

The Addabbo Newsletter  
Connecting the Community



**JPA RECOGNIZED WITH AWARD FOR ITS HYPERTENSION PROGRAM**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

JPA Recognized for its Hypertension Program	1
Welcome to Addabbo!	1
Welcome Cont'd.	2
Exciting News for JPA!	2
JPA Cares for Asylum-Seeking Pediatric Patients	2
Picture Page	3
Pandemic is Over but Covid Isn't	4
September is Childhood Obesity Awareness Month	4
JPA Receives Letter of Appreciation from Intern	4
Letter of Appreciation Cont'd.	5
"A Word or Two" from Dr. Miriam Y. Vega, Ph.D. CEO	5
Some Health Facts to Consider	6

We are very pleased to announce that JPA has won recognition for Excellence in Transforming Patient Outcomes in connection with CAREMINDr and the National Hypertension Control Initiative (NHCI). Ari Benjamin, MD, Chief Medical Officer, and his excellent program team accepted the award virtually and participated in an informative conversation with other Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) on August 23rd during which they were showcased in a program focused on "Jumpstarting Connection and Engagement with Patients".

This award specifically acknowledges the significant number of positive patient results that the JPA program continues to achieve. Despite the many obstacles of the pandemic and the continuing challenges occasioned by the conclusion of the public health emergency, JPA's Hypertension Program has resulted in an impressive number of at-risk patients managed into "under control" status. Glen Markham, VP of CAREMINDr, acknowledged that the areas served by JPA are located in some of the most demanding medical care landscapes in the country, making this an important accomplishment.

CAREMINDr works with over three dozen other FQHCs and presented this award to JPA for being a leader in creating innovation and achieving the health outcome goals of the NHCI. "This is a remarkable achievement," stated Harry R. Soza, President & CEO of CAREMINDr, "and we reaffirm our commitment to support you as your program grows." Under the guidance of Dr. Ari Benjamin, JPA's Hypertension Program continues to grow. Patients with high blood pressure and those patients who are on the edge of hypertension or high blood pressure issues can be included in the program wherein patients receive a FREE Bluetooth blood pressure monitor used to report their blood pressure from wherever they are. "Our team carefully monitors the results and works directly with the program participants," explains Dr. Benjamin. "The team guides them to healthier choices and lifestyles and obviously, it's working very well. Our hypertensive patients on the program are reaping the rewards."

Congratulations to Dr. Ari Benjamin and his JPA team who worked together to help JPA garner this prestigious award: Louis Raymond, Brendalee Vasquez, Erendira Cortes and Tiffany Doris.

**WELCOME TO ADDABBO!**

JPA is pleased to welcome Ms. Cherrisse Adams as its new Director of Marketing. Cherrisse Adams is a driven Marketing Strategist with over 10 years experience in leading marketing, public relations and operations management initiatives across multifunctional teams in the telecommunications and Early Childhood Education industry.

Ms. Adams articulates the value proposition by aligning incentives and priorities for achieving sustainable goals. Cherrisse is known for her innovative leadership in implementing branding and public relations strategies that ensure continuous improvements, expand business opportunities, and drive organizational growth and revenue.

Outside of her professional accomplishments, Cherrisse has served as Vice President and an active member of the Rotaract Club of Antigua and then on to the Rotary Club of Antigua -Sundown.

On a personal note, Cherrisse was born in the United States of America but grew up on the small island of Antigua and Barbuda. It can be said that she has the heart of an island girl. She is a mother of a two-year-old son "who has a greater appreciation for nature than I do."



## WELCOME TO JPA cont'd



The mantra of Cherisse's life is *"Experience teaches Wisdom"* and she stands by the saying *"You can only learn from it if you have gone through it!"* **Welcome to JPA, Cherrise Adams. We wish you much success in your new position!!!**

JPA also welcomes two additional members to our JPA family who joined the JPA team in August:

**Dana Yusupov, DDS - Dentist**  
**Courtney Spann - Focus Patient Navigator**

## JPA IS DELIGHTED TO SHARE SOME EXCITING NEWS!



**JPA has partnered with Zoc Doc, a leading healthcare platform, to enhance our services and provide an even better experience for those we serve.**

Zoc Doc is a renowned platform that connects patients with healthcare providers, making it easier for individuals to find the right care when they need it. This partnership will enable JPA to streamline appointment scheduling, improve patient access to our services and enhance the overall patient experience.

**JPA patients will now have two self-scheduling options: Zoc Doc & Healow Open Access.** For now, Zoc Doc will feature Adult Medicine and Pediatrics. As JPA moves forward, it is committed to exploring the possibility of integrating additional departments within the platform.

## JPA PROVIDES PEDIATRIC HEALTHCARE TO ASYLUM SEEKERS



By definition, people become asylum seekers when they flee their home country because of persecution or fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. In many cases, people become asylum seekers because they are fleeing war, violence or human rights abuses in their homeland. Recently, we have all read about and seen the bus loads of asylum seekers arriving in NYC. Many of these people have spent days, weeks and months traveling under arduous conditions to get to the US. Entire families including infants have arrived in the US seeking asylum.

In a groundbreaking collaboration, JPA has joined forces with the Department of Health to extend essential healthcare services to pediatric patients among the asylum seeker community. This innovative initiative aims to ensure that vulnerable young individuals have access to comprehensive medical care that addresses their needs, routine preventative vaccines and services promoting their health and well-being during challenging times. Through this partnership, JPA and the DOH strive to uphold the principles of compassionate care and humanitarian support for those seeking asylum in this country.



Dr. Luis Velasquez, JPA's Director of Pediatrics, has treated many of these children and has been impressed with the fact that most of the children, although certainly behind on routine vaccinations, have been pretty healthy. "This speaks highly for the parents' dedication to making sure their children have food to eat and have as normal a life as possible given their individual situations," says Dr. Velasquez. "So far, most of the families have spoken Spanish so I can communicate with them easily," continues Dr. Velasquez. "We use translation services and iPad voice apps if other languages are spoken and it's amazing to see the parents' and children's faces light up when they hear their own language spoken face to face!"

Given the challenges of translating medical terms, etc. and making sure the parents understand everything, Dr. Velasquez says that "the love of a parent for their child and wanting the best for their child really needs no translation. I see that so clearly with these families who want the most and best for their children. It is what has brought them to this country and ultimately to me as a physician to help them." This is what JPA does—it makes sure that children get healthy starts so they can live healthier lives.



Pictures 1-2 CAREMINDER Award for JPA for Excellence in Transforming Patient Outcomes—Hypertension Program. Shown in photo: Erendira Cortes, Louis Raymond and Brendalee Vasquez. Not shown: Ari Benjamin, MD and Tiffany Doris  
 Pictures 3 to 12 Outreach Events: NYS Senator James Sanders Jr. presents Queens Carnival, Queens Community Justice Center's Community Event, Rockaway Resource Fair 2023, Jamaica JAMS and 41st Street Tenants Association Family Day  
 Picture 13-18 Backpack distribution at all sites to JPA pediatric patients in collaboration with EmpireBC/BS who made this Back to School Backpack Day a special treat!

## THE PANDEMIC IS OVER BUT COVID ISN'T

Yes, the panicky days of the pandemic are behind us. The Covid-19 pandemic has formally ended and key metrics remain well below the key metrics during the pandemic. **But**, data suggests that COVID-19 levels are trending up in the United States yet again. The CDC has advised that COVID-19 hospitalizations have been on the rise since early July and in the first week of August, more than 10,000 people were hospitalized with COVID-19. That's a significant increase of 60% in just one month. It's true that fewer people are getting COVID-19 these days but some people still remain vulnerable and can get seriously ill if they contract it. Wastewater samples indicate that COVID-19 is on the rise at a time when immunity levels are quite low in the U.S. So, what do we do to stay safe?

First of all and most importantly, discuss this subject with your provider. He or she knows your health history and can make recommendations for you. Secondly, the trend now is for everyone to get their annual **FLU shot** and an annual **COVID-19 shot** to protect themselves. **RSV vaccinations** are also available and should be discussed with your provider. It's perfectly okay to get both the Flu and Covid shots together, although most doctors recommend getting them in different arms because there could be some discomfort in the injection area. It appears that this vaccination protocol will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The updated Covid vaccine is due out in a few weeks — a vaccine that will protect against many of the new variants.



## SEPTEMBER IS CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

*The rise of childhood obesity has placed the health of an entire generation at risk.* With everyone concerned about healthy weight these days and with umpteen diet plans around and greatly advertised for adults, the issue of childhood obesity is often overlooked even though it is a serious health threat to kids. Kids with obesity have gone beyond simply being a few pounds overweight and risk developing chronic health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma and sleep problems just to name a few. Unfortunately, childhood obesity doesn't just affect one's physical health. Children and teens who are overweight can be depressed and suffer from low self-esteem and poor self-image.

**NOTICE TO PARENTS:** It's really up to you to change the eating habits for your kids. Your family eats what you provide so healthy eating needs to begin with you. It's not always easy for sure, especially when both parents work and there seems to be no time in the day as it is. But in the end, spending some additional time picking out healthy foods is well worth it because it affects the health and well-being of your kids. A good start is to limit the sweets and sodas in your home. Even juices that are made from 100% juice can be high in calories, too. Water or lo-fat milk are good alternatives to serve with meals and cooking at home instead of eating fast foods can make a huge difference. Feature fresh foods instead of processed items, salty snacks or baked goods. **You can try fresh fruits and raw vegetables as snacks, lean proteins, such as chicken and fish, whole grains, such as brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, and whole-grain breads and low-fat dairy yogurt or cheese.**

There are life-style changes parents can make that will encourage good health. More physical activity and less screen time are the two primary "treatments" for obesity and they both make a difference. Add that to a healthier diet and the instances of childhood obesity would decrease rapidly. During routine annual check-ups, your pediatrician will check for signs of obesity and will work with you to improve your child's health.

## A LETTER OF APPRECIATION FROM AN INTERN AT JPA

*Whether we are among friends, colleagues or meeting new people, we make lasting impressions on others. This is one such instance when an intern at JPA formed lasting impressions of healthcare in general and the people who guided her during her internship. This wonderful letter is addressed to JPA's Betsy Varghese, MD and from the excerpts of her letter that follow, we can all be reminded that what we do on a daily basis can greatly impact others.*

Good Morning, Dr. Varghese,  
My name is Bianca Fulgencio, a former intern at Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center. I had done my internship around the spring/summer of 2021 while applying for medical school and wanted to express my appreciation for the experience. As of now, I am a rising second year medical student at NYIT College of Osteopathic  
*Con'd. on Page 5*



## Letter of Appreciation Cont'd.

Medicine. During my medical training thus far, I can say for certain that many skills I picked up during my time working at Addabbo back in 2021 has helped shaped my first year of medical school a year later.

Many thanks to Dr. Khan, Dr. Mondesir and Dr. Valeus (as well as her resident doctors) as my time learning under them has been invaluable. Gaining the insight I did has not only prepared me for the clinical sciences in my studies, but also a sense of professionalism, patient-provider communication, and practical skills that has built towards my success.

I would also like to express my thanks to Mr. Rodriguez for helping me learn & practice professional communication within the administrative sphere, as well as the importance of leadership. With a desire to work within a team setting and further strengthen my leadership skills, I pursued and will be part of the executive board for two student organizations at my school this upcoming academic year.

Also, I am grateful for the patients seen at Addabbo for their willingness and encouragement by allowing

me to observe and learn from them in my journey in medicine. It was more than a pleasure to meet and learn from the patients within this community, understanding the valuable contributions they make to their healthcare team as well.

Part of what I enjoyed most about my first year were the standardized patient interactions, and I employed what I had learned about patient interviewing, examinations, and bedside manner (the last being something that I believe is harder to teach through lecture as opposed to actual exposure and practice) from my internship!

Last but not least, of course, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. Initially I reached out for just volunteer or shadowing experiences, but was very lucky as you offered me a chance to delve even further and partake in more involved roles. This experience truly provided me a sense of what to expect as a future healthcare provider, and I can't have imagined going into medical school without these prior experiences at hand!

*With gratitude,  
Bianca Fulgencio*

## "A WORD or TWO" from Miriam Y. Vega, Ph.D, CEO

### Hello JPA Community,

As September begins, we're hoping to enjoy the beauty that the autumn season usually brings— the changing leaf colors... the slightly brisk air... the warm thoughts of family events to come. With the fall, we also have children going back to school and our plans for the end-of-year start to ramp up.

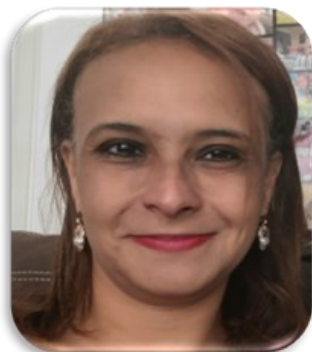
Furthermore, usually in the fall, we start thinking about getting the flu and our flu vaccines. This year there are also RSV and covid booster shots. We are still uncertain as to what the fall will bring in terms of COVID. There are some areas seeing rising rates. We urge you all to take precautionary measures as necessitated in your particular areas.

After so much uncertainty during the height of the pandemic, I remain grateful and excited that JPA continues to provide the high-quality, whole-person care that our communities deserve. We now provide radiology services, remote hypertension monitoring and chronic care management. We are also enhancing our use of technology and welcome you to join us on the journey. You can even find our providers on Zoc Doc now. As the leaves continue to change colors this autumn, so will our enhanced services as we strive to meet your needs as a whole.

I expect we'll face more challenges as we navigate the changing seasons, but I know that with our determined and deeply committed staff, we'll rise above whatever may come our way. We are here for you all. Please drop us a note and let us know what other services you'd like to see us provide.

Keep well. Remember that it's important to come in for your annual screenings. Self-care is ethical and very much needed during these challenging times. In Community,

*Miriam Y. Vega, Ph.D, CEO*



## SOME HEALTH FACTS TO CONSIDER

We all know the basics like the back of our hands —drink more water, sleep well, exercise daily, eat well. However, *Bestlife* has put together a list of helpful health facts we don't always think about. Here are some of them to consider.

**Laughter:** Among male and female study subjects over the age of 65, those who reported laughing daily had drastically lower rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

**Obesity** may soon overtake smoking as a leading cause of cancer.

**Calories:** We eat 600 more calories per day as Americans did in the 70's. Ever notice how big hamburgers have become or orders of French Fries or how huge bagels are now never mind the gobs of butter on them!

**Optimism:** People with optimistic views on life tend to live longer. Make sure your "glass is half full"!

**Exercise** can not only help with chronic pain but it can also reduce your risk for Alzheimers.

**Meditating** is actually better for your mental health than a vacation!

**Poor sleep habits** can make you gain weight.

**Sodium:** 90% of Americans consume too much sodium. It's also very bad for your kidneys.

**Thyroid:** As many as 70% of American women have thyroid issues.

**Stress** makes a person store fat.

**Text Neck is an epidemic!** In effect, these torqued angles we're placing our necks at are putting up to five times the amount of pressure on them than they were designed to hold.

**Talk to each other more:** Ever notice that even in restaurants people take out their cell phones and place them on the table next to their silverware so they are handy? You'll see families who have gone out to eat all sitting there on or checking their devices. Most people check their phone at least 150 times a day or once every 6 minutes. There's no question that our cell phones play important roles in our lives, but we must also take time out to appreciate our surroundings, the people we sit next to and our families. Communication is critical to all relationships and our ability to understand each other goes a long way towards a happy and healthy life. So the next time you go out to dinner, leave those cell phones off the table and talk to each other! **"A lot of problems in the world would disappear if we only talked to each other instead of reading about each other or texting about each other."**



## About Us

Established in 1987, the Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center, Inc. (JPA) is a non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center with five (5) operational facilities located on the Rockaway Peninsula, Southeast Queens, and Red Hook, Brooklyn. JPA has been designated a Level III (the highest level) Patient Centered Medical Home.

Our caring professional staff of Board Certified Physicians, Nurses and certified support staff offer a wide range of services including routine in-person appointments, televideo and telephonic consultations and "walk-in" service for sick visits.

We have a long history of delivering exemplary medical services. We look forward to continue providing our patients with the same standard of excellence.

*FTCA Deemed Organization. The Joseph P, Addabbo Family Health Center is granted medical malpractice protection through the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). The Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center receives HHS funding and has Federal Public Health Service (PHS) deemed status with respect to certain health or health-related claims, including medical malpractice claims, for itself and its covered individuals. This institution is an equal opportunity employer.*

### Our Locations:

6200 Beach Channel Dr.  
Arverne, NY 11692

1288 Central Ave.  
Far Rockaway, NY 11691

114-39 Sutphin Blvd.  
Jamaica, NY 11434

118-11 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.  
Jamaica, NY 11434

120 Richards Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11231

**Call Us At:**  
**718-945-7150**

**Follow us on:**  




**Check Us Out At:**  
**addabbo.org**