

HOME CARE
HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE
ISABELLA & MENORAH CENTERS FOR
REHABILITATION AND NURSING CARE
ELDERPLAN/HOMEFIRST
INSTITUTE FOR INNOVATION IN
PALLIATIVE CARE

MJHS *in* FOCUS

Spring 2019

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MJHS
MEMORY
CARE
RESIDENCE

UPDATE

New programming and construction in the MJHS Memory Care Residence are underway...

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The 2018 MAP and MLTC Plan quality results have been released.

ELDERPLAN MAP *and* **HOMEFIRST** *are both*

TOP TIER

For the 2nd Year in a Row!

Each year the New York State Department of Health rates and rewards Medicare Advantage Plus (MAP) and Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) health plans based on their performance on quality measures in the areas of patient safety, preventive screenings, quality of life, satisfaction, stability of members' chronic conditions and overall health status.

In results published February of 2019, both Elderplan MAP and HomeFirst MLTC achieved the highest tier rating for the second year in a row.

2018 EMPLOYEE GIVING
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Every year our very own employees raise funds for the programs and services of MJHS! Thank you to our employees who not only give to us every day by caring for our community but who also go above and beyond to donate funds to ensure we can continue caring for those in need.

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Elderplan Put Caring into Care Management AND SAVED A MEMBER

REFLECTIONS FROM LENAY, A CARE MANAGER WHO SUPPORTS
ELDERPLAN MEMBERS WITH COMPLEX HEALTH ISSUES.

Richard was 64 when he enrolled in the Elderplan Medicaid Advantage Plus (MAP) health plan. He had extensive medical issues including congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic pancreatitis, depression, diabetes and alcohol dependence. Richard had a limited support system, having suffered profound losses including his mother, two daughters, sister and brother. He needed help medically and emotionally.

Shortly after enrollment in Elderplan MAP, Richard was hospitalized. Given his complex medical condition, when he returned home, we increased his home health aide hours... but we didn't stop there. We also enrolled him into our MJHS Plus program which included monthly home visits from a nurse practitioner, a personal emergency response system, follow-up by a transitional care nurse to ensure that he was

following through with his treatment and care after discharge and twice weekly visits by an MJHS nurse to help him better manage his health. In addition, his Elderplan care team assisted Richard with obtaining correct medications by coordinating with his primary care physician and pharmacist. Richard also needed emotional support. I spoke with him often, listening to stories about his family, but he needed professional guidance. While diagnosed with depression earlier in his life, he'd never sought treatment. So we connected him with a community psychiatrist who he now regularly sees. I'm proud to say that Richard has reclaimed his life. He now plays saxophone in a band.

There were no heroic measures taken in this story. There were small—but meaningful—acts of kindness that made a profound difference for Richard. We responded. We listened. We cared. ■

- LeNay

IN THE MEMBER'S OWN WORDS...

After losing my two kids, my mother, my brother and sister, I lost EVERYTHING. Destitute, I attempted suicide and fell into a DEEP depression. I had no clue where my next meal was coming from. I felt so alone, lost. There was nothing to live for. I want to thank Ms. LeNay R., my Elderplan care manager, for saving my life by being so understanding and compassionate. She REALLY cared. There isn't much more to say other than to say THANK YOU, Ms. R. for giving me back HOPE. You and your staff are so good in your hearts. May God bless you, your staff and, most of all, your families!

- Richard

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Isabella Staff Provided **Care and Support** for Maria and Raul...Becoming Part of Their Family

Reflections from Linda, a social worker who cared for the couple.

They were a “match made in heaven.” That’s how Raul and Maria felt about their 65-year marriage. He had been a postal worker, Maria a school librarian. When Maria had a stroke, she came to Isabella for rehabilitation. We helped her regain some of her speech and strength—but she never regained the independence required for her to return home. Maria became a long-term resident of Isabella.

Raul visited Maria every day—bringing her fresh flowers and her favorite candy. When the Isabella staff learned that this remarkable couple shared a love of bebop jazz, they brought in music for both to enjoy.

Maria’s health did not improve. Fifteen months later, she passed away. Raul was devastated. The Isabella staff, whom he now called “family,” realized he would need help. They referred Raul to a support group sponsored by Isabella’s Institute for Older Adults. It took some time, but Raul was able to work through his grief and make new friends. He is forever grateful for the care Isabella provided Maria during her illness and to him as he regained his life back in the community. Today, Raul still stops by, bringing flowers and candy to his Isabella “family”—the staff that took such loving care of them both.

In Raul’s own words...

“Every time I come to Isabella, it’s like I’m visiting my own family. I now regularly join the exercise class held by the Walking Works Wonders Program, have breakfast in the cafeteria and often visit the staff that took such wonderful care of my wife and me. Together we keep her memory alive.”

It’s very rewarding when a patient, or their family members, have such a positive experience that they come back to us when they need help in the future. ■

—Linda

Photographs and some details have been changed to protect member privacy.

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Philip Littman Memorial Fund for Medical Ethics

Difficult and painful questions can often arise at the end of life. In my husband Phil's case, his terminal diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) complicated his care. While his mind was sharp, his body failed him. He could recall his days as a husband and father, as a Peace Corps volunteer, his career as a radiation oncologist, and later as a general practitioner at Volunteers in Medicine. But he couldn't eat, stand, talk, use assistive devices or breathe on his own. When he requested compassionate termination of his respirator, we struggled to find an organization that would help. Thanks to MJHS Hospice and their Medical Ethics program, we were able to receive guidance regarding the ethical issues of his choice.

Thanks to this sensitive, supportive program, in March of 2016, Phil passed away at home with dignity, surrounded by his family and friends—exactly the way he wanted. To honor him and support this vital program, I established the Philip Littman Memorial Fund for Medical Ethics at MJHS Hospice.

A strong medical ethics program focuses on each person's unique experience of terminal illness to identify his or her values and preferences. Most critically, it helps patients and their families realize their goals of care while navigating all the challenging complexities.

Phil never shied away from big, knotty issues. He thought deeply and widely, and acted with moral conviction to do the right thing, especially about his own medical situation. Establishing the Philip Littman Memorial Fund for Medical Ethics celebrates his character, fills me with a sense of purpose, and gives back to an organization that gave us so very, very much during such a heartbreaking time. ■

—Trish Littman

MJHS Hospice Receives Grant Funds will be used to aid Holocaust Survivors at the End of Life

MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care is proud to be the recipient of a **\$233,333** grant that will enable new programming and services for Holocaust Survivors and their families.

This program is made possible by federal funds from a grant through the **The Jewish Federations of North America Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care**.

This generous grant will enable MJHS Hospice to add specially-trained music and art therapists to our Creative Arts Therapy program. In so doing, it will allow MJHS to help more Holocaust survivors and their families address trauma-related issues of spiritual and emotional pain. The grant will also support an online toolkit and an experiential program at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, both

of which will educate new MJHS Hospice staff and other health care professionals about the impact of trauma on Holocaust survivors, and on the second generation, at the end of life. ■



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MJHS Home Care Helps Husband Get Back on his Feet

My husband Val and I like to support organizations that do meaningful work. After the extraordinary care MJHS provided Val, we were inspired to give back. Making a gift through the MJHS Foundation’s Circle of Caring was the perfect way for us to do our part in ensuring that other MJHS patients will receive the same quality care.

Val and I immigrated from the Soviet Union 40 years ago, along with our daughter and my mother. When we arrived in the US, we settled down in Brooklyn and have lived here ever since. I worked as a supervisor in the accounting department of a large law firm. Val worked in the elevator industry, which was very strenuous on his knees. About 20 years ago he had arthroscopic surgery which helped for a while, but the pain began to come back and was interfering with his daily activities. When Val retired at 67, and had ample time to heal and recuperate, we decided it was time for him to get the necessary surgery.

Following Val’s knee replacement surgery last August, we had options as to who would come to our home to provide physical therapy. We are so thankful that we found MJHS Home Care. The first day that Val came home after his surgery, a physical therapist stopped by for the initial evaluation. Not only was he knowledgeable, experienced, and a good listener, but he made us laugh. The whole time he was working with my husband, he shared funny stories—making us feel comfortable right away. Val’s regular physical therapist was excellent as well. We were especially appreciative of how well he communicated with us. He would clearly explain the purpose of every exercise and was happy to answer any questions we had, giving us confidence in his treatment plan and peace of mind. Val’s nurse was kind, warm, and understanding. From the start, she felt like someone we’d known for a long time.

Thanks to MJHS, Val is well on his way to a full recovery from his knee surgery. The two of us look forward to enjoying retirement together—pain-free. ■

–Klavdia Khasina

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Fortifying the Frontline

Social workers and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) often have little or no training in palliative care, although they care for seriously ill patients in many health care settings. To address this glaring problem—and in recognition of its expertise—the **MJHS Institute for Innovation in Palliative Care** has received support for two innovative programs that teach palliative care fundamentals.

Research shows that when frontline clinicians are more knowledgeable and empowered, patients and their families often have a better quality of life.

The **MJHS Institute** received a total of **\$500,000 in grants** from the **U.S. Cancer Pain Relief Committee** and **The New York Community Trust** to develop a national training program for social workers. The focus will be on expanding the familiarity and skills of frontline social workers in the basics of palliative care. Its creators are Myra Glajchen, DSW, MJHS Institute director of medical education, and Tom Sedgwick, MSSW, senior director of social work at NYU Langone Health.

Separate funding from the New York State Department of Labor's Ladders to Value program via 1199SEIU allows the MJHS Institute to provide full-day classes for nursing home CNAs. Our CNA curriculum, developed by MJHS Institute's director of education and training, Colleen Fleming-Damon, PhD, teaches participants how to better identify and report notable patient symptoms to nurse managers. The class also offers practical lessons on respecting cultural and spiritual preferences, as well as how and when to discuss a patient's care needs and symptoms. ■



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MJHS MEMORY CARE RESIDENCE

New programming and construction in the **MJHS Memory Care Residence** are underway and good things are happening: residents and their family members are reporting improvements in patient engagement, attentiveness, alertness and an increase in the expression of pleasure. This is less than a year since MJHS Health System received a grant from the Sephardic Home for the Aged Foundation to create a residence dedicated to caring for the specific needs of nursing home patients living with dementia. This 80-bed unit is located on the third floor of the Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care, a member of the MJHS family.

Since being awarded this grant, MJHS has trained nearly 100 employees in integrating an individualized and person-centered approach to care planning for residents. During the trainings, the staff learned to recognize unmet needs of the residents and techniques to address them. They also engaged in sample activities to help them explore residents' interests based on their life histories.

To implement these new techniques in the Residence, the staff created a robust programming schedule including horticulture and cooking groups, music therapy, drama therapy, pet therapy, memory games, and exercise groups. These programs engage the residents to connect and help reduce common symptoms of dementia such as agitation and distress.

The new drama therapist, for instance, offers 2-3 sessions weekly along with individual sessions in the residents' rooms. The therapy helps residents develop self-awareness and encourages interactions with peers while allowing the expression of individual creativity.

The newly redesigned bathing suites incorporate music in a serene and calming environment to create a smoother and more enjoyable bathing process for residents.

Construction also began on the new bathing suites. These newly redesigned suites incorporate music in a serene and calming environment to create a smoother and more enjoyable bathing process for residents. Bathing time frequently exacerbates agitation in those living with dementia. The bathing suites were selected as top priority for an upgrade to help patients regain a sense of dignity, keeping with our goal of engaging residents to their fullest potential. ■



A story created by MJHS Memory Care Resident Maya in Drama Therapy

*The couple reminds me of when I was young with my husband.
 We liked walking together.
 Beautiful Rainbow.
 It reminds me of something, but I can't remember.
 Probably Ukraine...
 I feel good.*

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UPDATE



KEYS *to* CONNECTION

A campaign dedicated to supporting the new MJHS Memory Care Residence.

Your donation is the key to providing our patients with ways to connect with their loved ones through innovative therapies, memory stimulation tools and specialized programming.

Platinum Key	\$5,000–\$9,999
Gold Key	\$2,500–\$4,999
Silver Key	\$1,000–\$2,499
Copper Key	\$250–\$999
Bronze Key	Other ____

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“When caring for veterans, especially those who’ve served in combat positions, each member of the MJHS Hospice team uses respectful inquiry, compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgment to learn more about the person behind the uniform...”

– Toby Weiss,

Director of Cultural Sensitivity at MJHS Hospice



We Believe in Respect for Every Culture

At the core of our mission is a promise to understand and accept our patients as they are, and to understand their culture so we can tailor a plan of care that will be sensitive to their past experience.

Through continuous education, training and partnerships with community organizations, we have been able to develop standards of care that help us carry out our mission and address our patient’s sensitivities.

Some of these include:



We Honor Veterans—developed in partnership between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, we hope to continue learning and educating our staff on how to respectfully address veterans’ needs at this important time of life. Currently, MJHS is the only hospice program in the NY Metropolitan area to earn a Level 5 Partner Status!

LGBTQ+ & Sensitive Care—with partnership and education from SAGE Care we are learning how to set industry standards and best practices when caring for the LGBTQ+ community.



Attendees pinned where they were from. A fun visual activity that shows just how diverse we all are.

We also have a well-established **Holocaust Survivor** care program which teaches our care team about the sensitivities associated with providing end-of-life care to Holocaust Survivors.

Diversity Day: Cultural Sensitivity Starts at Home

In November 2018, as part of our commitment to understanding Diversity, MJHS Health System celebrated the uniqueness we all share: **that we are all different.**

Members of the organization were invited to join others to celebrate and learn how our different life experiences have shaped who we are. Panelists also discussed diversity in the context of care planning challenges at the end of life. It was a great day for everyone to share, learn and appreciate where we all come from! ■

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MJHS Diversity Day 2018



Members of MJHS gather together during Diversity Day for a fun day of learning and celebrating our differences



Our panel discusses diversity on the context of end-of-life care planning challenges for various patient populations

BREAKING NEWS

HOMEFIRST RATED A 5-STAR MLTC PLAN FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW!

On April 2, 2019, New York State Department of Health announced in the MLTC Consumer Guide that **HomeFirst was once again rated 5 out of 5 stars** on overall health plan performance.

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