

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. Or call him at 753-1119, ext. 9366.

Contact The Villages Health at 352-674-1700 or visit the website at thevillageshealth.com.

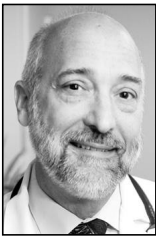
Did you know?

Cynthia Stewart, a physician assistant at the Pinellas Care Center, is a big fan of the 1965 classic movie "Doctor Zhivago" starring Omar Sharif, Julie Christie and Geraldine Chaplin.

Teamwork Q&A

Why does the team concept work so well in medicine?

There's a lot of other things that medical research has found that needs to be going on that may not be on your radar, but still needs to be taken care of.



If it's just on the doctor's shoulders to remember, "You're due for a tetanus shot. You need one every 10 years and it looks like it was nine and a half years ago." There's just so many things like that that need to be attended to that it just works better if a member of the team is in charge of that and they're feeding the doctor that information.

Dr. Joe Hildner,
chief medical officer,
The Villages Health

Can any member of the team make or break the experience for a patient?

It's very much true. If you

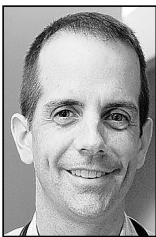


have one weak link, it can make your whole team weak. That's why in our huddles, we talk about patients. We talk about the teamwork. In our routine activities, we talk about the teamwork.

Dr. Nasseer Masoodi,
Santa Barbara Care Center

What is one of the most important things about the team concept?

We love the continuity, not only with our patients, but also with our staff. The doctor



is hooked up with an excellent medical assistant. Let's preserve that relationship because they get to know the patients and they can feed off each other. A lot of times, they know what the doctor's going to say before the doctor says it.

Dr. J.D. Steed,
medical director,
Belleview Care Center

When patients make appointments to come to The Villages Health, is their information reviewed before they arrive for the visit?

The nursing staff is reviewing it several weeks out, a week before, a day before. We look at it, as well as pre-visit planning. And then we look at it that



day after the nurses come out of the room and we review what's going on. So this is not looking at a chart cold and saying, "Hi, Mrs. Smith. Oh, I meant Mrs. Adams." This is, "Hey, I see that you're from Illinois. What part of Illinois?" That gives that interpersonal relationship and connection that I really find very valuable.

Dr. Karla Noel,
medical director,
Pinellas Care Center



Linda Wheeling, left, a nurse practitioner, talks about a patient with Dr. Brooks Betts in the huddle zone at the Colony Care Center recently. Betts says conversations between doctors and other team members occur constantly throughout the day.

Photos by George Horsford / Daily Sun

A special synergy

For Villages Health providers, teamwork centers around patients

By LARRY D. CROOM / DAILY SUN OMBUDSMAN

When it comes to teamwork in The Villages Health, it's really quite simple – every employee plays a vital role in making sure patients have a positive experience.

"Back in the old days, doctors were cowboys and they were being independent and doing everything themselves," said Dr. J.D. Steed, medical director of the Belleview Care Center. "But that's not where we need to be."

Steed said primary care doctors at The Villages Health are more like a race car driver who is surrounded by a team of professionals, all working together to get the job done.

"That driver doesn't go anywhere without someone filling up the gas, changing the tires, working on the electrical system and communicating throughout the whole place," he said. "So that's what we need to do. I have so much to do on each individual patient, whether it's preparing for the visit, making sure their labs are in place, any radiology studies are in place, taking phone calls and setting the appointments. It is a complete team effort."

Dr. Robert Aisenstat, of the Pinellas Care Center, said he would be "dead in the water" without a team of medical professionals that includes fellow doctors, physician extenders (nurse practitioners and physician assistants), nurses and medical assistants. "The doctors here don't exist without their team," he said. "We meet every morning to talk about our patients for that particular day and we

map out a plan."

Dr. Brooks Betts, of the Colony Care Center, said he also meets with his team each morning and one of the first things they talk about is how to improve their overall performance.

"Those are constant conversations," he said. "If I think something isn't working well, we talk about it and we say, 'OK, how can we handle this better the next time?'"

Dr. Karla Noel, who serves as medical director at the Pinellas Care Center, said it's important for her team to take ownership of the patients.

"We're all integrated as to what your best interests would be," she said. "The staff is so well-trained and so well-educated and really just there to help everybody and be involved."

Dr. Robert Reilly, medical director of the Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center, said one of the most important



Dr. Nasseer Masoodi, left, consults with Dr. Karla Noel, medical director of the Pinellas Care Center, recently. Noel says Villages Health medical providers take ownership of their patients and make excellent care a top priority.

Coming July 6
Physician assistants, nurse practitioners key to providing patient access.

visits for patients is their first, which occurs after they have filled out a new patient packet and submitted it to be entered into their record.

Reilly said a great thing about that packet is that it is completed by a member of the team and ready before the patient arrives for his or her first appointment. He said that allows patients to spend time talking with their doctor about concerns and future plans rather than using the majority of the allotted time to fill out documents.

"As I'm shaking the hand of the patient for the first time, I've got kind of their life right in front of me," he said. "You've already been discussed. We've already

thought about you and we've already prioritized you in terms of when you need to come in. Now, we're just going to clarify and address whatever concerns you've brought in today."

Dr. Michael Wald said he really appreciates the members of his team because they bring many different sets of skills to the table.

"I had a lady with a hip problem and rather than just say, 'go to the orthoped and find out what's wrong,' I was able to get an X-ray and tell her that she did not have significant degenerative arthritis," he said. "But I have to have an X-ray technician. I don't know how to do that, either."

"And if I had to do those things, it would just occupy too much of my time. Let me do what I know how to do and other excellent people do what they know how to do."

Notable quotes

"When our patients come through the door, we're prepared. That's our job."



That's what they should expect. And they should expect to always have all of their questions answered. They should never expect to leave an office visit wondering, 'What did she just say and what am I supposed to do?'"

Dr. Christine Stopyra,
Lake Sumter Creekside
Care Center

"I see some hardworking, devoted people to this issue."



Those who have chosen to be a part of this are invested in it. I hear it every day in what they say to me. I feel very proud to be selected to be a part of this team."

Cynthia Stewart,
physician assistant,
Mulberry Grove Care Center

"I love the team approach. It not only allows us to take better care of our patients, it really makes us think more about our patients, and we can then kind of work off of each other. What one person is thinking,

maybe the other person wasn't. So we're able to kind of come together and really look at our patients from more than just one person's point of view."

Brittany Gagnon,
physician assistant,
Belleview Care Center

"Team care is really an important concept. You've got a whole team of people that are really all here to take care of the patient. It's sort of like the spokes of a wheel, with the patient at the center and everything is kind of filtered into that. All of these people make a difference."



Dr. Robert Reilly, medical director, Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center

"My extender will talk to me about any of the patients she has coming in for the day. So I can maybe give them a little heads-up as to what to expect, what the history might be. I can say where I think this may be going because I've seen them before. It's definitely a whole team effort."

Dr. Robert Aisenstat,
Pinellas Care Center



Dr. Robert Aisenstat, Pinellas Care Center

— **Dr. Karla Noel**, medical director at Pinellas Care Center