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A Healthy Investment

Program Offers a More Personalized Approach to Primary Care

Every Friday morning, Brenda Minor, M.D., a primary care physician with North Shore Physicians Group (NSPG), laces up her sneakers and joins a group of patients at the Northshore Mall or a nearby park for their weekly “Walk with a Doc” walking club.

Sometimes they chat about health and wellness topics or someone might ask about their medication, but many times they just talk about what’s going on in their lives. “The walking group has been a great way for me to get to know my patients on a different level, while helping them to incorporate more exercise into their lives,” explains Dr. Minor. “Things will come up in conversation that they might not mention in an office visit, which gives me a better insight into their overall health. It enables us to be more proactive and prevent health issues before they become a bigger problem.”

“Walk with a Doc” is just one of the new services that Dr. Minor has been able to offer since fundamentally changing the way she manages her practice. In early 2012 she and two other NSPG physicians—John Szymanski, M.D., and Maurice Greenbaum, M.D.—became affiliated with MDVIP, a new practice model that enables them to reduce the size of their practices but adopt a more personalized approach to medicine.

“This latter point, Dr. Szymanski says, is important to emphasize in today’s increasingly complex healthcare environment. “As part of this program, we will oversee each patient’s care across the entire continuum, whether it’s a consultation with a specialist, a hospital visit, home care or rehab,” he explains. “We will act as the single point of contact for other caregivers and family members, which makes the whole communication process much easier and less stressful.”

The benefits of the concierge-style practice extend to the physicians as well. “I had thought about scaling back a bit, but now I can focus on providing care more thoroughly to a smaller number of patients,” says Dr. Minor. “It’s very invigorating at this point in my career to be able to invest so much time in my patients.” The lighter patient load leaves her more time to organize wellness events and lectures on nutrition, complementary therapies, yoga and other exercise options.

To learn more about the benefits of NSPG’s concierge medicine practices, or to make an appointment, please contact:

Maurice Greenbaum, M.D.
55 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA
978-745-1200

Brenda Minor, M.D.
1 Hutchinson Drive, Danvers, MA
978-774-7171

John Szymanski, M.D.
331 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA
978-745-1200

As part of the MDVIP program, Brenda Minor, M.D. (in blue jacket), walks with a group of her patients.
T
o say that Marblehead resident and kindergarten teacher Debra Geaney, 63, is an active woman would be an understatement. A former collegiate gymnast, she has enjoyed athletic pursuits over the years, including skiing, triathlons, biking, spinning, golfing and even piloting planes.

So it’s even more surprising that just bending down to get on her students’ level caused so much pain in her hips that she was changing her daily routine and thinking about her future with limited movement. “I started avoiding stairs and thinking that we might have to sell our house and move to a one-level home,” says Geaney.

It also landed her in the middle of an emerging medical device controversy—the ongoing safety of metal-on-metal (MoM) hip replacements, which has resulted in device recalls, class action lawsuits and publicity about the issue. (Please see next page for more details.)

Her struggles with hip pain began in the fall of 2006 when she was practicing emergency procedures in her multi-engine airplane. “I was working on single-engine stalls, which required me to push the rudder pedal full force with one leg to keep the plane flying on course,” she explains. “After I landed, my right hip felt sore and when I walked. Within a few days, I started to limp.”

Dr. Martin stood out as a surgeon who wanted to remain active without having to undergo a second replacement or revision surgery later in life. Within the last five years, however, it became apparent that some of the metal-on-metal replacements were failing at higher rates than others. Issues emerged over toxicity resulting from the two metal surfaces grinding against each other and releasing metal ions into the surrounding tissue and blood.

There were also design issues with the implants that compromised successful implant fixation. One device manufacturer actually recalled one of their implants in 2010. Similar devices remain on the market, as well as other metal-on-metal bearings, although most orthopedic surgeons are no longer implanting them but have returned to using polyethylene and ceramic bearings.

During her annual follow-up visit in 2011, Dr. Murzic told her about certain metal-on-metal hip devices that were under scrutiny for failing to perform as well as others. She also learned that, in fact, she had a metal-on-metal hip implant, but not the one that was being recalled. As a precaution, Dr. Murzic ordered a blood test to measure the metal ion levels in her blood, an indicator of excessive wear on the implant. “My blood levels were elevated, but because I wasn’t experiencing any pain, we decided to continue to monitor it,” says Geaney.

A few months later, Geaney began experiencing pain again. She went back to Dr. Murzic, and another blood test revealed even higher levels of metal ions. She also had a special MRI that showed cysts in the muscles surrounding the hip replacement, indicating that the device was failing.

In April 2012, Dr. Murzic performed revision surgery on both hips, replacing the metal liner on the socket of the joint with a polyethylene version. Two short months later, she was pain free and keeping up with her husband and young grandchildren at Disney World.

“Outside of the revision, Dr. Murzic has done a great job,” says Geaney. “The device recall has had orthopedic effects of high serum metal ions are, but we know that high concentrations of metal ions in the hip joint can be damaging to surrounding muscle and soft tissue.”

“W e’re really lucky to have such a great network of physicians locally. When I needed surgery, I knew I could get great care at NSMC,” says Geaney. “As you get older, you often have more medical issues, and it’s so reassuring that NSMC and Partners has such a broad network of specialists available to us.”

Debra Geaney, a teacher in Marblehead, remains active thanks to hip revision surgery.
Physician Q&A

Q | My daughter is 13 and I’m not sure when she should start seeing a gynecologist. What is the right age to take this step?

Teenage girls should go for their first appointment with their gynecologist between the ages of 13 and 15. The first visit is to check for normal development and also to familiarize them with their new doctor. This is a good way for your daughter to develop a relationship with her gynecologist so that she is comfortable sharing personal information in the future. This can include a discussion on general health, lifestyle and medical history. By 18, young women should go for their first gynecologic exam. This exam can include breast and pelvic exams; pap smears will begin at the age of 21. Yearly OB-GYN visits are important as part of routine health check-ups.

To contact Dr. Nathan, please call 978-741-3700.

Q | My son feels tired and coughs a lot when he exercises. Is he out of shape or could this be asthma?

It is normal to feel out of breath during or after exercising, especially when one is out of shape. The major difference is that out-of-shape children can catch their breath within minutes, where it takes much longer for someone with asthma to recover. Children with asthma also commonly experience a hacking cough, wheezing and chest tightness. They may also have an intermittent nighttime cough, even when they are well. Talk to your doctor to find out if your child may have asthma. Your doctor will take a complete history, perform a physical exam and may perform a breathing test called a pulmonary function test. Also, keep in mind that asthma is not a reason for your child to refrain from or stop exercising. When properly managed, children with asthma should be able to participate fully in all physical activities.

To contact Dr. Weintraub, please call 781-631-7800.

Q | I’m terrified of fracturing a hip. Is there anything I can do to reduce my risk?

There are many measures you can take to prevent fractures of all types, including hip fractures. An important factor is to optimize bone health. Obtaining adequate levels of all key bone nutrients is important, such as getting enough calcium and vitamin D. Physical activity is especially important for preventing hip fractures because exercise helps you maintain mobility and balance as you age, as well as strengthens your bones. Additionally, preserve your bone density by avoiding excessive drinking and not smoking. About 90 percent of hip fractures happen due to a fall, so keeping your floor clear of clutter can help prevent falls and, in turn, fractures. To contact Dr. Naz, please call 781-593-3400.

Calendar

North Shore Medical Center offers a wide range of health programs, classes, support groups and special events at our locations in Salem, Lynn and Danvers.

Disease Management

Cardiac Rehabilitation
781-477-3300
Cardiac Risk Reduction
781-477-3900
Diabetes Management Program
781-477-3499 (Lynn, Gloucester)
Living Well with Heart Failure
978-354-2577
Pulmonary Rehabilitation
781-477-3102
Surgical Weight Management
978-825-6505

Wellness Classes and Services

• Acupuncture
• Chair Strength Training for Seniors
• Chi Gong
• CPR
• Fitness Gym
• Hypnotherapy
• LEARN Program for Weight Control
• Massage
• Meditation
• Personal Training
• Reiki
• Smoking Cessation
• Tai Chi
• Exercise for Overweight Teens (9-15)
• Total Body Conditioning
• Yoga & Yogalates

Support Groups

Please contact the following organizations for meeting times and locations.

Addiction Recovery
www.smartrecovery.org
ADHD Parent Support Group
978-354-2600
Al-Anon
908-366-0956
Asthma and Food Allergy Support Group
781-598-5932
Bereavement: Fetal/Newborn Loss
978-354-3357
Bipolar Disorder Parent Support Group
978-354-2600

Breastfeeding Support Group
978-354-3263
CPAP Support Group
978-354-4197
Depression Support Group (for teens)
978-354-2670
Diabetes Management Support Group
978-347-3409
Fibromyalgia Support Group
866-670-2239
Gastric Bypass, Band and Sleeve Support Group (pre- and post-op support)
978-825-6595
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group
781-741-1215 x2263
Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)
781-593-5224
HAWC (Healing Abuse Working (GRASP)
781-641-2303
Parents Helping Parents
978-354-2600
Sibshop Support Group (for siblings of children with special needs)
978-354-2600
Stress Reduction Clinic (adults and teens)
978-354-2670
Stroke Support Group
781-631-0114

To register online or sign up for advanced email notification of class registration, visit nsmc.partners.org, or call 1-866-676-2239.
Type 2 diabetes, the pancreas does not secrete sufficient insulin, and the body is resistant to it. Diabetes can, among other things, contribute to eye disorders and blindness, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, limb amputation and nerve damage. It can affect pregnancy and cause birth defects as well. Although diabetes is a chronic and incurable disease (with the exception of gestational diabetes), with proper medical care, clinical therapies, diet, hygiene and exercise, symptoms and complications can be successfully treated and managed.

Getting Control
Earlier this year, Barlow made an appointment with Shant Parseghian, M.D., an NSMC endocrinologist who specializes in caring for patients with diabetes, because his blood sugar was “getting a bit out of control” after a recent back surgery. While at that appointment, he learned about a shared medical appointment that Dr. Parseghian holds for patients with diabetes and thought it sounded appealing. “I had never heard of shared medical appointments, but it sounded like a good idea to be around other people grappling with the same issues,” says Barlow.

The bi-weekly appointments typically have four patients or more and start with a five-minute orientation about the plan for the appointment. All patients sign a confidentiality agreement not to share information about other patients. A medical assistant takes the blood pressure readings of all patients and then Dr. Parseghian reviews each patient’s case, informing about other patients. A group about a specific subject and the doctor or nutritionist educates the patients share tips or challenges. The bi-weekly appointments typically have four patients or more and start with a five-minute orientation about the plan for the appointment. All patients sign a confidentiality agreement not to share information about other patients. A medical assistant takes the blood pressure readings of all patients and then Dr. Parseghian reviews each patient’s case, informing about other patients. A group about a specific subject and the doctor or nutritionist educates the patients share tips or challenges.

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To learn more about the NSMC Diabetes Management Program, please call 781-477-3409.

“Getting the right information at the right time is the most important thing,” says Barlow. “They give me an added level of support and education that really helps keep me on track.”

“I liked the people in the group appointment,” says Barlow. “They were all there for the right reasons, because they wanted to learn and benefit from all the information being provided by Dr. Parseghian. It had a very positive atmosphere.”

With better-focused education from his healthcare team and the added support of other patients, Barlow now feels like he is taking more control of his health. He has been more consistent with taking his diabetes medications and is trying to live an all-around healthier lifestyle. He is also learning from the experiences of the other patients in the shared medical appointments and the efforts they find successful in controlling their disease.

“The shared medical appointments are a great way to augment my individual appointments with Dr. Parseghian,” says Barlow. “They give me an added level of support and education that really helps keep me on track.”

To learn more about shared medical appointments for diabetes, please call 978-542-0331.

THE DIABETES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Diabetes Management Program at North Shore Medical Center helps patients and their families learn the necessary skills for managing diabetes through diet, medication and exercise. Certified by the American Diabetes Association, the program includes individualized assessment, goal-setting for optimal blood sugar management, nutrition recommendations and meal planning. Patients will also receive instructions in blood sugar monitoring, glucometer reading, oral medication or insulin management, insulin pump initiation and management.

In small group classes offered in Lynn and Gloucester, patients discuss real-life topics including eating in restaurants, reading food labels and carbohydrate counting. They discuss the benefits of exercise, what to do when you are sick and how to deal with the stress of having diabetes.

To learn more about the NSMC Diabetes Management Program, please call 781-477-3409.

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Strength in Numbers

Shared Medical Appointments Offer Extra Support for Diabetes Patients

Lynn resident Scott Barlow, 48, was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes 10 years ago and, by his own admission, didn’t take the news too seriously. “I tried to cut back on soda and stay away from sweets, but I wasn’t very well informed on nutrition and really did the bare minimum,” he says. A truck driver who worked long, physically demanding 12-hour shifts, Barlow says that he tended to eat on the run, which meant a lot of unhealthy fast food. His long days also meant that he usually didn’t have enough time or energy to exercise when he got home. A work-related injury further limited his physical capabilities and he suddenly found his health moving in a downward spiral. “I started gaining weight and my fight with diabetes started to get really tough.”

What is Diabetes?
Diabetes is a serious disease, which, if not controlled, can be life threatening. It is often associated with long-term complications that can affect every system and part of the body. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the disease. In a healthy person, the pancreas produces insulin that helps to metabolize glucose and starches. In a patient with
North Shore Medical Center was recently named to U.S. News and World Report’s list of the 24 best hospitals in Massachusetts, joining Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in receiving the honor. NSMC also received regional accolades from the magazine, earning a Best Hospitals designation in the Greater Boston rankings, and was designated as a high-performing hospital in both geriatrics and pulmonology based on clinical quality data like patient survival, safety and volume. NSMC is the only North Shore hospital to be named to both lists.

NSMC has launched a mobile website to make it easier to find information about the medical center using a smartphone—that is, an iPhone, Android or similar device. NSMC’s mobile website is a streamlined version of its full website that has been configured to fit on any smart phone or tablet computer screen. With simple graphics and bold navigation, the site enables visitors to quickly find a physician, directions to any NSMC facility, general information and contact phone numbers and email addresses.

NSMC’s Heart-Bypass Surgery Program has received a three-star rating—the highest available—from Consumer Reports magazine for the third year in a row. NSMC is one of only 27 heart surgery practices in the country, including just three in Massachusetts, to receive this designation. Ratings were based on information collected by the American Society of Thoracic Surgeons on measures such as survival rates, complications, proper medication use and optimal surgical technique. NSMC is one of only three community hospitals in the Commonwealth with a cardiac surgery program, and the only one on the North Shore.

NSMC Salem and Union Hospitals have received the American Stroke Association’s Get With The Guidelines®—Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. This award recognizes NSMC’s commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

North Shore Pulmonary Associates, a practice of intensivists, pulmonologists and sleep specialists with a long association with NSMC, has joined North Shore Physicians Group (NSPG), NSMC’s affiliated multi-specialty group practice. Working closely with NSPG’s primary and specialty care physicians, this new association will ensure better coordinated care for patients diagnosed with respiratory issues and chronic lung diseases. Expanded use of electronic medical records and the secure electronic patient portal, Patient Gateway, will also enhance both quality and satisfaction.

North Shore Pulmonary Associates will continue to care for patients in their offices at Highland Hall, 55 Highland Avenue in Salem.
**NSMC is dedicated to primary care.**

Our primary care physicians are ready to care for you and your family. In the past year, we have welcomed several new primary care physicians to the North Shore, which means that many of our PCPs can offer you and your family an appointment with little to no wait time. And to provide you with the best care possible, all of our primary care offices use electronic medical records. These doctors are your connection to the Mass General/North Shore Center for Outpatient Care in Danvers as well as the full services of North Shore Medical Center and Partners Healthcare.

To learn more about our primary care physicians, please call our Physician Finder service at 1-877-NSMC-MDs (1-877-676-2637) or visit us online at nsmc.partners.org.