

The Addabbo Newsletter  
Connecting the Community

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**A Message of Appreciation for Our Nurses**

You, the nurses, are most assuredly the backbone of our healthcare system. Your jobs are incredibly difficult especially during the pandemic and you have continued to treat all of us while personally facing the continuing challenges. We all know this but often take your sacrifices and talents for granted.

You are caregivers, communicators, patient advocates, often the voice of reason and the hand holders. Your voices are calming, and your faces filled with compassion. You’re there for us when we receive good news and compassionately there for us where the news isn’t as good to hear. You explain things to us patiently and carefully so we can understand, and you offer words of reassurance and encouragement. Yes, for many of us, you are our empathetic, trusted and loyal guardian angels.

You have the strength to navigate through rough waters with us and the knowledge to apply during our medical emergencies. We don’t expect you to have “bad days” – we just expect you to play the supportive roles in our lives that we have come to expect no matter what the circumstances. We know that some of your days have to be physically and emotionally draining but we also know that you will continue to give us the care that we need.

For all of the wonderful things that you do on a daily basis, there are two small words you don’t hear often enough – “Thank You”. While we realize that it isn’t appropriate to say these words **only** when we are reminded to do so, we humbly and gratefully extend a heartfelt and resounding “thank you” for everything you do for us. You are sincerely and deeply appreciated.

**National Nurses Week – May 6th through May 12th, 2022**

**JPA WOMEN RECOGNIZED**

Three members of JPA’s staff, Carla Lewis-Peter, Susie Lopez and Tina Burke, along with other women in healthcare from Queens, were recognized by NYS Senator James Sanders Jr as part of his Women's History Month event held at the Rochdale Village Ballroom.

Senator Sanders was joined by U.S. Senator Charles Schumer in praising these ladies for their dedication. "I am proud to be here with you, during this National Women's Month... and I am proud to say that we are so proud here in New York of our women who really make this country and this city a great place," said Senator Schumer.

All of the honorees were residents of Senator Sanders’ district and received a certificate of recognition. The honored ladies came from hospitals, healthcare facilities and providers from all over the district including Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, St. John’s Episcopal Hospital, NYC Health + Hospitals Queens and the Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center.

"Women in healthcare save lives every day, especially as frontline workers during the pandemic, so it is only fitting that we honor them during Women's History Month," Senator Sanders said. "Women are an important part of history and of our lives. They are often the backbone of the family unit and globally provide strength in times of peril."

**Congratulations to Carla, Susie and Tina and to the all the very deserving JPA women!**



## JPA's Hardworking Nursing Staff



## LEARN F.A.S.T — MAY IS NATIONAL STROKE MONTH



May is Stroke Awareness Month and since stroke is one of leading causes of death in the US and is a major cause of disability in adults, this is an excellent time to learn what it is, how and why it happens and how you, yes **YOU**, can save a life by knowing some simple signs of stroke and what to do. On an average, someone in the US has a stroke every 40 seconds, and the risk of having a stroke varies with race and ethnicity. African American adults have twice the chance of having a stroke as white adults and also the highest rate of death from a stroke.

A stroke happens when a clot blocks the blood supply to part of the brain or when a blood vessel in or around the brain bursts. The brain is an extraordinarily complex organ that controls many body functions. If a stroke happens and blood flow, oxygen and nutrients can't reach the area of the brain that controls a body function, that part of the body won't work the way it should. Stroke can cause weakness or numbness of an arm or leg on one side of the body or affect speech and language, vision, memory, emotions and/or behaviors.

Heavy drinking, smoking, heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, age and lack of exercise can contribute to the risk for stroke. 1 in 3 adults in the US has at least one of these conditions so it's no wonder that stroke is such a common occurrence.

You cannot change your family history, gender, race or ethnicity, but you can reduce your risk by making healthy choices such as:

- Control your blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugar.
- Eat a healthy diet that's rich in fruits and veggies and low in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugary drinks.
- Be physically active to help maintain a healthy weight.
- Avoid (or stop) smoking and limit alcohol use.

### YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE BY LEARNING F.A.S.T.

- F. Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the FACE droop?**
- A. ARMS Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm droop downwards or is one arm unable to rise?**
- S. SPEECH Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is his or her speech slurred or strange?**
- T. TIME If you observe any of these signs, call 911 or emergency medical help immediately!**

Continued on page 6

## JPA WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS

**Adriana Velasco, MSN, MPH, CNS, LNC**, joins JPA as its new Chief Operating Officer with 27 years of experience in healthcare and healthcare consulting. She is highly regarded as an outgoing, result-driven leader, mentor, motivator and change agent who utilizes a collaborative approach to developing and executing solutions with key stakeholders. Ms. Velasco is highly skilled in operations including cost efficiency, productivity and resource management, LEAN approach to quality management and strategic planning.

William Lowe—Peer Specialist

Preston Carter—Outreach Coordinator

Victor Sattaur—Medical Assistant

Shalijah Penn - Medical Assistant

Yolanda Florez - WIC Nutritionist

Hayden Blake—Custodian

*Welcome All! We're very glad to have you with us. We believe that your skills, experience and creativity will have a real impact. We're so excited to have you be part of our team, and we can't wait to see what you can do!*



## MAY IS ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH



Asthma is a condition in which the airways narrow and swell and may produce extra mucus. This can often make breathing difficult, cause coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing. For some people, asthma is nothing more than a nuisance but for others, it can be a major problem that can interfere with daily activities.

About 25 million Americans live with asthma and 5 million of them are children. Asthma attacks cause adults to miss work and children to miss school. These dangerous and sometimes life-threatening episodes reduce the quality of life for people with asthma. There are risk factors which could make it more likely that people might develop asthma: being overweight, being a smoker, being exposed to secondhand smoke or exhaust fumes or even being exposed to products used by hairdressers.

For some people, asthma symptoms flare up under various conditions such as exercising when the air is cold and dry. Allergies can be triggered by airborne substances like pollen, mold spores, cockroach waste,

dust, mildew or pet dander. For instance, in the spring, trees produce great quantities of pollen. Even some food or beverages can be triggers. One of the first steps to living with asthma is identifying triggers and take steps to avoid them.

Although asthma cannot be cured, the good news is that it can be successfully managed. Like diabetes and high blood pressure, asthma takes ongoing monitoring and management to keep it under control. Managing the disease effectively means working closely with a healthcare provider who can design a plan for living with asthma and prescribe medications to help. Avoiding triggers also plays a big part in managing asthma and can help anyone with asthma gain—and keep—control and prevent serious asthma attacks.

*Note: It is currently unknown if people with asthma are at higher risk of getting infected with COVID, but if you do get infected, you may be at higher risk of getting very sick. Since COVID can affect your respiratory system, you should continue following the COVID precautions as set by the CDC.*

## Hepatitis C— “but I feel fine...”



Kathleen Bernock  
Nurse Practitioner  
Wellness Department

When Nurse Practitioner Kathleen Bernock told her patient that he had been exposed to Hepatitis C, the first thing he said was, “...**but I feel fine.**” He didn’t have a fever. He didn’t feel tired. And since Hepatitis C can live in your body for years without any signs or symptoms, the patient said it didn’t affect him and turned down additional tests and medication. “Just because you don’t feel it, it doesn’t mean that it’s not affecting your body,” says Bernock. “With Hepatitis C, feeling sick means the virus has already done a lot of damage to your body. Our goal is to treat the virus and get rid of it before it causes lasting damage.”

This patient is one of many who come to see their provider only when something hurts or when they feel under the weather. About 40% of people living with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected, and the New York City Department of Health is expecting that number to rise. It’s worrying news for May 2022, Hepatitis Awareness Month, but there is hope. Working with a provider and doing blood work can help a patient understand exactly how healthy they really are.

“When you finish blood work and know your numbers,” Bernock explains, “providers can effectively work with their patients to offer a treatment plan that’s best for them. Delaying treatment may make things worse, but, just like with all patients, a person can always return to start treatment if he changes his mind.”

“If you want the best quality of life possible, work with your providers,” advises Bernock. “Answer all questions honestly, complete blood work and stick with your treatment even when you feel better. We are here to help.”

Do you know your numbers? Have questions about testing? Call 718-945-7150 for more information or to schedule an appointment.



## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Mental Health is the overall wellness of how we think, regulate our feelings and act. Life has lots of ups and downs. Some problems are solvable and others not so much. In the first year of the COVID pandemic, anxiety and depression increased by over 25% and that’s a huge increase. Major reasons for this increase include social isolation, loneliness, fear of the infection, financial worries, grief and just plain exhaustion. Young people and women have been particularly affected.

The only way to really enjoy life to the fullest is if we take care of ourselves, both mentally and physically. We have come a long way from when behavioral/mental health patients were treated differently. Times are changing and more and more people are changing their outlook on needing some emotional and mental health help and support. We still have a ways to go, but we are making progress. Nowadays, we are beginning to realize that **seeking mental health assistance is a strength rather than a weakness.** And, even if you are diagnosed with a mental health issue, you can get better and recover!

Generally speaking, you might want to consider professional help or counseling if you or a family member experience the following symptoms:

- ⇒ Big changes in personality, eating or sleeping patterns
- ⇒ Excessive anxiety
- ⇒ Prolonged sadness, depression or apathy
- ⇒ Extreme mood swings
- ⇒ Excessive anger, hostility or violent behavior
- ⇒ Feeling of disconnection or withdrawal from normal activities
- ⇒ Substance misuse.

If you’re at all concerned about yourself or a family member, even a child, speak to your healthcare provider. *Remember, mental health issues don’t define who you are. They are only something you experience and can get beyond.*

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT – ROXANA SAGASTUME, UNIT CLERK



Roxana Sagastume  
Unit Clerk

Roxana Sagastume has deep lifelong connections to JPA as she was born and raised in Far Rockaway directly across the street from JPA’s Site 2 on Central Avenue. She has also been a patient at JPA for most of her life. She realizes the impact that JPA has in the community on a first-hand basis. “I think JPA is a great blessing to the Far Rockaway community where so many people are uninsured and underinsured and often lack access to medical resources,” says Roxana. “Medical bills can be frightening but JPA affords the community the opportunity to receive excellent healthcare services affordably.”

As a young girl, she always enjoyed helping others. Her passion extended to assisting family members, neighbors and friends be it with homework, translations or just personal advice to help people navigate through troubled waters. Over the years, working with others has brought her experience in dealing with many different personalities and situations and she enjoys continuing to assist her community family and team at JPA.

Site 2’s ACM, Diana Catalan, works closely with Roxana and praises her for always going above and beyond. “Unfortunately, Roxana was furloughed for a few months during COVID, but when she returned she didn’t miss a step,” says Diana. “Officially, she is a unit clerk, but covers front desk registration as well as dental when needed. She has worked extra hours to accommodate providers and patients with referral authorizations, scanning and scheduling appointments. She also assists with making sure we schedule patients efficiently on vaccination days. She is a true asset to JPA and our JPA team.”

Roxana attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College, obtained an Associate Degree in Human Services and continued her education at York College where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.

## DELICIOUS MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

Mother's Day is the perfect time to celebrate as a family and recognize mothers and families everywhere. Brunch is always a special meal on Mother's Day and this is a recipe that's bound to please. Food is an important part of most celebrations as you join with friends and family to enjoy the day!



### Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. sliced, chopped bacon
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced or pressed
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 12 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 package (16 oz.) frozen shredded hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 to 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

You can also add breakfast sausage, mushrooms, green onions or chives and sweet red pepper instead of the green pepper (or use both).

### Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
- Cook chopped bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until crisp. Remove and drain on a paper-towel lined plate. Retain the drippings in the skillet and lower heat to medium.
- Add onion, garlic and green pepper to the drippings and sauté until tender. Remove with a slotted spoon and discard any drippings.
- Whisk together eggs, milk and seasonings in a large mixing bowl.
- Fold in hash browns, onion mixture, cheese and bacon.
- Transfer to the prepared baking dish and bake uncovered for 45-55 minutes or until the center comes out clean when inserted with a knife or toothpick. If you add more ingredients, you will need to extend the cooking time.

### Stroke continued (continued from page 2)



Symptoms of a stroke can include trouble speaking or understanding what others are saying; paralysis or numbness of the face, arm or leg; problem seeing in one or both eyes; headache and trouble walking. It's important to learn these symptoms because treatment options are most effective when given soon after a stroke begins. ***It is important to know that if you are with someone you think may be experiencing a stroke, you should stay with them and watch them carefully while waiting for any emergency assistance.*** The American Heart Association publishes a Stroke Heroes Toolkit which is an excellent resource for the whole family. <https://www.stroke.org/-/media/Stroke-Files/About-Stroke/Stroke-in-Children/Stroke-Heroes-Toolkit--FINAL--Digital.pdf> Copy and paste the link in your browser to see the toolkit.

### 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 Richard Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11231

### 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.

***For the safety of everyone, please continue to wear your masks, maintain social distancing, avoid large gatherings and wash your hands frequently.***

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**718-945-7150**

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**Check Us Out At:**  
**[www.addabbo.org](http://www.addabbo.org)**