

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**
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For information

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Did you know?

Jack Redding, a physician assistant at the Bellevue Care Center, is a private pilot and a flight instructor.

Fixing health care: All about Dr. Uyen Anh Nguyen

Primary care doctors 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 become a physician?

It’s the usual answer, but to help people, to make their lives better. Most doctors go into the profession because they really do want to help folks be healthier in general. I know it’s such a cliché, but it’s true.

Why did you decide to go into primary care?

I just love the patients. I love taking care of the entire family, the multi-generational unit.

What is your philosophy on health care?

Prevention. Preventative medicine. That was one of my biggest reasons for going into family practice when I was starting school. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

How important is it for patients to have a good primary care physician?

I think if they have a physician, a doctor, a (physician) extender – whomever they feel comfortable with – hopefully they’re more willing to come and express their concerns and take care of the issue or problem before it becomes a bigger issue.

What is the importance of having only 1,250 patients to care for?

Primary care takes a lot of time to do it right. If you’re



Care Center: Colony
Age: 44
Undergraduate: Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
Medical school: Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Internship, residency: St. Luke’s Hospital in Bethlehem, Pa.
Board Certified: American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians

seeing 3,000 or 4,000 patients in a year, you don’t have time. You try to focus on those small number of patients and do things better, do things right rather than just base it on time.

Next week Find out all about David Fischer, a physician assistant at the Colony Care Center.

Creating America’s Healthiest Hometown What is your personal philosophy on health care?

“Patient-centered, of course. Evidence-based, when there is evidence. And relationship-based. Having that family-like atmosphere and having that relationship with a patient just facilitates trust and a comfort level that otherwise you wouldn’t have.”

Dr. Dave Jordahl,
medical director,
Colony Care Center



Care Centers in The Villages

Primary care

The Villages Health Colony Care Center
280 Farner Place, 352-674-1710
The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center
1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 352-674-1740
The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center
2485 Pinellas Place (*Opening in December*)
The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center
8877 S.E. 165th Mulberry Lane (*Opening spring 2014*)
The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center
1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100 (*Opening spring 2014*)

Specialty care

USF Health Specialty Care Center
1400 N. U.S. Highway 24/441, Building 810
(*Opening in Nov. 18*)

Opening day nears

USF Health Specialty Care Center getting ready to serve patients

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

THE VILLAGES
Excitement is in the air at the new USF Health Specialty Care Center.

That’s because the 25,000-square-foot facility, which will be staffed with an array of specialists from many different fields, will officially open for business on Nov. 18 – just eight days from today.

Dr. Jeff Lowenkron, chairman of the department of comprehensive medicine in The Villages, said the new center will open with five specialists and two nurse practitioners in the fold. Those include:

- Dr. Kathy Steepy, an OB/GYN who practices in The Villages, as well as nurse practitioners Caroline Mathis and Rosemary Kipp and their office staff;
- Dr. Adrian Finol, a cardiac thoracic surgeon who practices in The Villages;
- Dr. David Ethier, an orthopedist who practices in Belleview;
- Dr. Reed Panos, a plastic surgeon from Champaign, Ill.;
- Dr. James Mersey, an endocrinologist from Baltimore, Md., who is coming from Johns Hopkins University.

Lowenkron said he’s also working on adding other specialists from several disciplines, including cardiology, pulmonary, neurology and gastroenterology, as well as other orthopedists. He said those doctors must have the same patient-centered mindset that is the lifeblood of both USF Health and The Villages Health in the primary-care-driven model that’s come to life in Florida’s Friendliest Hometown.

“We want to be selective in getting people that are high-quality physicians,” he said. “But the harder part is to get the alignment with care philosophy, those who say ‘my goal is to not to figure out how many procedures I



Dr. Jeff Lowenkron, chairman of the department of comprehensive medicine in The Villages, shows the Computers on Wheels system that will be used at the USF Specialty Care Center.

Coming next Sunday: Villages Health primary care doctors looking forward to forming strong relationships with USF Health specialists.
Coming Nov. 24: Doctors at USF Health Specialty Care Center in The Villages offer thoughts on the new facility and the changing face of health care.
Volunteers needed: Opportunities are available for those who enjoy helping others and want to get involved in the new USF Health Specialty Care Center in The Villages. The facility is seeking friendly and outgoing volunteers who are able to walk throughout the building and can push wheelchair patients as needed. Please call (352) 753-6200 or send an email to villagesinfo@health.usf.edu if you are interested.

can do, but rather, how can we get the right procedure to the right patient.’ And even if there’s a small increase in benefit to the patient, it still may not be justified by the increase in cost.”

Along those same lines, Lowenkron said, the specialty care facility, which is located in the old Wellness Center next to the Sharon Morse Building, was designed with the patient in mind when it comes to comfort and service, all the way down to the setup of visit and procedure rooms.

“They’re very spacious, they’re open and well lit,” he said. “The real key is that if you’re going to have a procedure, you want to be confident, but you also want to be comfortable. And we want the physicians to also be confident and comfortable as they’re doing procedures.”

Lowenkron said patient comfort is also important because it oftentimes impacts outcomes.

“If they feel more confident in what’s happening and they believe that they’re

going to get better because of what’s going on, then they’re more likely to do well,” he said. “So we’re going to align things to work that way.”

That alignment in care, he added, hinges greatly on those specialists having close working relationships with their primary care colleagues. He said a recent mixer that allowed those physicians some time to get to know one another is just one of the many steps being taken to form those close bonds.

“If you know who you’re working with and know who they are personally, the outcomes for the patients are generally better,” he said. “In this day and age, many times, primary care will be referring patients to specialists they’ve never met. They may know reputation-wise what’s going on and they know a little bit about the notes that they get back. But to really understand who they are, with the idea being to build this integrated care delivery system by design, not by accident, that’s what we’re trying to do here.”

Administrator vows to provide top-notch customer service

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

THE VILLAGES – For Barbara Bowman, the mission at the USF Health Specialty Care Center is really quite simple – it’s all about the patients.

“We’re hiring for attitude and training for aptitude,” said the administrator of the new facility, which is located in the old Wellness Center next to the Sharon Morse Building. “We want to create a culture here where exceptional patient service and customer service is the norm.”

Bowman, a longtime health care professional who started as a nurse and has worked in a variety of consulting and high-level assignments, said it’s extremely important for patients to have an excellent experience every time they visit her facility.

“We want to make sure that patients who come in know that we care about them, like as ‘John Doe who has a French poodle named Sam,’ not ‘the sore elbow in Room 10 or Dr. Smith’s 4 o’clock appointment,’” she said. “We need to make sure that we’re



Barbara Bowman

treating the whole patient here. We want to know you as a person and know that the care you’re getting is not cookie-cutter. It’s going to be based on your issues and your needs and your conditions. In health care, especially, one size does not fit all.”

Bowman said that effort to put patients first will be quite evident when they arrive for appointments, all the way down to including extra time and assistance for slower patients to make their way through the 25,000-square-foot facility.

“Some people just like to walk, even though they’re not quick at it,” she said. “They don’t like being put in

a wheelchair, because that’s giving up their last effort of being independent. We will offer a wheelchair for them, but if they choose to ambulate, we will respect that. It’s just not a dignity issue that we want to take away from a patient for our convenience.”

Along those lines, Bowman said, the facility is offering a unique opportunity for Villagers who like to walk and want to serve as escorts for those patients who need a helping hand.

“Those volunteers will help us make someone’s day,” she said. “Everybody who works here has the opportunity to go home feeling 10 feet tall, because they can literally make someone’s day, every patient, every time. It’s a matter of attitude and that’s what we’re cultivating here.”

That customer-service mindset, Bowman said, also will continue once the patient arrives at exam or procedure rooms that were designed with privacy and dignity in mind.

“The exam rooms are big enough so that if the doctor needs to test your gait, for instance, he doesn’t have to

haul you out in the middle of a hallway and have you walk up and down the hallway,” she said. “Most of the time, he can do that within the exam room.”

Another interesting feature that will be available in some rooms is an exam table that can be lowered or raised, depending on the patient’s limitations and needs.

“We realize that there are many people that as they age, they’re either shorter or they have conditions that prohibit them from climbing up on an exam table with ease,” she said. “This is a lot easier on the patient. We’re not lifting them and pulling and tugging and potentially hurting the patient. So again, it’s a patient-comfort issue.”

Not surprisingly, Bowman said she’s quite excited and counting the days until the facility opens its doors on Nov. 18.

“I’m a firm believer and have been for a long time, if you take care of the patient, the rest of it will come,” she said. “So we want to make sure that this is an amazing experience at the right level for the right patient – every day, every time.”