

THE VILLAGES HEALTH

Colony Care Center
280 Farmer Place, 674-1710

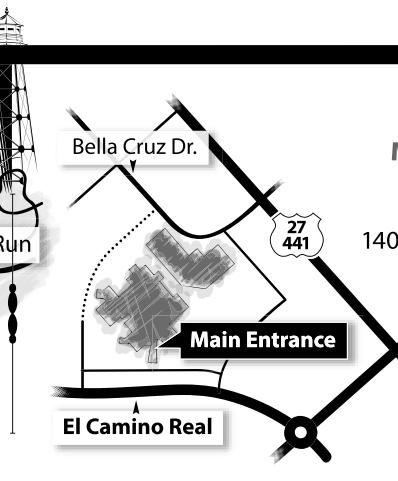
Pinellas Care Center
2485 Pinellas Place, 674-1720

Belleview 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



MEDICAL CAMPUS

Specialty Care Center
1400 N. U.S. Highway 27/441, Building 810, 674-8731
The Villages Regional Hospital
1451 El Camino Real, 751-8000
Urgent Care: 751-8863

america's healthiest hometown



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Dr. Helene Aisenstat, left, and her husband, Dr. Robert Aisenstat, served as paramedics in South Florida in the 1970s and early 1980s. They were the first two paramedics to take the state exam and become licensed by the state of Florida, and they were instrumental in helping others who were interested in the same career path.

They Were Paramedics When EMS Was New

Villages Health physicians recall their days of saving lives on the streets of South Florida.

By LARRY D. CROOM
Daily Sun Ombudsman



Roy DeSoto and Johnny Gage of television's "Emergency!" might have put paramedics on the map, but it was the innovative real-life medics like Villages Health doctors Robert and Helene Aisenstat who kept them there.

Long before the Aisenstats became physicians at the Pinellas Care Center, they were fearlessly treating patients and saving lives on the streets of South Florida. And as the first two paramedics to take the state exam and become licensed by the state of Florida — boards of physicians originally handled licensing — they were instrumental in teaching others who wanted to share the same career path.

"When I got hired as a firefighter, we were still using a hearse-type of old ambulance," said Robert, who became a paramedic with the Deerfield Beach Fire Department in 1974. "I

remember when we got our first rescue truck, and we moved all the way up the line to become advanced life support engines."

Helene, who was enjoying a successful career as a nurse, made the decision a year later to join Robert in the exciting new career.

"I was working in the emergency room, and I used to see the paramedics come in and I saw what they had done," said Helene, who served with Broward County EMS. "I thought that would be a good challenge, something that I would like to try to do. So I went back to school to become a paramedic."

Robert, who served as a lieutenant with the Deerfield Beach and was voted Firefighter of the Year in 1982 by his colleagues, said he ran thousands of calls as a paramedic — many of which still stick out in his mind.

For instance, he was shot at during an attempted suicide response. There was the cardiac arrest victim they brought back to life who then complained because his shoulder was sore. There was the successful rescue of a woman who had driven her Corvette underneath a semi-trailer. And there was the little girl he saved from suffocating because of a medical condition — epiglottitis — that was

I remember when we got our first rescue truck, and we moved all the way up the line to become advanced life support engines."

DR. ROBERT AISENSTAT

former firefighter/paramedic

COMING APRIL 5

Meet Dr. David Kelley, a primary care physician at the Pinellas Care Center who is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

blocking the flow of air into her lungs.

One of his proudest moments, he said, came when he and two of his fellow paramedics were honored for their abilities in competitions.

"A bunch of judges throw you into a scenario that has victims and/or extrication and you've got to perform," he said. "You've got to do all this advanced life support — starting IVs, intubating, giving all the right drugs and the whole nine yards. Our team won the state of Florida, as well as the national contest that year."

For Helene, the call to help a man who had his right leg amputated by a train car while working in a rail yard never will be forgotten. As she pulled away in the ambulance to transport the man to a nearby hospital, the reality of the situation hit home.

"As I accelerated with my right leg, I said, 'This man had two legs this morning. Now he only has one,'" Helene said. "That sticks in my mind, how one event can really change somebody."

Not surprisingly, Robert said both he and his wife still use skills today that they learned as paramedics almost 40 years ago.

"I educate my patients and Helene will do the same thing," he said. "That's part of what we're doing here, educating patients about their own diseases and how to take care of them. It makes them part of their own health. It all goes back to paramedic school. It's the same concept, just a little different."

MEET A DOCTOR

Dr. Laura Pratesi is an audiologist with The Villages Health. She completed her residency at Columbus Speech & Hearing Center in Georgia and is the youngest person to ever graduate from Auburn University's doctor of audiology program.



1

Why did you decide to become an audiologist?

I was diagnosed at age 5 with a unilateral moderate-to-severe mixed hearing loss on my left side and a hearing aid was not recommended for me. I did not see an audiologist again until I was 18 years old, when I was going to college. I was looking at doing music therapy and communication disorders. My classmates, on a whim, fit me with a hearing aid to practice. I couldn't believe the sound quality difference. It was as if I had been underwater my whole life and suddenly, everything was sharp and clear. I cried. It was just amazing. So I switched my major to audiology.

2

So being an audiologist is personal for you?

It is very personal. I grew up in a very well-educated family, with parents who loved me and had the resources to help me. We had access to very good health care and doctors. I fell through the cracks and I knew that if it could happen to me, it could happen to anybody in any walk of life.

3

What is your philosophy on health care?

The ears are simply the receptors for sound. We really hear with our brain. I can make the sound loud enough for someone to hear it. But if the brain goes five, 10, 15 years without hearing those sounds, it can start to forget how to interpret the sounds when it does hear them. So I'm about treating the patient as a whole person, taking into account the different aspects of their lives.

4

How will you feel if you are on the ground floor of a health care initiative that is used in other communities?

I feel like a pioneer. I think it's the best possible place for an audiologist to work. I've done clinical rotations in almost every setting an audiologist can work in — hospitals, VA clinics, private practice, ENT practices — and being in with primary care just makes sense.

ASK A DOCTOR

Why is it so important for a patient to have a primary care doctor?

Answer Provided by DR. DAVE JORDAHL
Medical director, Colony Care Center



It's often been said: jack of all trades, master of none. But I would argue that we're masters of many things. We're certainly not necessarily the expert in all. But the nice thing about having a primary care physician is, number one, you can build a relationship with them because you're seeing them frequently. And the other is, of course, you can bring just about any issue to your primary care physician. Oftentimes, it can be dealt with by that primary care physician. If not, we know the way to show you where to go.

What is the importance of having specialists and primary care doctors working together in The Villages Health?

Answer Provided by DR. ROBERT REILLY
Medical director, Creekside Care Center



We know who these doctors are because we've selected them. I've taken part in their interview process. I know what their backgrounds are, their training and experiences. I know that they are philosophically aligned with what we're trying to do, which is to always make sure that our primary care is the focal point of everything. They're critically important in helping us, but they don't take over the care. The other big advantage is that our specialty colleagues are on the same electronic health record. So when Dr. (James) Mersey or Dr. (David) Ethier see a patient of mine, I see the visit note immediately. I know what their thoughts were because it's right there in front of me. I know what the follow-up steps are supposed to be. I don't have to pray that it came through on a fax, from some doctor somewhere else.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. James Flaherty, a urogynecologist at The Villages Health's Specialty Care Center, is a huge fan of the 1993 hit movie "Sleepless in Seattle," starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

