

# “Let’s Connect”



July  
August  
September

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## Summer Safety

### Be prepared for summer!

- ◆ Protect yourself from extreme heat by scheduling outdoor activities earlier in the day.
- ◆ Make sure you check the Air Quality Index for your area. If the air quality is poor, avoid prolonged exertion outdoors.



- ◆ There is no safe place outside when lightning is in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of a storm.



- ◆ A safe shelter is a building with electricity and/or plumbing or a metal-topped vehicle with windows closed.

## Trainings for April – June:

Cameron – 0  
Clearfield – 14  
Elk – 11  
Erie – 13  
Forest – 0  
Jefferson – 6  
McKean – 2  
Potter – 1  
Warren – 20  
Home Study—234

- ◆ Whether you’re spending the day at the beach or an afternoon at the pool, at the first sign of a storm, you should seek shelter. When thunder roars, go indoors! Weather.gov/lightning.
- ◆ OSHA and NOAA encourage us to be aware, safe and prepared for the summer weather.



# Stay Hydrated!

Now that summer is here, dehydration becomes a greater concern, especially for young children and the elderly. The weather is often hot and humid in Pennsylvania during the summer months, and we sweat more than usual, causing us to lose fluid and important chemicals called electrolytes. Therefore, while it is important to drink adequate amounts of water year-round, it is even more important during the hottest months.

Acute dehydration is a dangerous, life-threatening condition. Early signs are headache, irritability, fatigue, and darker urine. Later on, symptoms worsen, and include cramps, visual disturbances, shallow, rapid breathing, confusion, fainting, and even seizures and/or coma. If you suspect someone is becoming dehydrated, get him out of the sun and into the shade. Have him rest, and offer sips of water. Monitor his condition. If he does not improve, call 911. If the person is having severe symptoms, call 911. If you are in doubt, call 911.

Did you know that people can also be *chronically* dehydrated? Most people in this country do not drink enough water on a daily basis. Your body's cells are approximately 70% water, and when they aren't getting enough H<sub>2</sub>O, they let you know it. Symptoms of chronic dehydration include headache, constipation, fatigue, irritability, and joint pain. Think about it—aren't these some of the most common complaints people have when they see the doctor?



The best way to prevent acute *or* chronic dehydration is to drink enough water every day (not soda, coffee, alcohol, or tea—these are diuretics, which is a fancy way of saying they make us urinate more, and thus *lose* fluid). Water is best. Squeeze some lemon juice in for flavor if you need it. And make sure you are drinking enough. Try to drink half your body weight in ounces per day. Someone who weighs 150 pounds should drink at least 75 ounces of water per day (that's just a tad over nine 8-oz glasses). Add another 16-24 ounces if you are physically active. Don't use thirst as a guide—you can actually be dehydrated *before* you even feel thirsty. Look at your urine. It should



be clear or pale yellow. If it is dark yellow or tea-colored, you need water.

Please remember that persons with physical disabilities may not be able to serve themselves, and those with intellectual/developmental disabilities may not be able to monitor their own status or request water. It is best to offer water to them on a regular basis, such as hourly.

So have a great summer and stay hydrated! Your body will thank you for it; you may even notice that your energy levels increase and you generally feel better from drinking more water.

Tim Juliano

## September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Ovarian Cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related death in women. In the U.S. alone, over 20,000 women/year are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and there are close to 15,000 deaths/year, due to this disease. Unfortunately, there are no effective screening options (pap smears do not test for this cancer) and the symptoms are so vague that the cancer is usually caught in its later stages.

What is ovarian cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later. When cancer starts in the ovaries, it is called ovarian cancer. Women have two ovaries that are located in the pelvis, one on each side of the uterus. The ovaries make female hormones and produce eggs. When ovarian cancer is found in its early stages, treatment is most effective. All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but older women are more likely to get the disease than younger women. About 90 percent of women who get ovarian cancer are older than 40, with the greatest number being age 55 or older. There is no way to know for sure if you will get ovarian cancer. Most women get it without being at high risk. However, there are several factors that may increase the chance that you will get ovarian cancer, including if you:

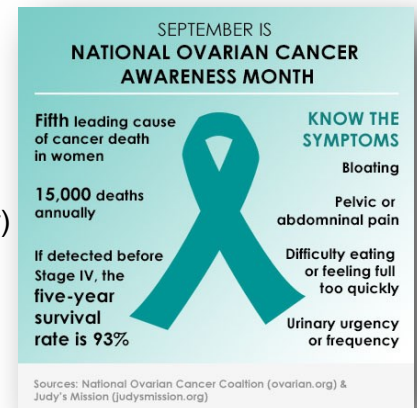
- Are middle-aged or older.
- Have close family members (such as your mother, sister, aunt, or grandmother) on either your mother's or your father's side who have had ovarian cancer.
- Have had breast, uterine, or colorectal cancer.
- Have an Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewish background.
- Have never given birth or have had trouble getting pregnant.
- Have endometriosis (a condition where tissue from the lining of the uterus grows else-where in the body).

If you have one or more of these factors, it does not mean you will get ovarian cancer. But you should speak with your doctor about your risk.

### Signs and Symptoms

Ovarian cancer often has signs and symptoms. See your doctor, nurse, or other health care professional if you have any of these signs every day for two weeks or longer and they are not normal for you, especially if they get worse:

- Pain in the pelvic or abdominal area (the area below your stomach and in between your hip bones).
- Back pain.
- Being tired all the time.
- Bloating, which is when the area below your stomach swells or feels full.
- A change in your bathroom habits, such as having to pass urine very badly or very often.
- An upset stomach or heartburn.
- Discharge from your vagina that is not normal for you.
- Also, see your doctor if you have any bleeding from your vagina that is not normal for you, particularly if you are past menopause. These symptoms may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see your doctor. Treatment is most effective when ovarian cancer is found and treated early.



[http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/pdf/ovarian\\_fs\\_0308.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/pdf/ovarian_fs_0308.pdf)

<https://whatjocraives.com/2015/09/30/ovarian-cancer-awareness-month/>



# Guide Dog Etiquette

By Amy Tobolski

Guide Dogs, sometimes referred to as Service Dogs or Assistance Dogs, are specially trained to lead people who are blind or visually impaired around obstacles and to assist them to utilize their communities while avoiding potential hazards. Guide dogs have a long history with humans (there are references to them as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century). The first formal training schools were established during World War I in Germany to assist wounded veterans. The first school in the United States, the Seeing Eye, was founded in Nashville in 1929. Today, there are 15 Guide Dog training schools in the U.S. Several breeds of dog are considered to make good guide dogs, although Golden Retrievers, Labradors, and German Shepherds are most commonly used.

National Guide Dog Month was established in 2009 by actor Dick Van Patten (remember *Eight Is Enough*?) when he visited Guide Dogs of the Desert in Palm Springs, CA. When he saw how much benefit people could receive from guide dogs, and when he learned that it can cost as much as \$40,000 and take up to two years to train a single dog, he worked to raise awareness of (and money for) accredited training programs across the country. An important part of awareness is knowing how and when to interact with a working Guide Dog. You know a dog is working when it is wearing a harness or a vest / cape. Remember, a Guide Dog in training should be treated as a working dog.

The following are some guidelines established by The Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc.:

- If a dog is wearing a harness or vest/cape, do not touch, talk to, feed, or distract it in any way. The dog must be able to focus on keeping its handler safe.
- Guide Dogs are not pets and should be treated as working animals (don't worry – at home, they are treated as pets whenever they are not working, so they still get to play, chew on toys, and receive lots of petting).
- Always speak to the handler, not the dog. Do not give the dog commands, as it will only confuse the dog and its focus should always be on its handler.
- Assist only if requested by the handler.
- Do not attempt to grab or steer the handler – allow the dog to do its job. If you are concerned, ask the handler if he/she needs your assistance then offer your left arm, if requested.
- When walking with a handler and dog, always position yourself to the right of the handler, as the dog will be trained and thus accustomed to being on the person's left.
- Do not allow anyone to tease or abuse the dog. Explain to children that the dog is working and cannot be disturbed / touched.
- Keep your pets in your control. If they must meet the Guide Dog, introduce them on neutral ground while you and the handler supervise.



**“Please don’t pat the Guide dog.”**

Reasons why it’s not ok!

Service Dogs are currently employed for a growing number of disabilities, including hearing impairment, seizure disorders, mobility impairments, mental illness (ex. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and even Diabetes. That means that you are likely to see more and more showing up in your communities. Although they may have somewhat different tasks, depending on their handlers' disability, the “rules” for interacting with them are the same.



# Shingles

Shingles is a viral disease caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox, varicella-zoster. Once a person has had chickenpox the virus actually remains in the body, harbored in the nerve cells waiting to re-erupt. Shingles can occur when the immune system is stressed by age (especially 70 and over), life stress or a cold, a major infection or illness such as cancer or treatment for cancer or HIV. Shingles is not contagious, however someone who has never had chickenpox can catch chickenpox from someone with shingles.

Initially a person may feel sick with chills, fever, nausea or headache. They may then notice a burning, tingling or numbness of the skin on the body, face or neck which becomes sensitive to touch, mild itching or strong pain. This most often occurs on only one side of the body. In a few days a red rash will appear that that will turn into fluid-filled blisters resembling chicken pox and often erupts in a band like fashion (following the nerve). The blisters will dry up and crust over in a few days. This process generally lasts from 3 to 5 weeks!

*See your doctor as soon  
as the rash appears!*

It is most important to see your doctor as soon as the rash appears and no more than 3 days later. Your doctor can order medications to fight the shingles virus such as antiviral drugs, steroids to lessen the pain and shorten the duration, antidepressants, anticonvulsants and analgesics to also help lessen the pain. Wet compresses, calamine lotion and colloidal oatmeal baths may relieve some of the itching.

Some people may experience chronic pain at the site of the shingles called Post-Herpetic Neuralgia or PHN. The pain can be very debilitating with extreme sensitivity, making it difficult to tolerate even light clothing. It has been described as sharp, throbbing or stabbing and can be unrelenting lasting weeks, months or years. PHN can cause depression, anxiety, sleeplessness and weight loss.

A vaccine, Zostavax, is available for people aged 60 and older. It can reduce the risk of shingles by 51% and the risk of PHN by 67%. The protection lasts about 5 years. If a person is unsure if they have ever had chickenpox, the vaccine will not give them chickenpox but will protect them against shingles.

Mild side effects from the shingles vaccine include redness, soreness, swelling, or itching at the site of injection and headache.

If you or a family member is unsure if they should get the vaccine, talk with your doctor.

<http://www.cdc.gov/shingles/>



**milestone  
HCQU Northwest**

**Roseland Building**

**247 Hospital Drive**

**Warren, PA 16365**

**Phone (814) 728-9400**

**Fax (814) 728-8887**

**[www.MilestonePA.org](http://www.MilestonePA.org)**

## Speaker of the Month Summer Session

We have some great speakers and topics lined up this summer in our Speaker of the Month series, held at 8:30am (registration begins at 8:00)\* in the Israel Building on the Warren State Hospital campus the third Wednesday of each month, from March through November.

July 20, Kelly Fisher, RN, will help us make more sense of people's behavior with "Demystifying Challenging Behaviors: Assessment and Planning Strategies that Work." Kelly is the Clinical Services Supervisor at our sister HCQU, Milestone HCQU West. During this training, we will break down assessment strategies using a multimodal approach integrating leading behavioral philosophies. We will evaluate a behavior planning approach which incorporates multiple theories to help us demystify behavior. (\* Note: this training will start at 9:00, with registration beginning at 8:30).

Orlando. Virginia Tech. Newtown Square. Killeen Texas/Fort Hood. Columbine. San Ysidro. These are just a few of the locations where public mass shootings have occurred in the US. We all hope it will never happen again, but the reality is, it could happen anywhere, anytime. Bob Winters of the Department of Homeland Security will join us August 17 to offer suggestions on what to do should the unthinkable ever happen to us and we come face-to-face with an active shooter. Bob has been the Protective Security Advisor for the Pittsburgh District of Homeland Security since 2005 and is an ASIS Certified Protection Professional.

The end of summer brings Jennifer Macioce to Warren to discuss the hot topic of Electronic Devices and Gaming Addiction. Game playing has always been a popular activity, and with the invention of gaming consoles and especially hand-held gaming devices, it has become rather commonplace to see everyone from young children to older adults whiling away the time glued to the screen of their TV, cell phone or tablet playing their favorite games. Certainly not everyone who plays electronic games becomes addicted to them, so how do we know if our game-playing is within normal limits or becoming a problem?

Jennifer Macioce LCSW, NCGC, Director of Integrative Care & Deaf Services at Milestone Centers, Inc., will be here September 21 to help us answer that question and more, as well as offer suggestions on how to help someone with a gaming addiction.



These trainings are open to anyone, so please share this information with anyone you think might be interested in these topics. For more information, please see our website at: [MilestonePA.org/health-care-quality-units/milestone-hcqu-northwest/upcoming-events](http://MilestonePA.org/health-care-quality-units/milestone-hcqu-northwest/upcoming-events).

Also, we'd like to thank everyone who has made our Speaker of the Month series a success, including the many speakers and all who have attended. Please let us know if there are topics you'd like to see presented at a future session, or if you have a topic you would like to present.





# "Thank You"

What a wonderful day in the park!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors, volunteers and guests for making "A Day in the Park" so special!

We couldn't do it without everyone's collaborative efforts.

We look forward to another year of planning and organizing with your help and suggestions.

*Milestone HCQU Northwest Team*

## ***Letter from the Director***

As June came to a close, I thought back on the previous twelve months and what we have accomplished at the Northwest HCQU. We survived the budget crisis, provided many technical assistances in a variety of modes, and offered a lot of trainings in our nine county area. We also saw the retirement of our founding director Joanne Cook back in February, and then my getting named as her replacement in May. Our staff of seven have been flexible and committed to providing information and support, and look forward to more of the same in the future. Part of our plan going forward is to better track the outcomes seen as the result of our suggestions, and looking for trends with that data. Finally, our yearly event at Wildcat Park in Ludlow, PA in June went well and with the feedback received we have already planned some changes for next year to make it even better for all. Have a wonderful year, and as always if you think that we can be of assistance just ask.

Darryl

### **HCQU Contacts**

**Gary Bell**  
Interim CEO  
Milestone Centers, Inc.

**Darryl Bergstrom**  
HCQU Director  
dbergstrom@MilestonePA.org

**Elizabeth Lorenzo, RN**  
Clinical Supervisor  
blorenzo@MilestonePA.org

**Lynn Carnahan**  
Training Coordinator  
lcarnahan@MilestonePA.org

**Lisa Brocious**  
Office Manager  
lbrocious@MilestonePA.org

**Amy Tobolski**  
Behavioral Health Specialist  
atobolski@MilestonePA.org

**Susan Swanson, RN**  
HCQU Nurse  
sswanson@MilestonePA.org

**Tim Juliano, RN**  
HCQU Nurse  
tjuliano@MilestonePA.org