

our

DECEMBER 2023

HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE
TO HEALTHY
LIVING

matters

www.kcourhealthmatters.com


university
health
Esmat Sadeddin, MD
Gastroenterology


UNMC

350 REASONS

Why Hepatitis C Patients
are in Good Hands



SCAN THIS QR CODE
TO VIEW DIGITAL EDITIONS AT
KCOURHEALTHMATTERS.COM

University Health Hep C Team

Esmat Sadeddin, M.D.

Jessamine Endaya Daley, DNP, APRN, NP-C

Christa Tetuan, Pharm.D., BCACP

Lina Zubiri-Sequera, R.N.

WHY?

After a family loses a loved one to murder, they are left with many questions and needs.



"I could never let another victim's family member stand alone in the street without the support of at least one person who understood the life-altering road they were now forced to walk."

— Rosilyn Temple, Founder,
KC Mothers in Charge

On November 23, 2011, in Kansas City, Missouri, Rosilyn Temple spent the day preparing the family's Thanksgiving dinner — which she looked forward to with her son, Antonio Thompson, or "PeeWee," as she affectionately called him. She never imagined that she would be standing alone outside of his apartment on the cold street that same night, searching for answers. She had just been notified that her son had been murdered. Her life changed forever.

Rosilyn quit her job and started to respond to homicide scenes in support of families throughout the Kansas City area. In 2014 Rosilyn formed KC Mothers in Charge, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose

mission is to provide homicide scene support, vigils, individual and group counseling, funeral home visits, criminal justice system navigation, and weekly phone calls to families.

Some of the staff and volunteers have experienced losing someone to homicide. All receive training and bring a unique level of compassion and encouragement to help victims' families build coping skills.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

KC Mothers in Charge welcomes donations to support operations and volunteers who can help them with the needs of families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.kcmothersincharge.org | 816-912-2601
3200 Wayne Avenue, #124, Kansas City, MO 64109





COVER STORY

350 Reasons Why Hepatitis C Patients are in Good Hands

By OHM Staff

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the hepatitis C virus affects as many as 3.9 million Americans. It is spread through contact with infected blood. Over the last four years University Health has cared for more than 350 hepatitis C patients. Learn the risk factors and what you need to do if diagnosed with the virus.



6

COMMUNITY

PACE Cutting Edge Senior Healthcare Facility Opens

By OHM Staff

Swope Health Central held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their \$15 million, 34,000-square-foot PACE Adult Wellness Center. PACE provides comprehensive healthcare and social services for seniors who need support that helps them to age gracefully in their home communities.

Bookmark kcourhealthmatters.com on your mobile devices to find trending health news and information.

STAY SOCIAL WITH US!



Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/kcourhealthmatters



Follow us on Instagram

www.instagram.com/kcourhealthmatters

Articles in the magazine do not constitute medical advice. Always consult your physician or healthcare provider before making medical decisions. We do not endorse the views expressed in the articles, advertisements and websites, nor are we responsible for products and services advertised.

MENTAL HEALTH

12

Infectious Love, Hope and Gratitude: Worth Spreading

By Dr. Robert Lee Hill
Community Consultant

Love, hope and gratitude are the best remedies to overcome apathy, divisiveness and conflict.

OUR KIDS MATTER

14

Stay Healthy During Viral Respiratory Season

By Jennifer Schuster, MD, MSCl

Children's Mercy Kansas City
Learn why RSV can become dangerous and unpredictable for children with weakened immune systems.

HEALTH

20

What Do You Know About Infectious Diseases?

Infectious diseases can be passed from person to person. Learn how to protect yourself.



MATERNAL HEALTH

22

U.S. Syphilis Cases in Newborns Continue to Climb

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

In 2022 more than 3,700 babies were born with syphilis. What should pregnant mothers know?



INFECTIOUS SUPPORT

Every year around the holiday season—Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years there is a flurry of activity focused on helping others. We are reminded that it is better to give than to receive. So, we give money, distribute food and buy toys for families that are less fortunate than we are. Bringing joy to others is good for the soul. We can take consolation in knowing that we made a difference in someone's life.

In this edition we share how important it is to not lose sight of the dangers posed by infectious viruses. Get vaccinated. Continue to do some of the simplest routines, such as hand washing and for people who are immune compromised, wearing a mask should be high priority. We introduce **University Health**, a healthcare institution that is a leader in the treatment and care of hepatitis C patients.

As our staff look forward to a New Year we do so with a spirit of thankfulness. The infectious support of our sponsors and advertisers has strengthened our core mission—to increase health literacy among ethnically and culturally diverse individuals and families.

Let's use the good and turn the bad and ugly experiences from this year into lessons for positive growth to move forward, with a great resolve to build a better community, city, state and nation.



Keep sending us your “infectious enthusiasm” of support and words of encouragement. We are better together.

Stay healthy and safe. Best wishes for the New Year.

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

©2023 OUR HEALTH MATTERS
is published bi-monthly (6 issues)
by Ramsey & Associates Design, Inc. All rights reserved.

Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/kcourhealthmatters



P.O. Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131
816.361.6400
kcourhealthmatters.com

PUBLISHER
Ruth Ramsey
ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING
Donna Wood
dwood@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jeanene Dunn
jdunn@kcourhealthmatters.com

**HAVING AN EVENT?
HAVE QUESTIONS?**
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

WANT TO ADVERTISE?
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Juliette B. Bradley
Jessamine Endaya Daley
DNP, APRN, NP-C
Dr. Robert Lee Hill
Barbara Mitchell
Heath Rath, MS
Esmat Sadeed, M.D.
Jennifer Schuster, MD, MSCI
Lina Zubiri-Sequerra, R.N.
Christa Tetuan
Pharm.D., BCACP



WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine.

Email us at
info@kcourhealthmatters.com
or write to us at

Our Health Matters
PO Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131

Our future is forward.

*An end-of-year message from Health Forward Foundation
President/CEO Qiana Thomason*



Health Forward
FOUNDATION

As Kansas City and our surrounding rural communities look ahead to a new year and our shared future, it's important to reflect on the momentum carrying us forward.

In 2023, the Health Forward Foundation team continued implementing our new purpose-driven strategic plan.

We convened leaders and implementers from across Kansas City's health system to make it more equitable and anti-racist.

We provided funding support to nonprofits in rural communities and nonprofits led by people of color.

We funded predominantly white-led organizations looking to instill anti-racist policies and practices into their work.

We began identifying actionable steps we can take to ensure our health care workforce better reflects our diverse region.

We funded organizations working to advance digital inclusion.

And we funded organizations advancing civic participation and engagement in our democracy.

We are energized by this work and what it means for our city, region, and the communities we love.

**Here's to a future that is more
just, fair, inclusive, and healthy
— for all of us.**



PACE CUTTING EDGE SENIOR HEALTHCARE FACILITY OPENS

BY OHM STAFF

swopeHEALTH

According to the AARP, 76% of adults aged 50+ prefer to stay in their homes as they age.

"Expanding our mission to provide services that meet the needs of older adults demonstrates our enduring commitment to the community that we have proudly served for more than 50 years."

—Jeron Ravin, J.D.
President and CEO of Swope Health

On October 17, 2023 Swope Health Central opened the doors for a tour of its \$15 million, 34,000-square-foot PACE KC Adult Wellness Center. PACE stands for Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. Now, adults who are 55 or older who have healthcare needs that would otherwise require nursing home care have a place that supports and helps them to age gracefully in their home communities.

Swope's PACE facility is one of 154 national organizations across the U.S. PACE facilities offer a full range of health and wellness services.

What are requirements to receive care?

- You must be 55 or older.

- You must reside in Jackson County, Missouri.
- You must qualify for nursing home care, but be able to live safely in the community at the time of enrollment.

A few of PACE KC's extensive range of holistic and individualized services include:

- **Medical Care.** Primary and specialty care, covering areas such as dental, vision, cardiology, nephrology, and more.
- **Social Services.** Support, advocacy, and access to essential community resources like food, financial aid, and housing.
- **Rehabilitation Therapy.** Individual or group therapy plans based on each individual's function, strength, and mobility.
- **Home Care Services.** Personal care, housekeeping, chores, shopping, laundry, meal preparation, and medical reminders.
- **Transportation.** To and from the PACE KC Adult Wellness Center and other medical specialist appointments

PACE KC will begin enrolling participants in first quarter of 2024. For information about services, or how to register, call 816-321-3300 or visit SwopeHealth.org/pacekc



university
health

Orthopaedics



**Certified in
Total Joint
Replacement of
Hips and Knees**

Arthroscopy
Foot & Ankle Surgery
Hand Surgery
Spine Surgery
Sports Medicine
**Trauma &
Fracture Care**

*Call **816-307-0087** to book your appointment today!*

2101 Charlotte Street, Suite 190, KCMO 64105



Support the Dementia Caregiver

More than 11 million people in the U.S. are providing unpaid care to a person living with Alzheimer's or another dementia. In 2022, the estimated 18 billion hours of unpaid care was valued at more than \$339 billion.

The **Alzheimer's Association** offers free resources online and on the phone for caregivers. A professionally staffed 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) offers information and advice to more than 300,000 callers each year and provides translation in more than 200 languages. The Alzheimer's Association caregiving pages (alz.org/care) contain information and resources to support caregivers across the caregiving journey.

ALZConnected is an online community that allows caregivers and individuals living with the disease to connect with others to share thoughts, questions, and ideas with each other 24 hours a day. The Alzheimer's Association and AARP Community Resource Finder connects caregivers to a variety of local resources by simply entering their zip code. The database includes listings for a wide range of services, including: housing options, adult day care, home care, medical services, legal services, and other community resources.

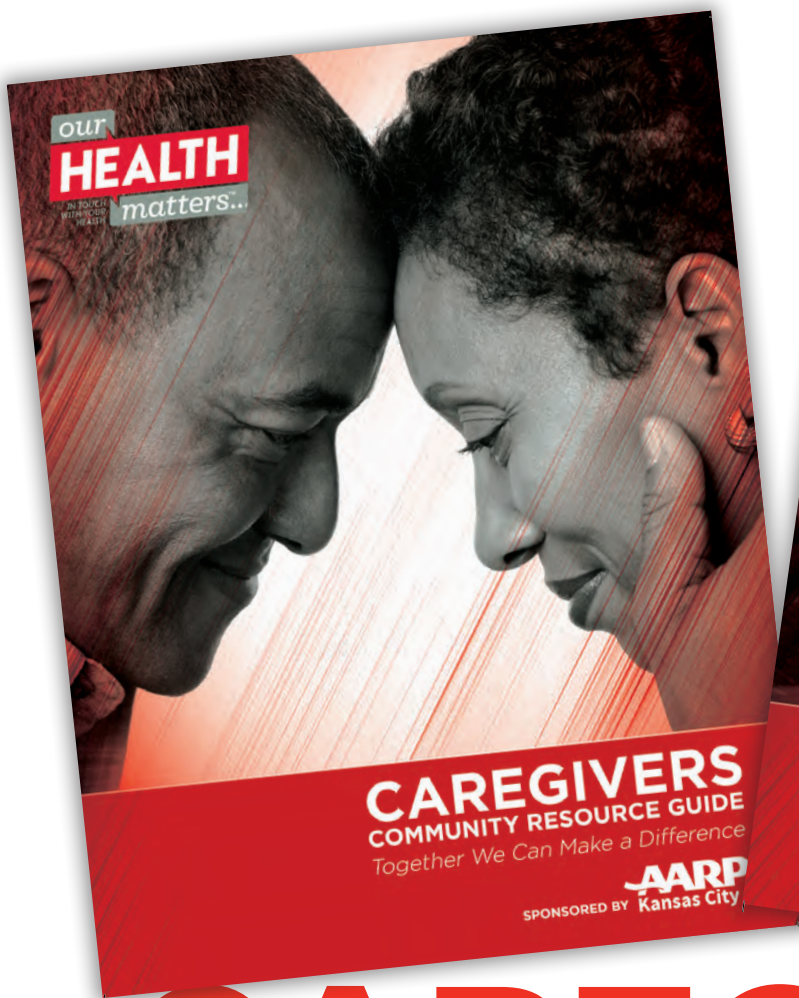
Dementia caregivers report providing 27 hours more care per month on average than caregivers of those without dementia. Alzheimer's caregivers often provide care over a longer period of time. Average life expectancy following an Alzheimer's diagnosis is 4 to 8 years, but can be as long as 20. Many dementia caregivers continue to work at their full-time jobs, but sometimes experience

issues with their employer when they need to go in late or leave early due to care responsibilities.

The Alzheimer's Association offers 8 tips to support an Alzheimer's caregiver:

- 1. Educate yourself about the disease.** The more you know, the better you can understand what a caregiver deals with every day.
- 2. Get others involved.** Build a team of family and friends who want to help with caregiving.
- 3. Give caregivers a break.** Make a standing appointment to spend time with the person living with dementia and allow the caregiver a chance to get out.
- 4. Check in.** Call, send a note or stop by for a visit.
- 5. Do the "to-do" list.** Ask the caregiver for a list of errands that need to be run.
- 6. Be specific with your offer to help.** Instead of saying, "Call me if you need anything," say "I'm headed to the grocery store before I stop by for a visit...what can I pick up for you?"
- 7. Help during the holidays.** There are always shopping, cooking, or cleaning tasks that need to be done.
- 8. Join the fight to end Alzheimer's.** Honor a person living with dementia or their caregiver by joining the fight against Alzheimer's. Volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association as a community educator, support group facilitator or participate in fundraising events like Walk to End Alzheimer's or The Longest Day.

For more information, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900 or consult alz.org/care.



CAREGIVERS MATTER

Caregiving is a journey you should not face alone. If you have ever been a caregiver or are new to the role, it's not easy. Caregivers have many needs and are sometimes at a loss for where to turn for food assistance, medicine, transportation, in-home care, emergency assistance, health care, mental health services, support groups and more!

Our Health Matters™ Caregivers Community Resource Guide, sponsored by AARP Kansas City, connects

Visit
KCOURHEALTHMATTERS.COM
to download a digital copy
of the **Caregivers Community
Resource Guide**

caregivers of a loved one or a person in their care to beneficial services and programs.





SMOTHERED COLLARD GREENS

SERVING SIZE | MAKES 5 SERVINGS

These greens are delicious. They're especially wonderful in the cooler months when greens are easily found in your garden or market.

INGREDIENTS

- > 3 cups water
- > 1/4 pound turkey breast, smoked, skinless
- > 3 teaspoons hot pepper (freshly chopped)
- > 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- > 1/4 teaspoon cloves (ground)
- > 2 cloves garlic (crushed)
- > 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- > 1 scallion stalk (chopped)
- > 1 teaspoon ginger (ground)
- > 1/4 cup onion (chopped)
- > 14 cups collard greens (you can use mustard or turnip greens, kale or a mixture)

NUTRIENTS

AMOUNT

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total Calories..... | 84 |
| Total Fat..... | 1 g |
| Saturated Fat..... | 0 g |
| Cholesterol..... | 18 mg |
| Sodium..... | 61 mg |
| Carbohydrates..... | 9 g |
| Dietary Fiber..... | 5 g |
| Total Sugars..... | 3 g |
| Added Sugars included..... | 0 g |
| Protein..... | 12 g |
| Vitamin D..... | 0 mcg |
| Calcium..... | 196 mg |
| Iron..... | 3 mg |
| Potassium..... | 695 mg |

Please note: nutrient values are subject to change as data is updated.


DIRECTIONS

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prepare greens by washing thoroughly and removing stems.
3. Tear or slice leaves into bite-size pieces.
4. Place all ingredients except greens into large saucepan and bring to a boil.
5. Add greens to turkey stock. Cook 20-30 minutes until tender.

FOOD FACTS

Collard greens activate detoxifying enzymes already present in the body. Collards are cruciferous vegetables and have proven to be one of the most effective antioxidant foods. Collard greens are a rich source of compounds known as glucosinolates, which may help fight cancer. A number of research studies suggest that a diet rich in cruciferous vegetables (green leaf—kale, turnips, to name a few) may lower rates of a variety of cancers, including breast, pancreatic, bladder, lung, prostate and colon cancer.

Source: Heart Healthy Home Cooking: African American Style
US Department of Health and Human Services
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



Infectious Love, Hope and Gratitude: Worth Spreading

Since the onset of the COVID pandemic, we've become acutely aware of the impact that infectious diseases can have on us all. The development of various vaccines and treatment protocols over the last three years reveals that infectious diseases can be managed and overcome in ways that lead to overall health and well-being.

In our social lives, “diseases” like divisiveness, rancor, violence, as well as apathy and countless other sorts of negativity can be managed and overcome when we find positive remedies, especially the healing “infections” of love, hope, and gratitude.

Everyone shines brighter when they experience love, hope, and gratitude. Life is more enjoyable, ties grow deeper, our striding and striving become more confident. Living lovingly, hopefully, and gratefully—in simple, rhythmic ways—can impart to families, friends, and the deepest recesses of one's personality untold encounters with grace and goodness.

How do we increase the “antidotes” of love, hope, and gratitude in our lives? By closer proximity with individuals, groups, and organizations who have known significant defeats and setbacks and yet have still prevailed. Find those who have known sorrowful losses and yet still laugh with joy and gladness. Discern their rituals and rhythms of daily living and then emulate them.

Where can we encounter such “infectious” personalities and organizations that convey love, hope, and gratitude?

- **Faith communities and neighborhoods are good places to start.** Seek out

the most loving, hopeful, and grateful persons in your congregation or neighborhood and inquire about their spiritual disciplines and routines. Then break bread with them regularly.

- **Seek out places where you have pondered the meanings of love, hope, and thankfulness.** It may be a park, a waterfall, a route you use for walking or biking, a theater, jazz club, gym, symphony hall, or nonprofit group you serve as a volunteer. Visit those places frequently.

Notice that all these suggestions involve community connections. Protecting our families, friends, and ourselves is done most effectively with the assistance and teamwork of others. We are better together. The healing “infections” of love, hope, and gratitude are premier remedies for keeping our communities safe. Who knows? If we get really good at such remedies, we might even cause a healing contagion!

Dr. Robert Lee Hill is Minister Emeritus of Community Christian Church, where he served for more than 30 years. He is the author of 10 books, most recently, “Life is to Be Celebrated”.



By Dr. Robert Lee Hill
Community Consultant

WALK IN THEIR SHOES

Self Care—Best Prescription for Frontline Healthcare Workers

Throughout the community there are frontline healthcare workers, first responders, behavioral health technicians, CNAs, EMT B, ER techs, firefighters, paramedics, patient care techs, first responders, patient care associates and patient transporters dealing with trauma, stress and burnout. A patient transporter walks 10-14 miles in a 12-hour shift and is paid minimum wage. If they work a minimum of 12 hours, three days a week, the cost of purchasing new shoes two to three times a year is an added expense employers do not provide.

Karla Pérez-Solórzano a frontline healthcare worker and a group of healthcare professionals working at The University of Kansas Health System Emergency Department recognized a gap between the healthcare institution and their good intentions to support employees. Karla and her colleagues developed the Emergency Department Wellness Committee (EDWC) to support the frontline healthcare workforce during the beginning of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. They surveyed staff and found heightened levels of anxiety, stress, financial constraints, reliance on sleep aids, and increased emotional, mental, and physical discomfort.

As a result, Karla started Healing Heroic Healers (H3) 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to generate resources to help frontline healthcare workers gain direct access to natural and holistic resources.

H3 provides Hero Spotlight, via social media network, coworker nominations for Wellness Care Package comfortable shoes and an H3 Podcast (hero interviews).

H3 Wellness Care Packages:

- Personal Massage
- Whole Body Cryotherapy
- Infrared + Chromatic & Ozone Sauna Therapy
- Light & Infrared Therapy
- Jiu Jitsu & Gym

H3 Wellness Cohort Program (WCP):

The Program is a comprehensive curriculum that teaches frontline workers self-care techniques they can use personally, as well as share with others, it includes:

- Stress Reduction
- Breathing Techniques
- Guided Imagery
- Hypnotherapy
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

What started out as a thoughtful gesture has grown into a mission of giving back to frontline healthcare workers so they can refresh, refuel and rebalance.

HOW CAN YOU HELP

Healing Heroic Healers needs donors and business partnerships to provide more services to frontline workers across the city.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
heroichealers.org or call 212.964.4451



Stay Healthy During Viral Respiratory Season

Don't let a respiratory illness put a damper on your holiday fun! Since the COVID-19 pandemic, respiratory viruses can be unpredictable so being prepared is important. Here's what you need to know to help keep your family safe and healthy.

Preventing viral respiratory illnesses

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Keep away from people who are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or sneeze/cough into your elbow).
- Clean surfaces often like doorknobs, car handles, phones and keys.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Stay up to date with flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

Flu Facts

Flu, or influenza, is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus. The flu is contagious and can be spread through droplets from person to person.

There's a misconception that influenza "isn't that bad," but it can be deadly, even for children who were previously healthy. Flu symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache, body aches, chills
- Cough
- Runny nose, congestion
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

The best way to protect yourself from getting the flu is to get vaccinated. The flu vaccine is safe. It is recommended for everyone six months and older. The vaccine is available at doctor's offices and other locations in your community.

RSV Facts

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that can be spread through droplets from coughing, sneezing or touching infected surfaces and then touching your face.

RSV symptoms include:

- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Fever
- Runny nose and nasal congestion

For most children, RSV causes mild symptoms, and the body fights the virus off in one week. In young children, particularly those less than six months, and children with weakened immune systems, RSV can become dangerous.

In July 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Nirsevimab (Beyfortus) to prevent RSV infections in infants, providing immunity to RSV by giving an antibody. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all infants younger than 8 months old receive Nirsevimab. There is currently no RSV vaccine for infants.

The FDA also approved an RSV vaccine for adults 60 years and older and pregnant persons. After getting the vaccine, the pregnant person makes antibodies to RSV and passes them to the baby before delivery. When the baby is born, they have some protection against RSV. CDC has also recommended this vaccine for pregnant people who are 32-36 weeks pregnant to help protect young infants.

COVID-19 Facts

In September, the CDC recommended an updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone ages 6 months and older. This updated vaccine will provide protection against serious illness from the current strains. Contact your child's primary care provider, pharmacy or local health department to get them vaccinated. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location near you for flu, RSV and COVID-19 shots.

Dr. Schuster is Director of the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program; Professor of Pediatrics at the UMKC School of Medicine & Education.



By Jennifer Schuster
MD, MSCI

Children's Mercy
Kansas City

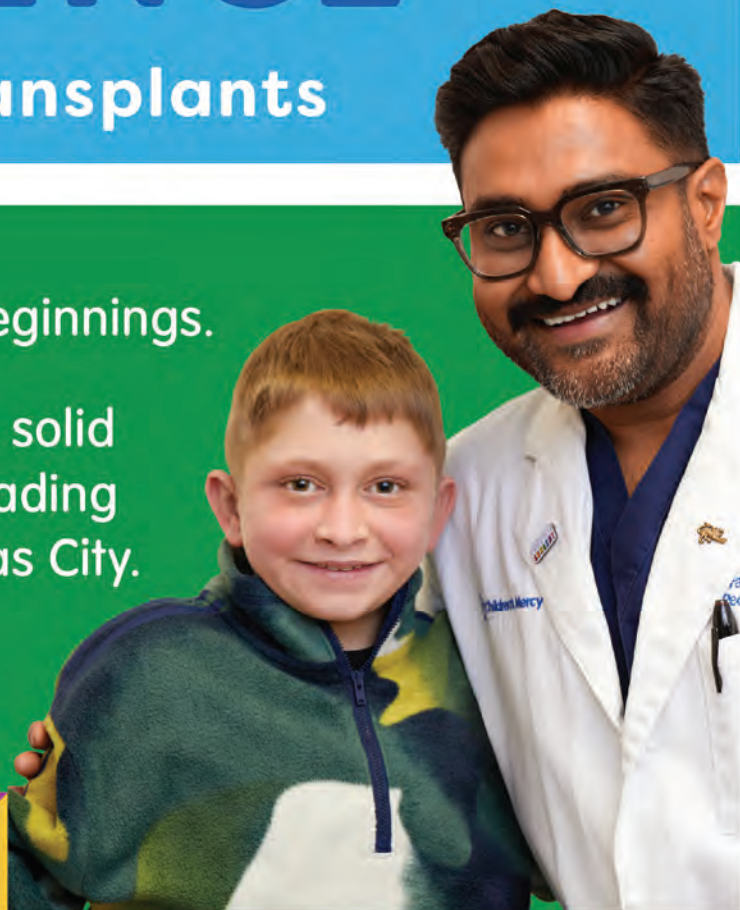
BUILT ON EXCELLENCE

700+ life-saving transplants

700+ transplants = 700+ new beginnings.

One of the nation's top pediatric solid organ transplant centers with leading survival rates right here in Kansas City.

BUILT FOR KIDS

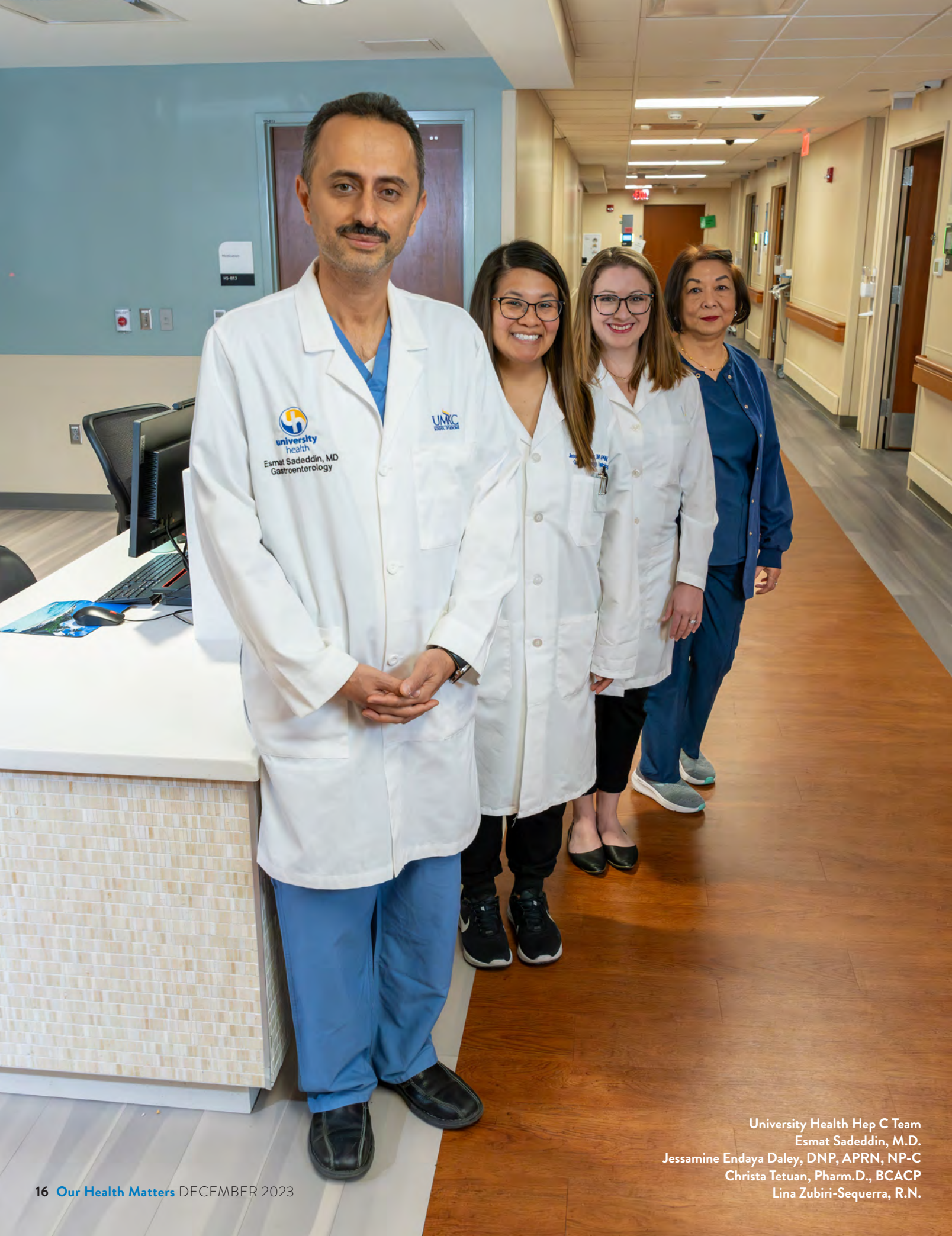


Learn More:
cmkc.link/builtforkids



Children's Mercy
KANSAS CITY





university
health
Esmat Sadeed, MD
Gastroenterology

UMC
1000 VETERAN

University Health Hep C Team
Esmat Sadeed, M.D.
Jessamine Endaya Daley, DNP, APRN, NP-C
Christa Tetuan, Pharm.D., BCACP
Lina Zubiri-Sequera, R.N.

350 REASONS

Why Hepatitis C Patients are in Good Hands

A dedicated team led by Dr. Esmat Sadeddin provides academic medicine for all hepatitis C patients regardless of their ability to pay.

"I truly feel proud of my team! Over the last four years, we have cared for over 350 hepatitis C patients, most of which achieved clinical cure despite many patients experiencing challenging circumstances."

— Esmat Sadeddin, M.D.

Unfortunately, many people are unaware they are infected with hepatitis C (HCV) because they do not experience symptoms. Over time, the virus can cause severe liver damage, which results in liver failure and cancer. And it is more common than people think. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the hepatitis C virus affects as many as 3.9 million Americans.

WHO DOES HEPATITIS C COMMONLY AFFECT?

Hepatitis C spreads through contact with infected blood, which means the virus can be spread between people. If you are over the age of 18, you should be screened for hepatitis C infection at least once. Those with risk factors may require more frequent monitoring. The risk factors include:

- Sharing needles or syringes
- Using intravenous or intranasal drugs
- Obtaining tattoos under unsanitary conditions
- Receiving a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- Receiving blood clotting factor for hemophilia before 1987
- Having unprotected sex
- Being born to a mother with hepatitis C



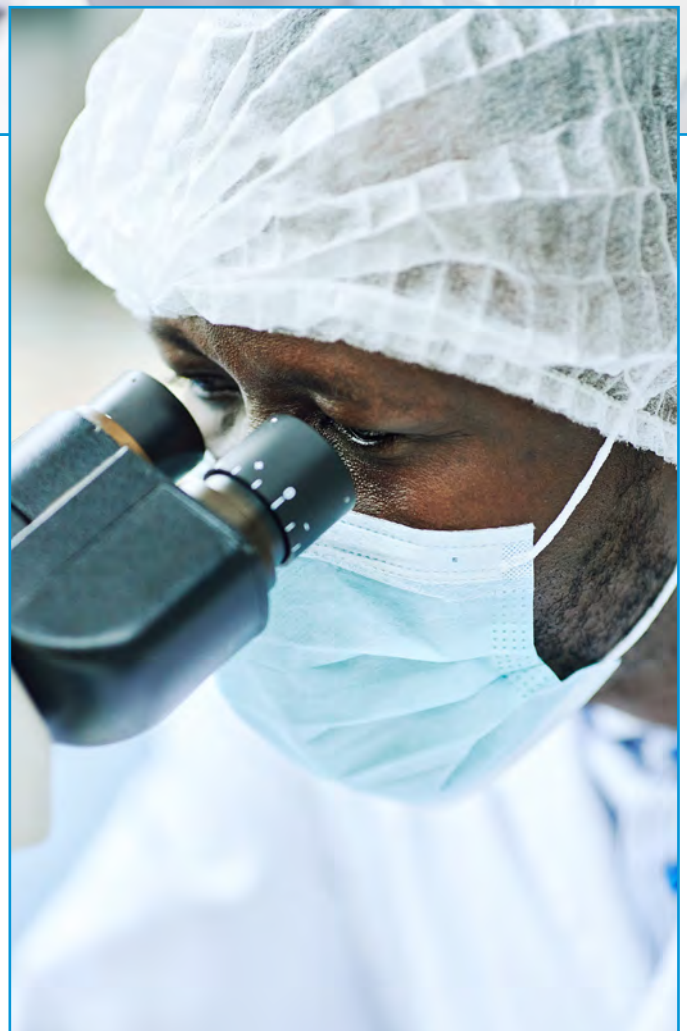
While many patients do not experience symptoms of hepatitis C, fatigue is the most common. Other symptoms may include fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, and yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice).

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT TESTING AND TREATMENT

Hepatitis C is diagnosed through blood testing and is not always included in standard blood workup. If you think you may be at risk, ask your healthcare provider for the test.

Today's treatments are highly effective at curing the hepatitis C virus. University Health has a team of people working to ensure you can afford treatment and navigate the healthcare system.

University Health offers convenient hepatitis C screening. Call 816-404-CARE to schedule an appointment with a primary care provider. Simply ask that the HCV screening be done at the same time as other blood work.





Epidemiologists Play a Major Role in Identifying Infectious Diseases

Epidemiologists investigate patterns and causes of disease and injury to determine how best to combat biological threats. They collect and analyze data to investigate the root cause of a disease and identify effective treatments. For example, an epidemiologist might study demographic data to determine groups at high risk for a particular disease to prevent negative outcomes.

Where do epidemiologists work?

Epidemiologists work in offices and laboratories, usually at health departments for state and local governments, in hospitals, and at colleges and universities.

How to become an epidemiologist

Epidemiologists typically need at least a master's degree to enter the occupation. They may have a master's degree in public health (MPH) or a related field, and some have completed a doctoral degree in epidemiology or medicine.

How long does it take to become an epidemiologist?

It may also depend on the education required for the position. While most epidemiologist jobs require a master's degree, some may require doctoral degrees as

well. In some cases, it may take up to six years or longer to become an epidemiologist.

Do epidemiologists go to med school?

An epidemiologist is not required to have a doctor of medicine degree. Some epidemiologists are licensed physicians; however, this isn't required for most positions.

The median annual wage for epidemiologists was \$78,520 in May 2022.

Is there a high demand for epidemiologists?

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 25.8% employment growth for epidemiologists or medical scientists between 2021 and 2031. In that period, an estimated 2,200 jobs should open up.

Employment of epidemiologists is projected to grow 27% from 2022 to 2032, much faster than the average for all occupations.

About 800 openings for epidemiologists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force through retirement.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

WHAT DO YOU KNOW... about infectious diseases?

In Kansas, there are approximately 70 infectious diseases that are reportable to Kansas Department of Health and Environment—everything from chickenpox to tularemia (“rabbit fever”). Reporting of diseases help track the trend and prevent further spread.

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. Many organisms live in and on our bodies. They're normally harmless or even helpful. But under certain conditions, some organisms may cause disease.

Some infectious diseases can be passed from person to person. Some are transmitted by insects

or other animals, others by consuming contaminated food or water or being exposed to organisms in the environment. Signs and symptoms vary depending on the organism causing the infection. Mild infections may respond to rest and home remedies, while some life-threatening infections may need hospitalization.

Prevention is usually the best course of action. Many infectious diseases, such as measles, chickenpox, flu, and

COVID-19 can be prevented, or their impact lessened by vaccines. Frequent and thorough handwashing also helps protect you from most infectious diseases. Follow these tips to decrease the risk of infection:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS.** This is especially important before and after preparing food, before eating, and after using the toilet. Try not to touch your eyes,

nose, or mouth with your hands, as that's common way germs enter the body.

- **GET VACCINATED.** Vaccination can drastically reduce your chances of contracting many diseases. Make sure to keep up to date on your recommended vaccinations, as well as your children's.
- **STAY HOME WHEN ILL.** Don't go to work if you are vomiting, have diarrhea or have a fever. Don't send your child to school if he or she has these signs, either.
- **PREPARE FOOD SAFELY.** Keep counters and other kitchen surfaces clean when preparing meals. Cook foods to the proper temperature, using a food thermometer to check for doneness and promptly refrigerate leftovers.
- **DON'T SHARE PERSONAL ITEMS.** Use your own toothbrush, comb, and razor. Avoid sharing drinking glasses or dining utensils.
- **TRAVEL WISELY.** If you're traveling out of the country, talk to your doctor about any special vaccinations you may need, such as yellow fever, cholera, hepatitis A or B, or typhoid fever.

If you need more information about COVID-19 and flu vaccines and prevention, or other public health information, visit the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment online at www.jocogov.org/departments/health, or on social media:



Barbara Mitchell

Community Health
Division Director,
Johnson County
Department of Health
and Environment

 **Facebook: Johnson County Department of Health and Environment**

 **X (formerly Twitter): @JOCOHealth**

 **Instagram: @jocohealthdept**

 **YouTube: @JCDHEKS**

 **TikTok: @jcdcks**



DEPRESSION DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS VERY COMMON

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that 64% of people living with a mental illness reported that their conditions worsened around the holidays. Between Thanksgiving and New Years some people find themselves feeling depressed because of extreme pressure to participate in or coordinate a family gathering, or it may be brought on due to grieving the loss of a loved one.

Depression takes a toll on one's physical and mental health. It can manifest in ailments such as anxiety, stomach pain, headaches and unplanned weight changes, to name a few.

If you are experiencing more than normal depression such as not sleeping, feeling hopeless or losing interest in social activities, we encourage you to see a behavioral health consultant for mental health support. If you are having thoughts of harming yourself, call 988 the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Whether it's healthcare for women, men or children, Rodgers Health is prepared to deliver quality healthcare for you and your entire family.



"I encourage you to take time to understand the signs and symptoms of depression and make every effort to get the mental health support you, or a family member may need."

**— Dr. Manuel Solano,
Director of
Behavioral Health**

Check out our calendar for a variety of community health forums and events.

**For more information about our healthcare services visit
www.samrodgers.org**

**To make an appointment
call 816-474-4920**



**SAMUEL U. RODGERS
HEALTH CENTER**

U.S. Syphilis Cases in Newborns Continue to Climb

Early testing and treatment can protect mothers and babies.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

New CDC data reveal that more than 3,700 babies were born with syphilis in 2022, which was more than 10 times the number in 2012. Here's what the data found:

- Almost 9 in 10 cases of newborn syphilis in 2022 might have been prevented with timely testing and treatment during pregnancy.
- More than half were among people who tested positive for syphilis during pregnancy but did not receive treatment.
- Nearly 40 percent were among mothers who had not received prenatal care.
- According to previous CDC data, in 2021, more than 70% of the U.S. population lived in counties considered to have high rates of syphilis among people of childbearing age.

Reasons why testing and treatment is not happening during pregnancy

Some factors may include lack of insurance or substance use disorder. Healthcare system challenges could include systemic racism and limited healthcare access.

Which populations are more likely to be affected?

People from racial and ethnic minority groups bear the burden of the newborn syphilis epidemic. In 2021, babies born to Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native mothers were up to 8 times more likely to have newborn syphilis than babies born to White mothers.

If you are pregnant or think you may be

First consult your healthcare provider. You should be tested for syphilis the first time you see your doctor for

health care during pregnancy. If you don't have a healthcare provider, community health centers can provide services based on your income or insurance status.

Many people with syphilis do not have any symptoms. The only way to know for sure if you have syphilis is to get tested.

How can syphilis impact my baby?

Congenital syphilis (CS as it is known) can cause:

- Miscarriage (losing the baby during pregnancy)
- Stillbirth (a baby born dead)
- Prematurity (a baby born early)
- Low birth weight
- Death shortly after birth

For babies born with CS, CS can cause:

- Deformed bones
- Severe anemia (low blood count)
- Enlarged liver and spleen
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- Brain and nerve problems, like blindness or deafness
- Meningitis
- Skin rashes

Syphilis can be treated and cured.

Antibiotics are used to treat syphilis. If you test positive during pregnancy, be sure to get treatment right away. After treatment for syphilis, your healthcare provider should do follow-up testing for at least one year.

Advocate for your own health

Pregnant moms and babies deserve a healthy start. As soon as you know you are pregnant, be sure to get early and consistent prenatal care.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov



Tiffany Price
Executive Director
Hold Em Up 4 Care

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS EMPOWERED TO LEARN

In 2018 while completing a Parent Leadership Training Institute-KC community service project, Executive Director Tiffany Price of Hold Em Up 4 Care discovered there were unmet personal needs of at-risk, LGBTQIA and transgender high school girls and boys ages 9-19 years. "Few people realize how important it is to teens to have clean and properly fitted clothing," said Price.

Hold Em Up 4 Care (HEU4C) is focused on whole-person empowerment and well-being. Their inclusive approach ensures all students receive free essential clothing and are taught hygiene and other life skills such as etiquette. Girls receive properly fitting athletic bras and undergarments; males are taught etiquette and how to tie a tie. Hold Em Up 4 Care is also setting up the first-ever all-male prom closet.

Students perform better at school when they aren't worried about something as basic as essential and properly-fitting clothing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HOLD EM UP 4 CARE PROVIDES INCLUDE:

- **Picture Day Clothes Closet** - One outfit two times a year.
- **Houseless and Reentry Empowerment** - Clothes, shoes, socks, underwear, masks and other items. Re-entry clients receive clothing and gift cards.

AD SPONSORED BY



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Hold Em Up 4 Care needs male and female items: athletic bras, underwear, socks, belts, cuff links, cummerbunds, dress shirts and pants, shoes, suits, suspenders, toiletries, tuxedos and monetary donations.

Hold Em Up 4 Care is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit. To make a donation or to provide new clothing items, visit their website.



www.heu4ckc.org

Email: info@heu4ckc.org

816.824.5005



[holdemup4care](https://www.facebook.com/holdemup4care)



DON'T LET STRESS MANAGE YOU IN 2024

MAKE CHANGES NOW FOR BETTER HEALTH.

According to the American Psychological Association around three-quarters of adults (76%) said they have experienced health impacts due to stress in the prior month, including headache (38%), fatigue (35%), feeling nervous or anxious (34%), and/or feeling depressed or sad (33%).

A majority of adults (70%) said that health care is a significant source of stress in their lives. Adults at or below poverty level were more likely than those above poverty level to say that health care is a significant source of stress in their lives (75% vs. 68%). Black, Latino/a, and Asian adults were more likely than White adults to agree that health care is a significant source of stress in their lives (74%, 77% and 74% vs. 67%).

This article appeared in *Our Health Matters* December 2021 edition. Stress is a topic that everyone needs to understand better and take action to manage. We are reminding readers to make self care a priority. You can download the digital edition at kcourhealthmatters.com/digital-editions/.

If we don't get a handle on stress, we are headed for the next big public health crisis. This is the warning from the American Psychological Association (APA) in response to data from the Stress in America: A National Mental Health survey, released last October.

If we don't make changes now, a large segment of the population is headed for poor mental and physical health outcomes. The APA has not been alone in raising concerns about the rising levels of stress people are experiencing. For months, mental health professionals,

primary care providers and social services agencies have been sounding the alarm as they report seeing larger numbers of patients and clients who admit to struggling with their mental health.

OUR BODIES CAN HANDLE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF STRESS

It is important to know that stress is normal. When we experience challenges or stressors, our bodies and minds react in response. For example, you may be nervous about a job change or the birth of a child or grandchild, or your child could be anxious about a test at school. All stress isn't bad.

Good stress promotes resilience and helps us balance our emotions. Positive stress can include planning a new adventure like hang gliding or rock climbing for the first

time; starting a new job, or going on a first date. The effects of good stress can be increased self-esteem, motivation and inspiration.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EXPERIENCE STRESS?

“All parts of the body work in balance with each other,” explains Alex Jackson, LMT, NCTMB, Holistic Health Practitioner. Jackson understands the connection between stress and chronic diseases. In his practice, clients complete an assessment so that he understands their physical and mental status, which helps him determine if stress is a contributor to their health condition. “Most of the time we find all systems of the body are affected by stress,” says Jackson.

Situations that may cause stress and have a negative impact include:

- Extreme anger
- Fear of being bullied
- Working too hard
- Losing a job
- Marriage or relationship problems
- Divorce or recent breakup
- Death of a family member or friend
- Difficulty in school
- Overwhelming schedule (caring for a loved one, vacations and holidays)
- Relocating to a new home or job

STRESS IMPACTS THE BODY

- Musculoskeletal system (muscles and bones)
- Respiratory system (airways, lungs and blood vessels)
- Digestive system (mouth, throat, esophagus, stomach, intestines rectum, anus, salivary glands, liver, gallbladder and pancreas)
- Reproductive system (in women, ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix and vagina; in men, prostate, the testes and penis)
- Immune system (more susceptible to viruses and infections)

Some health conditions resulting from long-term or chronic stress include:

- Stomach issues (pain, digestive problems, eating disorders)

- Reproductive challenges (can contribute to infertility issues)
- Neck and back pain
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Chronic health diseases (diabetes, high blood pressure, breathing issues, kidney disease)

STRESS CAN LEAD TO UNHEALTHY HABITS

Long-term exposure to stress takes its toll. In her work as a Therapist at Reconciliation Services (RS), Shaleesa Rocket, LCSW, sees clients who have experienced long-term stress—sometimes all their lives. “Some of my clients have been exposed to trauma and stress and have faced struggles and loss,” Rocket explains. “As a result, some have adopted unhealthy habits or engage in risky behaviors. My goal is to give them the tools to heal, cope and grow—and lean into healthier ways to deal with life’s challenges.” Unhealthy habits can include:

- Poor nutrition
- Abusing alcohol and other drugs
- Tobacco use
- Sedentary lifestyle (little to no exercise)

UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE

Communities of color are more likely to live with the physical and mental health effects of stress and are the least likely to have access to mental health services. “The lack of access creates barriers and contributes to the stigma of seeking help,” Rocket says. “There is still a lot of work to do to remove the stigma and shame. Families are experiencing stresses and trauma that have passed from generation to generation.”

CAN STRESS BE PREVENTED?

Stress cannot be prevented, but it can be managed. These tips can help you battle stress and guard your mental health.

- **GET MOVING.** Exercise is great for mental and physical health. If you can’t get outside, do some indoor stretches and bends.
- **CONSIDER THERAPY AND COUNSELING** to learn new

perspectives and techniques to help you manage day-to-day stressors in your life.

- **GET ORGANIZED.** Planning your day can help ease a lot of stress.
- **MANAGE WORRIES.** Take action in those areas in which you have some control.
- **CONNECT WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE** who are calming and supportive.
- **LEARN TO SAY “NO.”** When you have too much—or even enough—on your plate already, taking on additional responsibilities will only add to your discomfort.
- **EAT HEALTHIER.** Learn what foods contribute to poor health. Ask your doctor to refer you to a nutritionist.
- **REDUCE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** and if you use tobacco, quit.
- **RELAX, RELAX, RELAX.** You might try meditation, yoga, Tai Chi or breathing exercises to promote relaxation.

IF YOU NEED HELP

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, providers have begun asking questions about mental health during screenings and visits. Talk to your healthcare provider and be open about your mental health. If you are considering a

less traditional approach, talk to your provider to determine what works best for your situation and health.

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

If you or someone you know is struggling to cope or threatening self-harm, contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

Reconciliation Services provides evidence-based, clinical support, group therapy and intensive case management for clients struggling with depression and the effects of trauma. To learn about how they support individuals and families, visit rs3101.org.

Shaleesa Rocket, LCSW is a Therapist at Reconciliation Services; Alex Jackson, LMT, NCTMB, is a Holistic Health Practitioner and owner of Centered Spirit, in Kansas City, Missouri.

Our Health Matters does not endorse any medical treatment or approach. Always consult your doctor regarding any physical and mental healthcare needs.

Source: American Psychological Association, Cleveland Clinic, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention



Enjoy a Happier, Healthier Life

Older adults who are lonely and socially isolated are at greater risk for heart disease, depression, dementia and memory loss.

Everyone needs social connections to survive and thrive. But as people age, they often find themselves spending more time alone. Being alone may leave older adults more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation, which can affect their health and wellbeing. Studies show that loneliness and social isolation are associated with higher risks for health problems such as heart disease, depression and dementia and memory loss.

If you are in poor health, you may be more likely to be socially isolated or lonely. If you are socially isolated or feeling lonely, it can put your physical and mental health

at risk. Adults who are lonely or socially isolated are less healthy, have longer hospital stays, are readmitted to the hospital more often, and are more likely to die earlier than those with meaningful and supportive social connections.

What is the difference between loneliness and social isolation?

A growing number of adults age 65 and older are socially isolated and regularly feel lonely.

Loneliness and social isolation are different but related. Loneliness is the distressing feeling of being alone or separated. Social isolation is the lack of social contacts



and having few people to interact with regularly. You can live alone and not feel lonely or socially isolated, and you can feel lonely while being with other people.

Older adults are at higher risk for social isolation and loneliness due to changes in health and social connections that can come with growing older, hearing, vision, and memory loss, disability, trouble getting around, and/or the loss of family and friends.

How can feeling lonely or being isolated affect older adults' health?

People who are socially isolated or lonely are more likely to be admitted to the emergency room or to a nursing home. Social isolation and loneliness also are associated with higher risks for:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Weakened immune function
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Cognitive decline
- Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease
- Death

How can you know your risk for loneliness and social isolation?

People who are particularly at risk of loneliness and social isolation are those who are isolated due to the illness of a loved one, separation from friends or family, loss of mobility, worsening vision or hearing problems, disability, or lack of mobility or access to transportation. You also may be at greater risk if you:

- Live alone
- Can't leave your home
- Had a major loss or life change, such as retirement or the death of a spouse or partner
- Struggle with money
- Are a caregiver
- Have psychological or cognitive challenges or depression
- Have limited social support
- Have trouble hearing
- Live in a rural, unsafe, and/or hard-to-reach neighborhood
- Have language barriers where you live

- Experience age, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity discrimination where you live
- Are not meaningfully engaged in activities or are feeling a lack of purpose
- People with hearing loss may find it hard to have conversations with friends and family, which can lead to less interaction with people, social isolation, and higher rates of loneliness.

If you or someone you know is experiencing isolation or loneliness here are a few ideas to help you stay connected.

Ideas for staying connected

- Look up community organizations that have resources and activities that you enjoy.
- Restart an old hobby or take a class to learn something new. You might have fun and meet people with similar interests.
- Schedule time each day to stay in touch with family, friends and neighbors in person, by email, social media, voice call or text. Talk with people you trust and share your feelings. Suggest an activity to help nurture and strengthen existing relationships. Send letters or cards to keep up friendships.
- Learn new technology devices and apps to participate in community conversations and learn video games.
- If you're not tech-savvy, sign up for an online or in-person class at your local public library or community center to help you learn how to use email or social media.
- Consider adopting a pet if you are able to care for one. Animals can be a source of comfort and may also lower stress and blood pressure.
- Stay physically active and include group exercise, such as joining a walking club or working out with a friend. Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of activity a week that makes you breathe hard.
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors.
- Find a faith-based organization where you can deepen your spirituality and engage with others in activities and events.
- Check out resources and programs at your local social service agencies, community and senior centers and public libraries.
- Join a cause and get involved in your community.

SOURCE: NIH National Institute on Aging (NIA).

Vaccines Aren't Just for Kids

As we age, the types of vaccines we need will change. You may even be required to get a booster dose of vaccines you received years ago in order to stay protected.

Aside from seasonal and hepatitis C vaccines, your healthcare provider may require that you get other vaccines:

TDAP. Every adult should get the Tdap vaccine once if they did not receive it when they were younger to protect against whooping cough, and then a Td booster shot (tetanus & diphtheria only) every 10 years.

- If you are going to be around a newborn, it's particularly important to get the Tdap shot to help protect the baby from whooping cough.
- If you are pregnant, experts recommend you get a Tdap vaccine during your third trimester, preferably at 27 through 36 weeks, to protect you AND your baby from whooping cough (also known as pertussis).

HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS). The vaccine protects against six HPV-related cancers and genital warts. The CDC recommends HPV vaccine for men and women up to age 26 if they weren't vaccinated when they were younger. Adults ages 27 through 45 years who want to get the HPV vaccine should talk to their healthcare provider.

MMR (MEASLES-MUMPS-RUBELLA). According to the CDC, if you were born after 1957 you need at least 1 dose of MMR vaccine unless a laboratory confirmed that you had past measles infection or are immune. Talk to your healthcare provider to find out what you need.

SHINGLES. The CDC recommends two doses of shingles vaccine (Shingrix) for all healthy adults starting at age 50.

PNEUMOCOCCAL PNEUMONIA. Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for all adults over 65, and for adults younger than 65 who have certain chronic health conditions.

Source: [Vaccinate Your Family, vaccinateyourfamily.org](https://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org)



STICK IT TO THE FLU

With just a little stick from your doctor, you can show the flu who's boss. **Help knock out the flu in Missouri.**

LEARN MORE

#MOStopsFlu

 **MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES**

Office of Minority Health and Health Equity

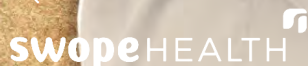
**WHAT'S
NEXT?
FEB 24**

MENTOR

ME

ICAN & I WILL

SPONSORS



BLACK MEN SPEAK

HEALTH COMMUNITY & HOPE

TM



MENTORS PLAY A VALUABLE ROLE IN HELPING TO SHAPE THE LIVES OF YOUNG MALES.

SAVE THE DATE for Saturday, February 24, 2024 to attend this special edition release and program at the Gem Theater in the Historic 18th & Vine District, KCMO.

For more information, sponsorship and advertising call 816-361-6400 or email ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

— Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895
Abolitionist, American Social Reformer and Writer

Making Better Health Knowledge **Our Top Priority**



DISCOVER TRENDING HEALTH TOPICS IN EVERY EDITION.

Scan the QR code at left or download your personal copy at: kcourhealthmatters.com
Email: info@kcourhealthmatters.com | Phone: 816.361.6400



**INCREASE YOUR EXPOSURE
AND EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS.
ADVERTISE IN OUR HEALTH MATTERS™**

If you are looking to reach new customers and foster lasting relationships,
call 816.361.6400 or email your request to info@kcourhealthmatters.com.

