

# AMERICA’S HEALTHIEST HOMETOWN

A weekly report on The Villages’ efforts to become “America’s Healthiest Hometown” compiled by Daily Sun Ombudsman **Larry D. Croom**. Email [larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com). Or call him at 753-1119, ext. 9366.

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### Did you know?

Karen Cotman, manager at the Belleview Care Center, is a big fan of the 2004 romantic drama “The Notebook,” which stars Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams as a young couple who fall in love in the 1940s.

## Fixing health care: All about ARNP India Dillion

Primary care doctors, specialists and other medical providers have been recruited as part of an initiative to revamp health care right here in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown. The Villages Health is partnering with USF Health to bring in family doctors, care providers and specialists who will work as a team, all in the best interests of serving patients. This weekly feature will introduce these innovative medical providers who have joined this effort.

### Why did you decide to become a nurse practitioner?

So I could further advance in my career. I was a registered nurse. I started in 2001 and worked in an open-heart intensive care unit. After awhile, I just wanted a little bit more of a challenge and to advance. I still wanted to stay somewhat in patient care. I didn’t want to get away from the bedside completely, and I felt that the nurse practitioner role would be the best way that I could still interact with patients and still do nursing to a certain degree. But it would be a little bit more challenging.

### What is your favorite thing about being a nurse practitioner?

I like the interaction with the physicians, working a little bit more closely with them as far as learning how to care for patients in a different way. We have some autonomy, but we still work with a team. I still get to interact with patients, and I really like that because I didn’t want to get away from being with the patients completely.

### How will you feel if this initiative is picked up by other communities and you were in on the



**Care Center:** Pinellas  
**Age:** 35  
**Associate’s degree:** Lake-Sumter Community College  
**Bachelor’s degree:** University of Central Florida  
**Master’s degree:** Frontier Nursing University (Hyden, Kentucky)  
**Certified:** Advanced registered nurse practitioner

### ground floor of it?

I think it’s excellent. There’s nothing better than being the starters for something that potentially could be just great for our whole country. I’d be very honored to be a part of something, especially a health initiative such as this, that could save lives ultimately.



Dr. Nasseer Masoodi, right, looks over a patient’s chart with Irma Gravier, a licensed practical nurse, at the Santa Barbara Care Center recently. **George Horsford / Daily Sun**

# TEAM APPROACH

For Villages Health providers, collegiality high on priority list

By **LARRY D. CROOM** / DAILY SUN OMBUDSMAN

**T**eamwork. It’s a simple term that signifies a cooperative or coordinated effort on the part of a group working together in the interests of a common cause. Teamwork might be thought of mostly in the sports world, but when it comes to medicine and providing primary and specialty care in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown, it’s easily one of the most important concepts on the table.

“There was a day when there was a doctor and a nurse and the two of them somehow got it all done,” said Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages Health. “But those days are gone. This is a team sport, and in order for the physician to do a good job, a lot more needs to be done than before. We need to be asking a lot more than doctors have traditionally asked. We need to be aware of preventative measures that the patient may not even know to be asking about.”

In fact, Hildner said, there are so many things that a doctor must keep track of for each patient that having a team in place to help is truly a necessity.

“It’s like holding up cue cards,” Hildner said. “They’re helping the doctor know where he or she is going and what needs to be done.”

“When you’ve got that kind of help, you’re just a better doctor and the patient is getting better care.”

At The Villages Health, that teams involves many different roles, from physician extender to nurses to medical assistants to X-ray techs to audiologists to phlebotomists, to name a few.

Toss in those who work on the business side of the equation, as well as the greeters, receptionists and schedulers, and the team that takes care of Villagers is as diverse as it is talented.

“The team is the whole big picture,” said Dr. Nasseer Masoodi, who practices at the Santa Barbara Care Center. “It starts with the first person that they meet when they enter our health care facilities, whether it is a greeter or whether it’s a front-desk person. Every person who comes in contact with that patient is part of the team, especially if we talk about the team that provides hands-on medical help to our patients.”

Masoodi added that every single member of the team can make or break the experience for patients.

“We try to make sure that we all stay on the same page, because it’s so important for all the team members to have the same kind of vision and mission,” Masoodi said. “That’s the only way for us to move forward in this effort.”

Marykate Drake, a physician extender at the Pinellas Care Center who works with Dr. Karla Noel, said she makes it a point to have new patients meet as many team members as possible.

“Every physician has a physician buddy and they have at least one extender, sometimes two,” said Drake, a physician assistant who also has a background in health care administration. “We want you to meet those members because for your normal, follow-up appointments, you’re most likely going to see your primary care physician.



**Bill Mitchell / Daily Sun**  
Jennifer Jordahl, an advanced registered nurse practitioner at the Pinellas Care Center, says she coordinates patient care very closely with physician Dr. Karla Noel.

**Coming June 29**  
Villages Health providers say teamwork centers around their patients.

But when you’re sick and you need to come today, then it’s likely you’re going to see an extender. We want you to know that extender before you come in the door.”

Jamie Kinsey, a physician assistant who works with Dr. J.D. Steed at the Belleview Care Center, said she is a huge fan of the team approach to medical care.

“You know the old saying, ‘two heads are better than one?’ Well, how about five or six or eight heads? That’s even better,” said Kinsey, who was

a paramedic before becoming a physician assistant. “You have less chance of missing something and more opportunity for other thoughts and other points of view. That, in itself, takes care of patients in a better manner than just one person doing everything.”

Jennifer Jordahl, a nurse practitioner who works with Noel at the Pinellas Care Center, agreed.

“I think it’s an amazing experience, and the patient’s getting the best of both worlds,” she said. “Not only does the medical assistant start planning the chart, but I go through the charts for the day. Then I discuss anything, even before the patient comes in, with Dr. Noel. The patients really benefit from the whole, the way the team works together.”

### Creating America’s Healthiest Hometown

### When patients come to The Villages Health, are they seeing a whole team of medical providers?

**“***We don’t work alone, that’s for sure. We each have our own support staff—medical assistants and nurses that are here to facilitate this patient care. When somebody walks in the door, they don’t just step in the room and we follow them in and begin. There’s a long process — being triaged, finding out their issues, refilling medications, updating the chart. It’s quite a process. If we, as providers, try to do all that ourselves, we might see four people a day. It’s just not possible.”*



**David Fischer,**  
physician assistant,  
Colony Care Center

## Care Centers in The Villages

### Primary care

**The Villages Health Colony Care Center**  
280 Farner Place, 674-1710

**The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center**  
1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 674-1740

**The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center**  
2485 Pinellas Place, 674-1720

**The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center**  
8877 S.E. 165th Mulberry Lane, 674-1750

**The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center**  
1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100, 674-1760