

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
Contact The Villages Health at 352- 674-1700 or visit the website at thevillageshealth.com.
Did you know?
Dr. Brent Stabler, who practices at the Belleview Care Center, has been a Navy flight surgeon and an emergency room doctor.

Fixing health care: All about PA-C Brittany Gagnon

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 assistant?

I always knew I was going to be in medicine in some aspect. When I was in undergraduate school, I really went back and forth between MD or PA. I thought for the schooling and everything that was involved, that PA just really fit me better.

What is your personal health care philosophy?

I really believe in a patient-centered environment for a good foundation of health care. That’s really why I wanted to work for The Villages Health, because their main mission is to create a patient-centered home and for our patients to feel comfortable for them to come to us for all their medical needs.

Why is the team approach so important?

I love the team approach. It not only allows us to take better care of our patients, it really makes us think more about our patients, and we can then kind of work off of each other. We’re able to come together and really look at our patients from more than just one person’s point of view. And we can take better care of our patients when we have more than one mind.



Care Center: Belleview
Age: 26
Certified: PA-C
Bachelor’s degree: Exercise physiology and kinesiology at University of Florida
Master’s degree: Physician assistant University of Florida

What is your favorite thing about being a PA?

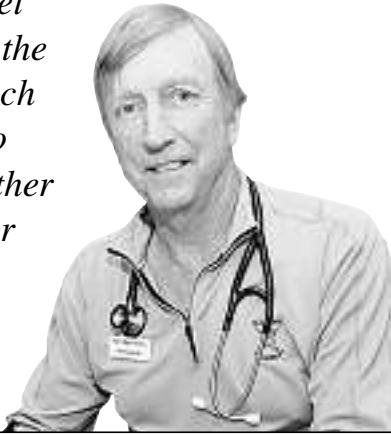
We get to spend more time with our patients. That’s pretty important. I also really like being able to discuss the patient with any physician that’s here. They’re all willing to talk about other patients, even if it’s not their patient. They’re all willing and they want to help, and they want to know what I’m thinking.

Next week Find out all about Dr. Robert Reilly, a primary care physician at the Colony Care Center.

When staying fit is a top priority What is it like to treat patients who truly care about their health?

“Personally, I enjoy that. It’s one of the reasons why I have such a strong interest in sports medicine as well. When patients are involved, it just seems like you can get into more detail and the patient is usually much more motivated to do what we decide together that would be best for them to do.”

Dr. Jack Hocutt,
Colony Care Center



Care Centers in The Villages

Primary care

- The Villages Health Colony Care Center**
280 Farner Place
- The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center**
1575 Santa Barbara Blvd. (Opening in October)
- The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center**
2485 Pinellas Place (Opening in November)
- The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center**
(Opening in spring 2014)

Medicare resources

To learn about Medicare, visit a UnitedHealthcare MedicareStore in The Villages.

Lake Sumter Landing
1049 Lake Sumter Landing
391-5262

Spanish Springs
979 Del Mar Drive
674-7160

Specialty care

USF Health Specialty Care Center
In wellness center facility near Sharon Morse Building
(Opening in November)

The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center
(Opening in spring 2014)

Brownwood
2617 W. Torch Lake Drive
674-1240

La Plaza Grande
1124 Bichara Blvd.
460-7924

■ Send an email to information@elderaffairs.org.



George Horsford / Daily Sun
Amy Wixted, program director for USF Health in The Villages, strives to provide a variety of public health services, such as screenings and educational seminars, to help residents improve their health.

Learning to stay healthy

USF Health’s Wixted says education big part of wellness

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

When it comes to good health care, there’s no question that education is a critical piece of the puzzle.

Some people don’t know what constitutes a healthy diet. Some struggle with obesity and need information about exercising. Some just need guidance for health-related answers.

That’s where Amy Wixted comes in. The program director for USF Health in The Villages and her staff provide a variety of public health services, including various screenings, educational seminars and information.

“We take a very broad perspective on health,” she said. “We want people to feel that they can come here for things on social health, financial wellness or environmental health. We want to be able to address all of those different components because we know that they all play into somebody’s overall wellness.”

Wixted, who works closely with primary care medical providers from The Villages Health, said she tries to provide residents with knowledge that will be helpful when they visit with physicians. She said that includes various seminars based on the results of the USF Health survey – the largest-ever single health survey of older Americans – conducted in The Villages in spring 2012.

“We want them to be able to come come here and learn about nutrition, healthy eating out, stress management, fall prevention,” she said. “Then they can go back and have better discussions with their doctor.”

The USF Health in The Villages office, at 1040 Lake Sumter Landing, has had more than 18,000 resident visits since opening in October 2011. That includes 1,400 for an innovative memory screenings program conducted by The Villages Nursing Club volunteers.

“The earlier that somebody can detect if there’s a problem, the earlier they can begin treatment,” Wixted said. She said her nurse volunteers are trained by USF Health’s Byrd Institute, the statewide leader in Alzheimer’s research.

USF Health in The Villages

Where: 1040 Lake Sumter Landing
Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday
Contact: Amy Wixted, 352-753-6200, villagesinfo@health.usf.edu.

Wixted said some people have dementia symptoms without having the condition.

“It could be an undiagnosed urinary tract infection or a vitamin B deficiency,” she said. “If this screening shows them there may be something wrong, we can send them into a doctor for those routine screenings. They can catch it and take care of it.”

About 3,400 residents have had a body composition analysis at the office. That test, which requires residents to step on a special scale for 10 seconds, gives a readout of weight, body mass index, body fat percentage, basal metabolic rate, fat mass, fat-free mass and hydration level.

“It’s very motivating for somebody who’s exercising,” Wixted said. “If they’re starting to put all this effort into it and not seeing any change on their scale at home, this breaks it down so that they can see if there’s a loss of fat mass and a gain of fat-free mass to your muscle. You may be gaining muscle at the same rate you’re losing fat and so your weight would stay the same.”

Wixted said a big part of

her mission is to make sure that no one who visits her office leaves without the information they requested.

“We don’t send them on their way or say, ‘oh, try down the street,’” she said. “Making that difference for Villagers is huge for us. It keeps us going every day.”

Dr. Jeff Lowenkron, USF Health’s chairman of comprehensive medicine in The Villages, said he’s thrilled to have Wixted working with Villagers.

“Very rarely do you have somebody who just thinks in terms of community benefit and then starts to link up and design programs that make that a reality,” he said. “She supports the notion that we’re going to do whatever we can to make this America’s Healthiest Hometown.”

Not surprisingly, Wixted said she cherishes the job.

“The thing I love the most is the people and being able to make a difference,” she said. “When somebody feels listened to and they feel like they can get their needs met, that makes a huge difference in their next step in being able to succeed with goals.”

Los Angeles

2 drugs pushed for women at high risk for breast cancer, but caution advised

Women with a higher-than-usual risk for developing breast cancer should consider one of two medications approved by the FDA to reduce that risk, a federal panel said.

But the medications, which can raise a woman’s risk of developing blood clots, are not for everyone and should not be taken for breast cancer reduction by most women, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force said.

Taken daily, the chemotherapy drug tamoxifen or the osteoporosis drug raloxifene

have been shown to drive down risk of cancer.

The panel said physicians and patients should discuss taking the medications in cases where a woman’s risk of breast cancer over the next five years is 3 percent by one of two reliable cancer risk calculators. But in certain cases, a woman’s other vulnerabilities – including a personal or family history of stroke or blood clots – might outweigh the benefits of the drugs, the panel said.

– McClatchy-Tribune