

america's healthiest hometown

Meet Dr. Robert Kersh, a cardiologist at the Specialty Care Center, earned his medical degree from New York Medical College. Kersh completed his internship/residency at Nassau County Medical Center in Long Island, New York, and a fellowship in cardiology training at Medical College of Pennsylvania. He is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine – Cardiovascular Diseases.



1 Why did you decide to become a doctor?
I started out as an astrophysics major. I had dreamed of being an astronaut when I was younger. I knew someone who was a propulsion engineer for the lunar module and he got let go after seven years when the project was complete. I decided I didn't want to rely on government contracts. So I went into chemistry, took a bio-chemistry course and got interested in the workings of the human body and the chemical reactions that were going on.

2 What is your favorite thing about being a cardiologist?
We've been very successful in reducing cardiac problems. In the last 20 or 30 years, we've been able to treat heart attacks better. We've been able to prevent heart attacks with risk modification, cholesterol medications and smoking campaigns. It's exciting to be part of the process. I see a dramatic difference from when I started to where we are now. We're seeing a lot less acute heart attacks and patients with angina.

3 How will you feel if you are on the ground floor of a health care initiative that's picked up and used successfully in other communities?
It'll feel great. It's always good to be a pioneer, especially if it works out well in the future. Talking to the administrators and people that have developed the whole Villages Health system, I am very encouraged that this is going to be a success. Otherwise, I wouldn't have picked up from from a prior practice of 33 years.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE GETS HIGH MARKS

In a recent study conducted by the Better Medicare Alliance, patients with Medicare Advantage were overwhelmingly satisfied.

91 PERCENT

of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with their coverage, with 69 percent saying they are highly satisfied.

87 PERCENT

of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with the preventive care they receive.

86 PERCENT

of seniors are satisfied with how their plans help manage chronic conditions.

79 PERCENT

of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with how their care is coordinated among doctors and other providers.

Study: Patients Like Medicare Advantage

Villages Health doctors not surprised by Better Medicare Alliance data.

By LARRY D. CROOM
Daily Sun Ombudsman

THE VILLAGES
A recent Medicare Advantage study proved what Villages Health officials have been claiming all along – beneficiaries are overwhelmingly happy with their coverage and the many perks that come with it. “I’m not surprised,” said Dr. Elliot Sussman, chair of The Villages Health. “My belief is that for the majority of people who are eligible for Medicare, that Medicare Advantage is simply a better way for them to receive their care. It allows care coordination and that is huge.” 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, preventative dental, and eyewear and hearing aid coverage, to name a few. At The Villages Health, that also includes a hospitalist from the practice for those patients who need it, as well as nurse navigators to help coordinate care after a hospital stay. And unlike traditional Medicare, Advantage plans offer an annual limit on out-of-pocket costs for medical services. Not surprisingly, it was those types of services that generated such favorable responses in data that was released recently by the Better Medicare Alliance. In fact, the study showed:

- » 91 percent of seniors in Medicare Advantage are satisfied with their coverage, with 69 percent saying they are highly satisfied.
- » Among seniors who switched to Medicare Advantage from fee-for-service Medicare, 58 percent say the plans are better, while just 2 percent say fee-for-service is better.

Sussman said the many

benefits Medicare Advantage plans offer – especially the philosophy of preventive care – make sense as people get older. “Things break and we need

to know what we should be worried about and what we don't have to be quite so

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Additionally, as an Internist, Dr. Valencia is more cognizant of the impact of the patients' Neurologic diagnosis in his/her medical condition.

CHRISTOPHER VALENCIA, M.D.

- Diplomate, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
- American Board of Internal Medicine
- Internal Medicine Internship and Residency at Mercy Hospital, Buffalo, New York
- Neurology Residency at Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI
- Clinical Instructor in Medicine (1990) at Mercy Hospital/SUNY – AB, Buffalo, New York
- Recipient of Louis A. and Ruth Siegel Award for TEACHING EXCELLENCE (1991) – State University of New York at Buffalo
- Award for Excellence in Research and Presentation – Mercy Hospital, John J. O'Brien Symposium, 1990

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