

# TO YOUR HEALTH

Volume 25, Number 10

October 2020

## Changing Times

by Susan Cusson, NP

Six years ago this month, as the new Clinic Administrator, I wrote my first article for "To Your Health". It was about change. As I write this, six months into the pandemic, the topic of change feels more relevant than ever. I think it's safe to say the changes forced on us since the outbreak of COVID-19 have been difficult at best. While these changes in lifestyle are necessary to control the spread of the virus, the effects on everyone's physical and mental health are not insignificant. Social distancing and masks changed the way we interact and relate to each other making it necessary to find new ways to connect. That connection is vital to our health and well-being.

Life changed quite suddenly when many of the activities in this community had to shut down abruptly for public health reasons. Slowly reopening and restarting activities, while minimizing risk, is a much more gradual process. During this time many of us learned new formats for communication, "virtual" visits for social engagements, committee meetings and medical appointments to name a few. Out of necessity, many of these will remain virtual until there is an effective vaccine and treatments for COVID-19.

If you, or someone you know, needs assistance with accessing technology such as the new live streaming, Zoom, Facetime or other virtual platforms, please contact Marcia Feldman for an appointment. She is generally available Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and can be reached by email [mfeldman@cwvillage.org](mailto:mfeldman@cwvillage.org) or call her at Ext. 1389.



## Announcement

Judi Tabor has been the Clinic Social Worker for the past 14 years. She transitioned to a new role as the new Program Director for CW at Home this summer. We will miss her in the Clinic but are pleased to announce a new Social Worker has been hired.

Maeve Lobo is a LICSW with over 12 years of experience in Elder Care, including hospice work and most recently Emerson Home Care. Maeve earned her Bachelor's Degree in Social Policy and Religious Studies and Master's Degree in Social Policy in the UK. She will be joining the Clinic Staff on October 14. Welcome Maeve!

## REMAINING VIGILANT . . .

A number of factors influence the spread of COVID-19. With cooler weather arriving, visiting is moving indoors. Masks and social distancing are more important than ever when we're indoors. If you choose to dine with another Resident in your home, continue to practice distancing while eating. Dining out at a restaurant remains a high risk activity. A recent report from the CDC found that individuals newly diagnosed with COVID-19 were almost three times more likely to have patronized a restaurant or bar during the prior two weeks than those who had not been infected. The virus can build up in concentrated amounts indoors when infected people exhale in a confined space for long stretches of time.

Knowledge is a powerful tool that can affect change. While there's an abundance of information about COVID-19 on the internet,



unfortunately not all of it accurate. We know for sure that masks and social distancing help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Here is more information about COVID-19 that I hope you will find useful (from Johns Hopkins).

- SARS-CoV-2 is not a living organism. It is a protein molecule (RNA or DNA) covered by a protective layer of lipid (fat). Since the virus is not a living organism, it cannot be killed. It has to decay on its own. The disintegration time depends on the temperature, humidity and type of material where it lies. The virus is very fragile, the only thing that protects it is a thin outer layer of fat.
- Soap is important and washing your hands for at least 20 seconds dissolves the protective fat layer and the protein molecule breaks down.
- Heat also melts the fat so warm water is better for hand washing, laundry and cleaning surfaces.
- Alcohol or any mixture with alcohol over 65% also dissolves the outer lipid layer of the virus.
- Any solution with 1 part bleach and 5 parts water directly dissolves the protein, breaking it down from the inside.
- Bactericides or antibiotics don't work because the virus is not a living organism like bacteria; antibiotics cannot kill what is not alive.
- The virus molecules remain very stable at colder temperatures, including air conditioning in houses, cars and restaurants. They also need moisture and darkness to stay stable. Therefore, dehumidified, dry, warm and bright environments will degrade the virus faster.
- UV LIGHT on an object that has virus on it breaks down the protein. Be careful, it also breaks down collagen (which is protein) in the skin.
- Vinegar is NOT useful because it does not break down the protective layer of fat.

- NO SPIRITS, including the strongest VODKA, meet the level of alcohol content needed to break down the virus.
- Listerine is 65% alcohol. (Alcohol free Listerine is ineffective.)
- The more confined the space, the more concentration of the virus there can be. The more open or naturally ventilated, the less.
- You have to wash your hands before and after touching any commonly used surfaces such as your mouth area, food, locks, knobs, switches, remotes, cell phones, watches, computers, elevator buttons,, etc. Don't forget to wash your hands after using the bathroom.

#### Three "C"s that **INCREASE** your risk:

- 1) Closed spaces
- 2) Crowded places
- 3) Close conversations

#### Three "W"s that **REDUCE** your risk:

- 1) Wear a mask
- 2) Wash your hands
- 3) Watch your distance



### **Medicare Open Enrollment**

This year's Annual Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15 – December 7, 2020. This is a good time to review your prescription plan if your costs are high or if you're looking to change insurance plans. Minuteman Senior Services is offering a free Zoom presentation by SHINE counselors on Wednesday, October 14 at 12:00. Call 781-275-6825 or email [coa@bedfordma.gov](mailto:coa@bedfordma.gov) for more information.