counts. Pollen.com and the weather apps on most smartphones will calculate these totals for you.
- Stay inside on windy, dry days.
- Wear a mask when doing outside chores.

- Take off outside layers before going into your home to avoid spreading allergens indoors. Pollen can also adhere to clothes and skin.
- Avoid outdoor activities in the morning, as pollen counts are at their highest at this time.
- Vacuum floors often with a high efficiency or HEPA filter vacuum cleaner.
- Be sure to keep your windows closed and look into air filtration options, which have been shown to reduce the effects of some allergens.



Prevention and Detection

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Chelsea Chambers

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization announced that breast cancer was the most common cancer on a global scale, substantially surpassing lung, liver and cervical cancer. In fact, The National Cancer Institute anticipates a diagnosis of more than 280,000 new breast cancer cases in 2021 in the U.S. alone. This is the number one reason why it is imperative to get frequent screenings and do regular self-screening. Early detection can be a lifesaver. And keep in mind, while dramatically lower, men can also be at risk for breast cancer. Today, nearly 2,000 men are diagnosed annually.

Screening

A screening is a preemptive check for disease, typically done before symptoms appear. If something is found, screenings can also help detect whether cancer cells are slow- or fast-growing. Early detection is the primary reason for screening.

The current guidance, while ever-changing, is that women in their mid 40s should begin regular screening practices, ideally on an annual basis. However, those with a history of breast cancer in their families should start considerably earlier. Screening options may include mammogram, MRI, breast exam, thermography and more.

Self-Screening

A good starting place for everyone, regardless of age or risk level, is at-home self-screening,

which should be done at least on a monthly basis. Here's how:

Step 1: Begin with a visual examination. Take note of any obvious changes in size, shape or color.

Step 2: Raise your arms and repeat step one.

Step 3: Lay flat on your back. With a firm touch of your fingers, move in a circular motion around each breast, one at a time.

Step 4: Repeat step three while sitting or standing. Carefully feel for any noticeable lumps or changes in tissue.

Step 5: Take note of any changes and discuss them with your healthcare provider right away.

Prevention

If you do have a family history of breast cancer, or simply want to take extra precautions, there are some additional steps to help protect yourself.

- **Limit alcohol**
- **Quit smoking**
- **Maintain a healthy weight**
- **Eat well and avoid processed foods**
- **Educate yourself** and talk with your physician about the possible risks of hormone replacement therapy drugs. Many have been linked to cancer cell growth.

Welcome to the Family

Quarantine Companions

By Chelsea Chambers

During the pandemic, many people across the nation welcomed new family members by giving an animal a loving home — kudos to you! That's been a wonderful thing for most families, as they've experienced not only the daily joy pets can bring to a household, but also an improved overall quality of life.

Love, Companionship and Laughter

It's a demonstrable fact that pets help humans reduce their stress levels — when they're not contributing to them — which improves emotional health. When the pandemic brought worry, working from home, mask mandates, home schooling and more, pets delivered their humans much-needed love, companionship and laughter. Just as importantly, our pets serve as a constant reminder to live in the present, enjoy the little things and appreciate each day.

Improved Health

According to a recent study from the American Heart Association, pet owners — specifically dog owners — were 54% more likely to get their recommended daily exercise. So, beyond the emotional benefits a pet can provide, they also often encourage us to get outside and move — whether we're walking, running or playing. As a result, pet owners typically enjoy better heart health than non-pet owners.

In New England, autumn is just about here. It brings a unique opportunity to enjoy the outdoors in cooler temperatures. Get out there, make the most of it and enjoy some quality time with your favorite canine walking companion.





Open and Honest

A Path to Hope, Happiness and Good Mental Health

By Rachel Evensen

In the wake of COVID-19, mental health has become a more prominent issue than ever. But individuals seeking treatment for their mental health issues often face stigma associated with their condition. To encourage patients to seek the care they need, St. Mary's Health System has launched a campaign with the goal of sharing personal stories and educating the public on mental health.

The system has partnered with WGME-TV (Channel 13) to create the program "Mental Health Monday." Monthly, one of St. Mary's providers is interviewed about various mental health subjects, including depression, burnout, workplace anxiety and insomnia, acknowledging the challenges associated with these issues and encouraging patients to reach out for help.

As one of New England's most comprehensive behavioral health care facilities, **St. Mary's Health System** can put you on a path to hope, happiness and good mental health. If you have questions about our services or how to access them, please call **207.777.8700**.

St. Mary's is also building a new General Psychiatric unit set to open in November, 2021, that will create a comfortable and positive environment for patients. This includes converting double rooms to private rooms, where each patient has their own TV and shower, comforts patients in other areas of the hospital already have.

Michael E. Kelley, M.D., chief medical officer of Behavioral Health,

St. Mary's Health System, shared, "In the end, the fight to end mental health stigma comes down to something as simple as speaking openly and honestly about mental health issues. When people share their stories, others know they are not alone. With support and treatment, these issues can be helped."

Breast Cancer Awareness with Dr. Demers

During Breast Cancer Awareness month, Marc Demers, M.D., a fellowship-trained surgical oncologist at St. Mary's Health System and a provider within MaineHealth's Cancer Care Network, answers questions about breast health.

What are the greatest risk factors for breast cancer?

During a woman's lifetime, the chance of getting breast cancer is about one in eight. Some breast cancer risk factors like gender, age and family history are beyond your control, but others like weight, activity and alcohol intake can limit your risks. Women who have multiple children earlier in life and breastfeed for longer than six months have lower risk because of reduced estrogen exposure. Early menopause reduces risk for the same reason. Breast cancer in men is not common, but it does occur. About one breast cancer in 100 occurs in males. Any lump in a man's breast should be evaluated by a doctor immediately.

When is the best time to start getting mammograms?

According to the American College of Radiology, women at average risk for breast cancer should have annual screening mammograms starting at age 40. Women at high risk for breast cancer — those with a strong family history of the disease or those with documented BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 gene mutations — should start having mammograms earlier, and those decisions are best made together with your physician.

What should you expect from your screening mammogram?

Mammograms are breast images that help detect cancer early, when tumors are small and the opportunities for treatment are highest, usually years before they can be felt by hand. For your screening mammogram, you will be in a private room with your mammography technician, undressed from the waist up in a special gown. Each breast will be compressed between two plates of the mammography machine while two images are taken of each breast. If a woman is called back for additional studies, focused mammograms will be performed. Typically, these mammograms are also accompanied by breast ultrasound to provide even more information. A 3D mammography, also known as breast tomosynthesis, is also a commonly used tool to find breast cancer early, especially in women with dense breasts.

What are the symptoms of breast cancer?

- Lumps, redness or swelling in the breast
- Skin dimpling, thickening or puckering
- Changes in breast size or shape
- Changes in the nipple, such as nipple inversion or non-milky discharge
- Swollen lymph nodes under the arm

How is breast cancer treated?

Once cancer is confirmed with a needle biopsy, surgery is the first and most common treatment for most breast cancers and may be followed by radiation, chemotherapy or hormone therapy. For aggressive cancers, chemotherapy is the first step to attack the cancer wherever it lies within the body, followed by surgery and radiation, if needed.

For more information, contact your provider.

Fit to the Finish

Stepping up for a Healthier Community

By Cheri Hinshelwood



Any great journey begins with a first step. No one knows this better than Jenny Cowie, co-chair and champion of the St. Mary's Health System Commit to Get Fit Challenge. This year marks the eighth annual event in Lewiston, an event that has encouraged thousands of first steps for healthier lives in the Lewiston-Auburn area.

This year's in-person event promises something for everyone with a 3K walk and 5K run. Company-sponsored teams faithful to improving their own health, and that of the greater community, will join individuals and families on the course.

Scheduled for Saturday, October 16, the event has higher goals than improving individual fitness. The Challenge also sets the bar to improve

the health and wellbeing of people across central Maine. Proceeds raised from the modest registration fees benefit the St. Mary's Nutrition Center to assist by providing meals, grocery assistance and food accessibility through the Lots to Gardens program to those in need.

"We attend to the whole person," said Cowie. "The thing I love most is seeing 5-, 6- and 7-year-olds running toward the finish line with the crowds cheering them on. I'm happy to see them get hooked on

health and wellness, because this is a lifelong journey."

The Commit to Get Fit Challenge typically draws hundreds of participants who make a commitment to their health and wellness. Some even make it a

Since its inception eight years ago, the **Commit to Get Fit Challenge** has raised nearly **\$200,000** for the Nutrition Center, helping it support equitable access to healthy food and educational opportunities for all ages. For more information about this event or to register, please visit stmarysmaine.com.

family tradition. Cowie said, "We're trying to break our previous record by registering over 500 participants this year."

Benefits of regular exercise include feeling happier as a result of better regulating stress and anxiety, weight loss, improved bone and muscle health, increased energy, sharper mind, better skin, improved blood sugar, better brain function and more.

"Fitness is not a single event; it's a lifestyle," said Cowie.

Supporting a Shift in Thinking

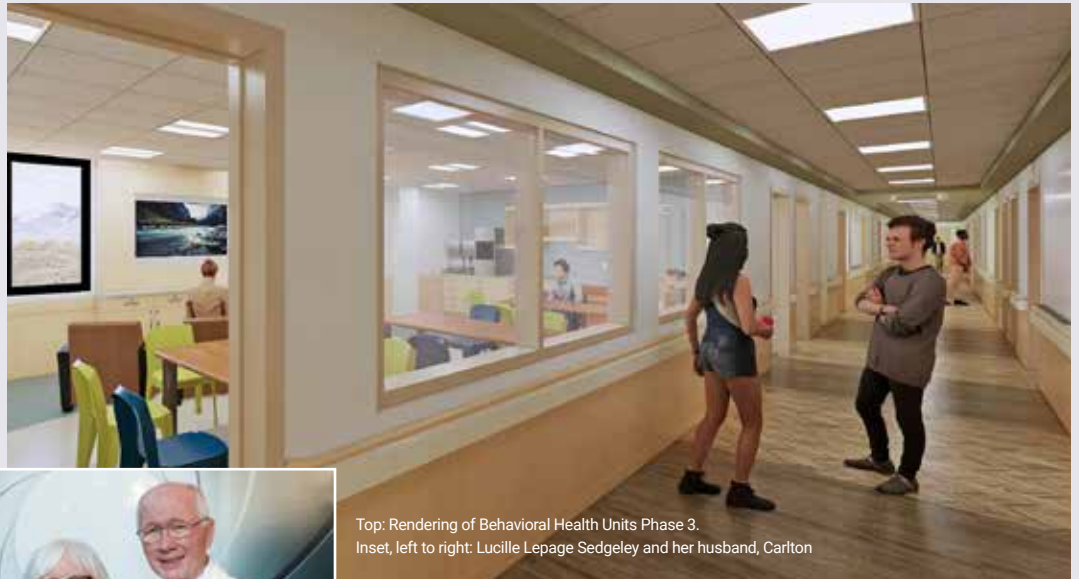
Third Phase of Behavioral Health Expansion Nears Completion

By Robert A. Poarch

This October, inpatient psychiatric care patients will be moved from the hospital's oldest building into a brand-new space. This will complete a three-phase plan that began in 2017 to proactively address the local community's growing need for behavioral health care. The renovation and expansion of St. Mary's Behavioral Health program not only includes a new space, it also features private rooms, increased natural light and enhanced safety features.

Michael E. Kelley, M.D., chief medical officer of behavioral health, St. Mary's Health System, explained, "In 2017, during phase-one of this project, the Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Unit was relocated into a spacious, renovated contemporary area in the hospital. Since then we've been able to see far more patients than ever before. Our patient's length of stay is shorter because they respond well to having a private room and being treated in a much more positive environment. In addition, the new space allowed us to expand our staff and services and that typically translates to improved treatment and a better patient experience."

The new center will be named in honor of Carlton and Lucille Lepage Sedgeley, who donated \$1 million to the project. They hope



Top: Rendering of Behavioral Health Units Phase 3.
Inset, left to right: Lucille Lepage Sedgeley and her husband, Carlton

this gift will help end the stigma associated with addiction and mental health issues and the community will have better access to the care they needed.

"Behavioral health is an issue that affects many individuals and families," said Kelley. "Unfortunately, even today, some people are hesitant to openly discuss it. Thankfully, that is changing and at St. Mary's we're proud to be a part of that shift in thinking by remaining committed to improving and expanding our behavioral health facilities and care."

If you're interested in supporting important projects like these, please contact the Foundation office at 207.777.8863.



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Caring for the young and the young at heart

Establishing a relationship with a primary care provider is one of the smartest things you can do to help ensure your long-term health.

Our primary care locations in Lewiston, Auburn and Poland are welcoming new patients now.

A photograph of two women smiling and hugging. The woman on the left is older, with short white hair and glasses, wearing a black and white patterned cardigan over a black top. The woman on the right is younger, with dark hair, wearing a black top and a black scarf. They are both smiling warmly at each other.

Call 207.777.8899 to request an appointment.