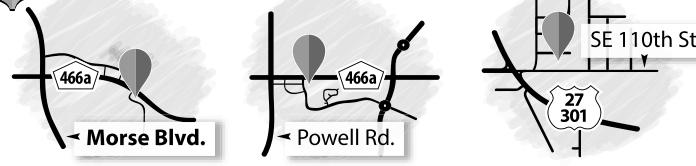


THE VILLAGES HEALTH



Colony Care Center
280 Farmer Place, 674-1710

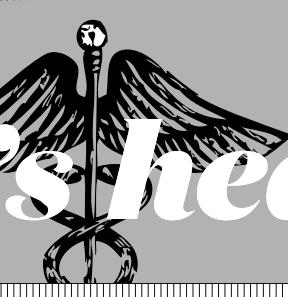
Pinellas Care Center
2485 Pinellas Place, 674-1720

Bellevue Care Center
5051 SE 110th Street, 674-1730

Santa Barbara Care Center
1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 674-1740

Mulberry Grove Care Center
8877 SE 165th Mulberry Lane, 674-1750

Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center
1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100, 674-1760



america's healthiest hometown



Peter Travers | Daily Sun

Diane and Brian Barnes, of the Village of Dunedin, have their photograph taken by The Villages Health's Janie Hathcox recently during a birthday party for patients turning 65 at the Colony Care Center.

Villages Health Patients Share Milestone Birthday Together at Care Center

From fast access to preventive screenings to physicians who listen, Villagers say medical experience here is much different from elsewhere.

By LARRY D. CROOM
Daily Sun Ombudsman

Villages Health patients gathered at the Colony Care Center recently to celebrate an important milestone in their lives.

The group of patients were approaching their 65th birthday, which is a time when many make important decisions about Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans. But it's also an opportunity to commemorate a major life accomplishment, which is why each primary care center shared the moment with patients through some fun 1960s trivia questions, refreshments, cake, gifts and time to mingle and chat with medical providers in a relaxed atmosphere.

Dr. David Jordahl, medical director of the Colony Care Center, said it was time well spent.

"We enjoy having relationships with our patients, and what better way than to celebrate a birthday," he said. "When you have that relationship with patients, that trust forms. And it just makes it a win-win for both the doctor and

the patient."

Patient Diana Haigh agreed, adding that she was happy to visit her care center for the event — with no strings attached.

"They don't have anything to sell us and they're just making us feel like we're special," the Village of Charlotte resident said. "Hopefully, we'll all live to be 100. But we'll remember this one."

Patient Gregory Thomas, of the Village of Hadley, said he was thrilled to receive the party invitation, especially since it contained a special touch from his physician.

"That's pretty cool," the 28-year Navy veteran said. "Dr. (Uyen Anh) Nguyen had written a little note on my RSVP. So that really personalized it."

Those kinds of special touches don't come as a surprise to Frank Lancione, a Villager who serves as a volunteer patient ambassador with The Villages Health.

"How many organizations spend their time giving a birthday party with no strings attached?" the Village of Antrim Dells resident said. "Nobody comes in and asks you to bring anything. They literally just want you to know that they're glad that you're a part of it. It's really a pretty exceptional organization."

Thomas agreed, adding that a large part of his satisfaction is because of the care he receives

I don't think we could find better health care anywhere in the United States."

GREGORY THOMAS
Village of Hadley and former Virginia resident

COMING AUG. 23

Pinellas Care Center celebrates with its patients.

from Nguyen and her medical team.

"She's very personal, very caring," he said. "She asks a lot of questions and she's very, very thorough. I feel like she's a friend asking me questions."

Haigh shared similar feelings about her physician, Dr. Denise Ollivierre.

"I absolutely love her and respect her a lot," Haigh said. "She is very thorough, and she found things that nobody has ever found before. And now we can do something about it."

Haigh said she appreciates Ollivierre's thoroughness and referral to a cardiologist because it gives her the opportunity to be much healthier while enjoying the best years of her life here in Florida's Friendliest Hometown.

"I have a heart murmur and nobody had ever told me," she said. "So we're going to look at options down the line. Nothing yet, but something to watch."

Haigh's husband, Paul, offered similar thoughts about Ollivierre.

"I had some issues that I've been trying to get people to look at and she looked at them," he said. "She referred me to other doctors and now I'm getting better because of it."

Thomas said it's that kind of philosophy that makes him glad he decided to become a Villages Health patient.

"You come down here and almost feel like you're going to extend your life," the former Virginia resident said. "You don't have the hard winters to go through and you've got such excellent health care."

"You don't have to worry about, 'Oh, I've got a little ache and pain.' You get seen right away. Really, I don't think we could find better health care anywhere in the United States."

MEDICARE Q & A

Answers provided by
PETE CLARKSON, CEO of
UnitedHealthcare Medicare &
Retirement in North/Central
Florida

Answers Provided by
DR. SAUL ROSENBLUM
medical director,
Santa Barbara Care Center



How do you feel about recent national health care rankings that show Villages Health patients are happy with the care they're receiving?

I think it's tremendous. We're in the people business. So if the people walk away happy with the service we've provided, that's what makes it fun and enjoyable for me.

What advice can you offer about staying healthy?

There is no secret fountain of youth. What there is is the knowledge that we can make every effort to maintain our vigor as long as possible. And the components are activity, healthy diet and good weight. Many studies have shown that a good daily exercise and even mild activity can lead to a healthier and longer life. I often tell patients that it is my observation after being in health care for over 30 years that the Grim Reaper has a tough time with moving targets. Keep moving, exercising and eat healthy!

1

How do I know if I'm eligible for Medicare?

Medicare eligibility might seem straightforward, but many people get confused when trying to figure out when they will be eligible for coverage. You are eligible for Medicare if you are 65 years old and have been a U.S. citizen or legal resident for more than five consecutive years. Some people also qualify for Medicare if they have a disability. In order to qualify, you need to have been receiving Social Security disability insurance for more than 24 months. Others may also qualify immediately because of a special situation, such as people with end-stage renal disease (this is also sometimes called chronic renal failure or stage 5 kidney disease), or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also called ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease).

2

I'm going to turn 65 next year and feel totally unprepared to enroll in Medicare. Where should I start?

Medicare is not one size fits all, so it's important to take time to learn about all of your coverage options before it's time to enroll. There are several good resources available to help you get started. I recommend you check out medicaremadeclear.com.

UnitedHealthcare created this educational website to help make Medicare easier to understand. You'll find a wide variety of information about enrollment, coverage options and more — plus resources to make learning about Medicare a little more engaging, including videos, plan comparison worksheets and quizzes. Medicare.gov is another good website.

Or you can call Medicare directly at 800-MEDICARE to speak with a representative 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Another great resource is your local SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) office through the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (800-963-5337). Whichever resource you use to get ready to enroll in Medicare, it's important to remember that the Medicare coverage you choose can have a significant impact on your health — and your pocketbook. So give yourself plenty of time to understand the coverage options available to you — Original Medicare (Parts A and B), Medicare Advantage (Part C), prescription drug coverage (Part D) and Medicare supplement insurance.

What are the benefits to you as a doctor when patients have a Medicare Advantage plan?

It certainly makes it much easier for us to take care of them appropriately. We have a lot more tools available for tracking and managing complicated patient diagnoses and so forth, from outpatient to hospitalization.

How important is that feedback you get on prescriptions for Medicare Advantage patients?

Huge. Patients want to please their doctor, I think, and maybe are embarrassed and say something like, 'Oh yes, I'm taking that medicine regularly.' But we actually have data that may show they're not refilling their prescription as it has been prescribed. Or they've been missing some doses and so forth. So we can share that with the patient and hopefully come up with a plan to improve their compliance with medication.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Collette Mercier, a primary care physician at the Mulberry Grove Care Center, is a big fan of the 1992 hit comedy "My Cousin Vinny."

