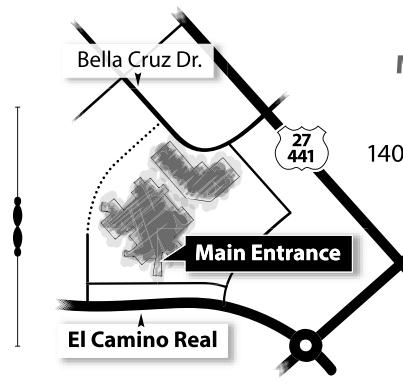


THE VILLAGES HEALTH



MEDICAL CAMPUS

Specialty Care Center
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Building 810, 674-8731
**The Villages
Regional Hospital**
1451 El Camino Real,
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Peter Travers | Daily Sun

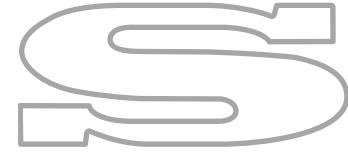
Dr. Laura Cloukey, center right, leads a game of 1960s trivia during a birthday party for patients turning 65 recently at the Pinellas Care Center. Cloukey, who serves as medical director of the facility, says patients often find out that they have many things in common with their physicians when they have a chance to socialize outside the exam room.

Villages Health Patients Share Milestone at Pinellas

Those turning 65 enjoy birthday party, mingle with medical providers in a social setting.

BY LARRY D. CROOM

Daily Sun Ombudsman



Smiles were aplenty recently as Villagers gathered at the Pinellas Care Center to celebrate an upcoming important milestone — turning 65.

As members of the medical staff greeted patients and snapped keepsake photographs, they gathered in the cafe to enjoy snacks, refreshments and a piece of birthday cake. And before the event was finished, patients had taken a walk down memory lane, thanks to some fun 1960s trivia questions that came complete with prizes to take home.

"This is different. I've never had my doctor invite me to a party," said a smiling Robert Geoghegan, of the Village of Collier. "This is very, very nice. I like the concept."

Deborah Burris, also of Collier, agreed.

"It was a very nice idea," said Burris, who like Geoghegan, was born in the Washington, D.C., area Sept. 28, 1950. "I think it's fun to meet with all the medical people and the staff and just to share it."

Deborah's husband, Gary, said he appreciated the fact that there were no strings — such as



sales pitches — attached to the party.

"It's fabulous," he said. "The care center and the people up here have been great."

Deneal Sullivan, a registered nurse who serves as the Pinellas Care Center manager, said she was thrilled to see so many patients having a good time at her facility.

"It's so fun to have an opportunity to be able to mingle with our patients in a fun, social environment," she said. "When they're sick, they're not in the mood to socialize. This way, they get to see their doctors in a casual situation. And turning 65 is a huge milestone, so it's fun to celebrate that."

Dr. Laura Cloukey, medical director of the care center, agreed, adding that she thoroughly enjoyed the interactions with so many different patients.

"They get to see their doctors in another light other than in an exam room," she said. "And the doctors are serving them cake and taking a moment to honor them."

Cloukey said it's extremely important for patients to get to know their doctors on a personal level so that the relationship between the two can grow and prosper.

"When we're in the exam room, we are all about business," she said. "But outside the exam room, you get to see our real personalities."

That kind of interaction, Cloukey added, is invaluable.

"We'll talk to you personally and give you examples from our

own lives," she said. "What we really want to do is connect on an interpersonal level."

Dr. Joe Hildner, director of medical affairs for The Villages Health, said having doctors and patients interact socially often leads to great things happening down the road.

"When the doctor and patient know each other well, things just work better for everybody," he said. "It's more fun as a doctor and the patient just feels a little more at home — a little more comfortable. So these birthday parties are kind of all about that."

Hildner added that it's those kinds of moments — the encouragement and expectation of spending time with patients and working alongside them when it comes to their health care — that physicians here have told him set The Villages Health apart from other medical groups across the country.

"We find it joyful to help the patient be well," he said. "But the neat thing is that, as we do that, the patients become able to help their friends and neighbors and family be well. So it's like they're paying it forward."

Sullivan agreed.

"We're a patient-centered medical home and, of course, home means family," she said, referring to the distinguished designation each Villages Health primary care center carries through certification by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. "That's really what we want to be for these folks. We want them to develop that close personal relationship with their primary care physician. And we want them to consider the whole team at Pinellas as their extended family involved in their health care."

COMING AUG. 30

UnitedHealthcare's Pete Clarkson answers pertinent questions about Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans.

TALK TO A DOCTOR

Answers Provided by
DR. HEIDI ZIMMERMAN,
Colony Care Center



1

Why do I need a primary care doctor in my life?

Because the medical system is so complex now. It's hard to know all the rules that you have to know. If you have a type of insurance that has a network, you need to know how to access the right people. You want to go through testing in an informed, cost-conscious kind of way. I don't order a test if it's not going to change the outcome of what I do. For instance, you come in with a sore throat but you have an ear infection, I'm going to put you on an antibiotic for your ear. And I'm probably going to put you on one that's going to cover strep throat. So does it make sense for me to culture your throat for strep throat? Not really, because it's not going to change what I do. I'm already putting you on an antibiotic. So those kinds of things, I think, are really important. As for the importance of a primary care doctor, you could go to an urgent care for your earache and your sore throat. But that doctor doesn't necessarily have access to all of your health information.

Like if you're not feeling good, you may forget about that heart murmur that your doctor told you about. And if you go to the ER and you're not conscious, you can't give that history. So it's nice to have an advocate that knows everything that's relevant to know about you.

2

How important is it for a patient to have a great relationship with his or her primary care doctor?

Of all the doctors that you have, I think your primary care is most important. That was one of the things that attracted me to The Villages Health. They really get that concept of your primary care doctor being your best friend, mentor and counselor. The whole system of health care can be quite overwhelming at times. So it's important to have that good relationship.

3

What does it mean for you as a doctor to have 30-minute visits with patients?

I think that's pretty cool. The patients love it. I think people who are new to the system can't quite believe that their doctor is actually sitting and talking to them without their hand on the door, ready to go out.

How do you feel about the team of medical providers you work with?

Answer Provided by
DR. JACK HOCUTT,
Colony Care Center



This is a pretty awesome team. We have a lot of different people but with similar ideals and goals. They're very experienced and very well trained and everybody on the team is quite willing to do whatever it takes for the patient.

What is your personal philosophy on health care?

Answer Provided by
DR. TOMAS PEREZ,
Pinellas Care Center



My philosophy has always been not to be paternalistic. I think the key is to partner with your patients, establish a good relationship and provide them with the tools and resources that they need as individuals to make medical decisions based on their own personal circumstances and beliefs.

Answer Provided by
DR. ROBERT KERSH,
cardiologist, Specialty Care Center



I think the big thing now is prevention — keeping the cigarettes away, getting a good diet going, keeping cholesterol under good control, controlling diabetes, controlling blood pressure and controlling the risk factors that we know will contribute to heart disease. And for those patients who have heart disease, to be able to control their symptoms and hopefully extend their life expectancy by being healthy. I think it's got to be a partnership. A doctor just can't say, "Here's a prescription. Take these pills and come back in six months." We have to have an ongoing dialogue, and the patient has to know why they're taking a medication, the reason for it and what to expect.

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Edward Morris, a rheumatologist with The Villages Health who practices at the Specialty Care Center, is a big fan of the Showtime television show "Homeland," which stars Claire Danes, Mandy Patinkin and Rupert Friend.

