

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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Did you know?

Dr. Kimberly Giovannelli, a primary care physician at the Santa Barbara Care Center, was a member of the tennis team at Georgia Southern University. She later attended medical school at the University of South Florida.

Health care expert to teach Villagers about ‘Dr. You’

Dr. Tuckson, national leader and primary care physician, to speak Nov. 10 at Savannah Center

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

THE VILLAGES – Dr. Reed Tuckson, a longtime successful health care professional and author, is coming to Florida’s Friendliest Hometown to introduce Villagers to “Dr. You.”

Tuckson, author of “The Doctor in the Mirror,” will speak Nov. 10 at Savannah Center. His presentation, which begins at 1 p.m., will address some of the principles in his book, which is designed to give those 55 and older encouragement and strategies they need as they seek to age with vitality.

It’s a process Tuckson calls “a lifestyle restyle.”

The longtime executive vice president and chief of medical affairs for UnitedHealth Group who is now the managing director of his own health care consulting firm, Tuckson Health Connections, will offer tips on making your health care system work for you.

He’ll also address the need for a “personal health safety net,” a team comprised of people who love you, as well as other health care resources.

Tuckson, a primary care physician who has served as the commissioner of public health for Washington, D.C., also will talk about an upcoming online course that is designed to empower residents to become “Dr. You,” as well as sessions that will be offered through The Villages Lifelong Learning College. And he’ll be available to sign copies of his book after the presentation.

Tuckson is no stranger to The Villages, having visited the community more than two years ago when he was with UnitedHealthcare, and again earlier this year as part of The Villages Health scholars program.

When recalling his first visit, Tuckson said one thing clearly sticks out in his mind.

“So many people were holding hands,” he said with a smile. “If we are connected to another person in a loving and caring way, our lives are filled with hope and we want



The Dr. Reed Tuckson file

Education

- Doctor of medicine (Georgetown University School of Medicine, 1978)
- Undergraduate degree (Howard University, 1973)
- Studied at (Wharton School of Business, 1981-83)

to do right, not only because we want to feel better, but the person that cares about us wants us to do better.”

Dr. Elliot Sussman, chair of The Villages Health, said he’s excited that Tuckson is bringing his presentation on “The Doctor in the Mirror” to The Villages. And he added that he hopes all Villagers will take advantage of the opportunity to learn more through both the online course and sessions that will be offered by The Villages Lifelong Learning College.

“Reed is a devoted primary care physician who has had a spectacular and influential career in American medicine,” Sussman said. “More recently, Reed has been infected by The Villages spirit and we are lucky to have him back here, helping to use his expertise to guide us in our journey to become America’s Healthiest Hometown.”

Tuckson’s presentation at Savannah Center is free with reserved seating. It is open to all Villages residents and tickets are available through The Villages Box Office and at thevillagesboxoffice.com. The event is being presented by The Villages Health and is sponsored by UnitedHealthcare.



George Horsford / Daily Sun

Dr. Dave Jordahl, right, looks over a patient’s chart recently with Nikki Carter, a certified medical assistant, in the huddle zone area of the Colony Care Center. Jordahl, who serves as medical director at Colony, says he appreciates the information he receives monthly on Medicare Advantage patients, such as whether or not preventive health screenings have been completed and prescriptions have been filled.

A powerful Advantage

Villages Health doctors say Medicare Advantage makes them better

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

THE VILLAGES

When it comes to Medicare Advantage, Villages Health physicians are adamant about one thing – it provides them opportunities to be even better doctors. “One of the reasons is I get a lot more information about what we call care gaps,” said Dr. Dave Jordahl, medical director of the Colony Care Center. “For example, if a patient hasn’t had their mammogram for breast cancer screening, or they haven’t had a colorectal cancer screening, I’ll get that information.”

Jordahl said the next step would be to check the patient’s electronic medical record to verify if they actually have missed the screening.

“If so, we can follow up on that,” he said. “If they’ve had it, then we can document back to the insurance company that the test has been completed. Obviously, that’s better for the patient.”

In addition to providing data streams with pertinent information about tests and prescriptions, Medicare Advantage plans oftentimes come with a variety of benefits, such as no premium, no or low co-pays, gym memberships and preventive dental, eyewear and hearing aid coverage, to name a few.

Those plans are available to those who are eligible for

traditional Medicare and are administered by private insurance companies. And unlike traditional Medicare, those Advantage plans offer an annual limit on out-of-pocket costs for medical services.

Like Jordahl, Dr. Ashok Ojha, a primary care physician at Santa Barbara Care Center, said he appreciates getting data that show if a patient is filling prescriptions in a timely manner and then taking the medications as prescribed.

“Oftentimes, it helps us get to the bottom of the reason why they may or may not be compliant,” he said. “We find the barrier that we can work on.”

Dr. Paul Daluga, a physician at the Mulberry Grove Care Center, said there can be a number of reasons patients fail to fill their prescriptions.

Coming Nov. 9

Villages Health patients benefit from Medicare Advantage.

“Certain medicines can cause side effects that are embarrassing, so they don’t tell you,” he said. “Occasionally it can be confusion or dementia, where they don’t remember that they’re taking a particular medicine. That’s very helpful to know that, because then you can intervene.”

Dr. Saul Rosenblum, medical director of the Santa Barbara Care Center, said he is a big fan of Medicare Advantage because the goal is to keep patients healthy through preventive measures rather than just treating illnesses.

“There’s a tremendous amount of useful clinical data that we get exposed to that tells us if we’re doing the right job,” he said. “Is it having an effect? What works? What doesn’t work? These are things that can be studied over periods of time.”

Rosenblum said he’s also a fan of Medicare Advantage because it provides the benefit of nurse navigators – registered nurses who are available to help make sure things are going well for patients as they transition from the hospital to a rehabilitation facility, or home to a caregiver, among

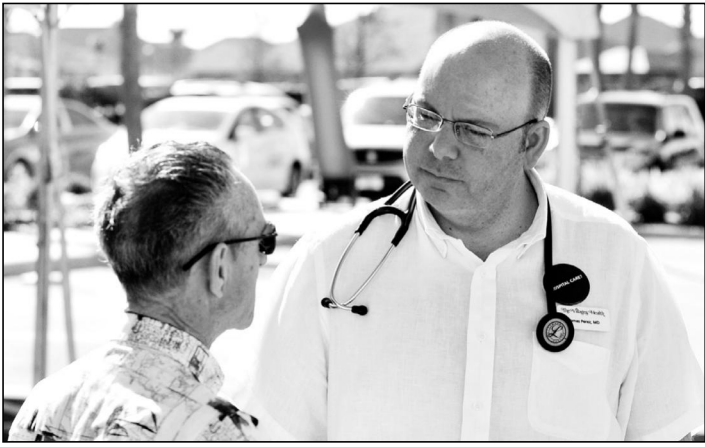
other things.

“We know there are people who have a high risk for falling, or whose illness is becoming such that maybe they’re not taking their medications correctly,” he said. “In order to prevent bad medical outcomes due to their inability to take medicines, we can have someone go to the house and say, ‘Are you doing things right or is there a safer way for you to live? Are you taking the medicines correctly? Are there handrails in the bathroom so that people don’t slip?’ This Medicare Advantage system allows you to do those things.”

The bottom line, Rosenblum said, is with Medicare Advantage, the goals of the health care provider and the insurance company are the same – better outcomes for patients.

“With interventions that are done at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner, why should someone be hospitalized three times for heart failure when, if the right things were being done in their house, they may not be hospitalized,” he said. “That’s really the outcomes you’re trying to push for.”

UnitedHealthcare offers the only Medicare Advantage plans that are accepted by The Villages Health. For more information, visit any of the MedicareStores that are located at each town square or speak to a representative at any care center.



Peter Travers / Daily Sun

Saying thanks to patients: Dr. Tomas Perez, right, talks with Peter Caliri, of the Village of Belvedere, during the recent patient-appreciation fair at The Villages Health’s Pinellas Care Center. The last of six fairs will be held Saturday at the Santa Barbara Care Center, 1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., with entertainment provided by the 4 Valves Trumpet Club. Villages Health officials say all of the fairs have been a success and have provided them the opportunity to thank patients for their support.

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