

# 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.

Contact The Villages Health at 352-674-1700 or visit the website at [thevillageshealth.com](http://thevillageshealth.com).

**Did you know?**

Dr. Glen Morgan, a primary care physician at the Mulberry Grove Care Center, is a fan of the 2004 biblical drama “The Passion of the Christ,” which was directed by Mel Gibson and starred actor Jim Caviezel as Jesus Christ.

## Fixing health care: All about Dr. Kimberly Giovannelli

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 bringing 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 doctor?**

I came from medicine. My father’s a doctor and my mom’s a nurse. We always played hospital in our house, and I just felt like my parents had these amazing powers and they could take care of everybody. They instilled a lot of good skills in me. I picked family medicine because I wanted to do a little bit of everything and know a little bit about each field – kind of a jack-of-all-trades kind of doctor.

**What is your favorite thing about being a doctor?**

Teaching. I really love to be able to talk to patients and really educate them on what’s going on, and kind of put it into terms that really makes them realize how they can help themselves to get better on their own.

**How do you feel about being a part of The Villages Health?**

I love it. That’s exactly why I chose this job. Thirty-minute patient visits are an amazing commodity, and no other job that I interviewed for allowed that for me. In primary care, especially, you have so many things to go over and so many things to really teach the patient to empower them. You just can’t do it in 15 minutes.

**What is your personal philosophy on health care?**

There are so many things that are going on right now and I think that our organization is part of a new wave. It’s what the philosophy should be – spend more time with the patient, prevent diseases and have it more on the front end than worrying about health care in the hospital and after



**Care Center:** Santa Barbara  
**Age:** 30  
**Undergraduate:** Georgia Southern University  
**Medical school:** University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine  
**Internship, residency:** Bayfront Family Medicine Center and All Children’s Hospital (St. Petersburg)  
**Board Certified:** American Board of Family Medicine

when, frankly, sometimes it’s too late. I believe in preventative medicine. I believe in taking care of the patient as a whole – spending the time to do it right the first time.

**How will you feel if you are on the ground floor of a health-care initiative that’s picked up and used in other communities?**

Wonderful. That’s what I hope happens. We’re on the front of this whole plan and this new-age way of thinking, which is actually an old, traditional way of thinking. I really hope that it is so successful that it takes off and it spreads like wildfire because that’s really how I believe it should be done.



George Horsford / Daily Sun

Dr. Joe Hildner, right, discusses a patient’s chart recently with Dr. Mirko Roethlisberger in the huddle zone area of the Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center. Hildner says he’s a big fan of Medicare Advantage because it allows doctors to take care of patients in a much more robust way.

# Empowering patients

Villages Health touts benefits of Medicare Advantage, preventive care

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

THE VILLAGES – Dr. Joe Hildner smiled when asked about the opportunities for improved health care that are available for both patients and physicians through Medicare Advantage plans.

“I am delighted to have discovered a whole new dynamic in how doctoring can be better and how patients’ needs and expectations can be exceeded,” said the chief medical officer of The Villages Health. “I’m just a better doctor. The care that I’m rendering is better and the patients are just happier with it.”

Medicare Advantage plans, which are available to those who are eligible for traditional Medicare, are administered by private insurance companies and often come with a variety of benefits, such as no premium, no or low co-pays, gym memberships and preventative dental, eyewear and hearing aid coverage, to name a few.

And unlike traditional Medicare, those Advantage plans offer an annual limit on out-of-pocket costs for medical services.

According to Dr. Elliot Sussman, chair of The Villages Health, one of the many good things about Medicare Advantage is that it’s designed to prevent patients from having health issues rather than just providing for treatment when they’re sick.

“There’s no question that we’re paid to keep patients well,” he said. “As we all get older, things wear out, things break down and things sometimes need replacing. We need to do all of those things, so

it’s not just prevention. But with Medicare Advantage, we can do things for patients that are just not available under Medicare Supplement or traditional, original Medicare.”

Hildner said another huge benefit is the data streams that are provided each month that show things like when prescriptions were filled and when preventative screenings, such as mammograms, are due. Hildner said physicians aren’t provided that kind of information about patients who are on traditional Medicare or Supplement plans.

“Let’s say your blood pressure is a little high and we know that there’s something not right about the way we understood you to be taking your medications,” he said. “I’m able to kind of go there and resolve it and help you understand which medicine is which and what we really ought to be doing.”

Hildner said those data streams also eliminate the risk of duplicate vaccines or unnecessary tests.

“If you come to us as a new patient, we’ll always ask you about your previous surgeries and hospital stays and conditions and allergies and so forth,” he said. “But there might be some details or things that a previous provider knows about you and entered into the system that just never really made it into your memory. We can see those things and it just puts us in a position to know more about a Medicare Advantage patient.”

Hildner said another important benefit is that Medicare Advantage patients who spend time in The Villages Regional Hospital have

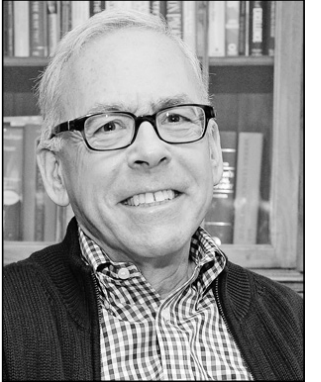
a Villages Health doctor as their attending physician.

“Your primary care doctor will come and visit you and then just make sure that our doctor who’s taking care of you knows about your medical history and the things that you’ve been working on together in the office,” Hildner said. “It’s peace of mind on both sides. Your doctor and the tending physician are able to talk personally and everyone just understands that this is going to be OK.”

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits for Medicare Advantage patients, Hildner added, is the use of nurse navigators – registered nurses that help make sure things are going smoothly for patients as they transition from the hospital to a rehabilitation facility or home to a caregiver.

“There might be a specialist that needs to see them and appointments that still need to be made,” Hildner said. “So if you’re going home on a Saturday and that office isn’t open, having the nurse navigator visit you in the hospital and get all that arranged, make sure that your follow-up appointments are made and that you understand what the new prescriptions are, it just makes that whole transition time more simplified. And you get that peace of mind that everything that should be happening in terms of your health care is happening.”

*UnitedHealthcare offers the only Medicare Advantage plans that are accepted by The Villages Health. For more information, visit any of the MedicareStores that are located at each town square or speak to a representative at any care center.*



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— **Dr. Elliot Sussman**, chair, The Villages Health

**Coming Nov. 2**

Villages Health doctors share their thoughts on Medicare Advantage and patient success stories.



Peter Travers / Daily Sun

**A special thanks:** Karen Doyle, a physician assistant at the Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center, speaks with visitors during a recent patient-appreciation fair at the facility. The next Villages Health patient-appreciation fair will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon at the Bellevue Care Center, 5051 SE 110th St. in Belleview, with singer George Robinson providing entertainment. The final event in the series of six fairs will be held Nov. 8 at the Santa Barbara Care Center, 1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., with entertainment by the 4 Valves Trumpet Club. According to Kathy Liefert, chief operating officer, the fairs are being held to show Villages Health patients how much they are appreciated and to provide pertinent information about Medicare options during the annual open enrollment period, which lasts until Dec. 7.