

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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Primary care centers in The Villages

Colony Care Center
Opened December 2012
Santa Barbara Care Center
Opening October 2013
Pinellas Care Center
Opening November 2013
Mulberry Grove
Opening February 2014
Lake Sumter Creekside
Opening March 2014

Fixing health care: All about Dr. Jack Hocutt

Primary care doctors 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 and specialists who will work as a team, all in the best interests of serving patients.

This weekly feature will introduce these innovative doctors who have joined this effort.

Why did you decide to become a primary care doctor?

My family doctor, when I was 6, took great care of me. He was the same type of doctor I wanted to become, family medicine, sports medicine.

How does it feel to be a part of this health care initiative in The Villages?

This is a real honor. The people here are really caring people. They're very generous and they really are interested in people as patients.

Do you think this health care model will be looked at by other communities?

They should. I think we have a little bit of an advantage here in The Villages because of our patient population. A lot of them have old-fashioned values and are willing to work and are interested in their health and readily take part. So that will serve as a model for the rest of the country and the world, not only for the medical people delivering the care, but also for what patients could and should do to help with their care.

What is your personal philosophy on health care?

I believe medicine is a team sport. The patient and the



Care Center: Colony
Age: 63
Undergraduate: University of North Carolina
Medical school: Jefferson Medical College (Philadelphia)
Internship, residency: Medical Center of Delaware

staff and the clinicians need to work together to achieve the best outcomes. I learned along time ago that the more my patients knew, the smarter I became. So we try our best to teach the patients as much as we can about medicine, because they go home and they've got to enact what we've asked them to do.

Next week: Find out all about Dr. Michael Clifford, a physician who is a Villager and practices medicine at the Colony Care Center.

Providing Marcus Welby-style care

What's your personal philosophy on health care?

"It's relationship-based. We're patient-centered here. We're evidence-based. And it's so much more enjoyable when you have that doctor-patient relationship. It's genuine, patients who not only know you as a physician and the type of medicine you practice, but what you do outside the office, because I am also a husband and a father and an athlete, and I think that makes my job more enjoyable. It appears the patients enjoy that, too, that relationship piece."

Dr. Dave Jordahl,
medical director,
Colony Care Center



George Horsford / Daily Sun

Promise Healthcare Inc., which runs Promise Hospital of Florida at The Villages, donated \$3.6 million to train young doctors in specialized care for older patients.

Promise to revamp care

Promise Healthcare Inc. pledges funds to teach specialized care for older patients

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

Efforts to revamp health care in Florida's Friendliest Hometown took yet another big step forward this past week, thanks to a \$3.6 million gift from Promise Healthcare Inc.

The long-term acute-care hospital company, which owns a facility in The Villages, pledged the money to create an Endowed Directorship in Geriatrics for USF Health. The program calls for the hiring of a director who will teach young doctors – internal medicine residents and geriatric fellows – in providing much-needed specialized care for older patients. That director will also serve as chief medical officer with Promise Healthcare, overseeing physician practice and patient care. And that person will work out of the company's local facility, Promise Hospital of Florida at The Villages.

Dr. Elliot Sussman, chair of The Villages Health, said he's thrilled that Peter Baronoff, a USF alumnus who serves as chairman and CEO of Promise Healthcare and a member of the USF Foundation board, made the commitment to help provide better care for seniors.

"One of the biggest shortages of physicians is in the area of doctors who have additional special training in geriatrics," Sussman said. "What Promise Hospital, and specifically, Peter Baronoff have done is said, 'let's

deal with this issue head-on. Let's train these folks in the best place to train them, right here at The Villages, at Promise Hospital."

Sussman said the endowment is proof that the drive to improve health care in The Villages is being noticed outside the community.

"This generous gift shows how important our efforts are and how others in the health care industry are excited about joining with us," Sussman said. "Make no mistake about it,

we are being watched from across the United States as we work to create America's Healthiest Hometown. And it wouldn't surprise me one bit if others take note of what we're accomplishing and join with us in this endeavor to revamp the sadly broken health care system that exists today."

Dr. Stephen Klasko, dean of the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and CEO of USF Health, echoed those sentiments.

"Imagine if you could create an ideal future where one of the country's leading senior facilities, the country's most active retirement community, and (a very) creative medical school got together to create a pipeline for new physicians for seniors around the country," Klasko said. "That's what the Promise-USF-Villages Health gift and partnership delivers right here in Florida."

Baronoff said the effort to improve geriatric care will have far-reaching implications.

"Serving as a progressive model, this demonstrates how vital it is for a national health care system like Promise Healthcare to partner with a university health care system in coordinating their efforts to enhance geriatric health care on a national basis," he said. "As hospitals across the country look to improve on quality initiatives in a values-based health care environment,

this partnership will provide enhanced direction to not only our physicians, employees and health systems that refer us patients, but also the national health care community."

Sussman said doctors who come through the new program in The Villages will have the chance to work with and train other physicians in the field of geriatrics, as well as provide care for area patients. He said those doctors will then have the opportunity to take the knowledge they learned here and share it with others in their field.

"I think we will see some of those doctors stay here because of the attraction of The Villages Health, this community, this area, all that it has to offer," Sussman said. "And my guess is some will be pioneers who go out to other areas of the country and help those communities start geriatrics training programs as well."

Sussman said the endowment is a great example of the power of partnerships.

"You take a for-profit company, Promise Healthcare; you take The Villages and all it represents as America's Healthiest Hometown and Friendliest Hometown; and you take a university partner, USF Health," Sussman said. "Put them together, stir that pot, and great things happen. I think this is just the beginning of all those great things, but this is a really important step."

Washington

Medicare: Cost-saving mail-order program starting July 1 for diabetics

Program saves money for taxpayers; seniors' copays should drop

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Medicare begins a major change next month that could save older diabetics money and time when they buy crucial supplies to test their blood sugar – but it also may cause some confusion

as patients figure out the new system.

On July 1, Medicare opens a national mail-order program that will dramatically drop the prices the government pays for those products, but patients will have to use designated suppliers.

The goal is to save taxpayers money but seniors should see their copays drop, too.

Don't care about the convenience of mail delivery? Just over half of the 4.2 million diabetics with traditional Medicare coverage used mail-order

last year, but starting July 1 beneficiaries also can get the new lower price at drugstores enrolled in the Medicare program.

"Those who like the face-to-face interaction with the pharmacist have that choice," stressed Jonathan Blum, Medicare deputy administrator. "We want to preserve both options."

It's the biggest expansion yet of a larger, and somewhat controversial, initiative that's predicted to save taxpayers nearly \$26 billion over the next

decade by cracking down on waste and fraud in the medical equipment industry. Diabetics aren't the only Medicare patients affected.

Depending on where they live, patients who rent home oxygen gear and hospital beds, or who need power wheelchairs, walkers and certain other equipment also could see changes in their suppliers and lower prices as a pilot test of this so-called competitive bidding program expands from nine metro areas to a total of 100 on July 1.

Medicare is supposed to apply the lower pricing nationally by 2016.

The diabetes initiative is the first to go nationwide – and Blum said it should put an end to unscrupulous practices such as shipping cartons of supplies to diabetics who haven't run out yet and billing Medicare for the cost.

The concern: Potentially hundreds of thousands of older patients may have to switch mail-order suppliers.

The American Diabetes Association worries they won't

get the word before their supplies run short – or might be pressured to switch to a cheaper brand of blood-sugar monitor and the matching supplies even though that's against the rules.

"We're sort of torn, truthfully," said Krista Maier, the association's associate director of public policy. "It will save the Medicare program money, which is good for its sustainability. The challenge is ensuring that beneficiaries' testing of their blood glucose isn't disrupted."