

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### Culturally Sensitive Education for a Diverse Aging Population: MSK Geriatrics Service Partnership with South Asian Council for Social Services



In summer 2015, the Geriatrics Service at MSK was awarded funding from the Health Resource Service Administration to create and sustain a Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program to educate healthcare providers as well as community members on culturally sensitive, comprehensive care for the aged. One of our collaborating institutions, South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS) in Flushing, Queens, plays a pivotal role in both the development and implementation of this work.

Created in 2000, SACSS's mission is to empower and integrate underserved South Asian and other immigrants into the civic and economic life of New York. All

services are free and provided by staff that is culturally competent and speak Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, and Spanish.

Presently SACSS serves over 4,500 clients annually. Their major focus areas are healthcare access and awareness, senior support, civic engagement, and English and computer classes. As a New York State certified Navigators Agency, they provide assistance to clients in accessing vital healthcare coverage. As community health advocates, they help with financial assistance from hospitals, document translations, and post-health enrollment issues.

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## ABOUT THE 65+ PROGRAM

A diagnosis of cancer is difficult at any age, but older patients face unique challenges. Older adults and their caregivers have special needs and considerations, which may include increased risk of drug reactions, increased financial burdens of care, problems related to multiple healthcare providers, and caregiver stress and strain.

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center is committed to providing cancer patients aged 65 and older with the treatment, facilities, and support they need. With this goal in mind, Memorial Sloan Kettering offers the services of a multidisciplinary geriatric team through the 65+ Program.

## 65+NEWS EDITORIAL STAFF

Jeannine Nonailada, PhD, OTR/L, BCG  
Beatriz Korc, MD, PhD

## UPCOMING EVENTS OPEN TO STAFF AND PATIENTS

### Keeping the Mind and Body Healthy

**June 28, 2016**  
**10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

### Simple and Healthy Meal Preparation

**September 6, 2016**  
**10:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

## Both events take place at:

Memorial Hospital  
1275 York Avenue, Room 107  
Between 67th and 68th Streets

## South Asian Cultural Partnership

SACSS has collaborated with the MSK's Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities (IHCD) Service to study health problems faced by New York City taxi drivers. Findings of this study resulted in the creation of driver-centered health interventions such as air filters in cabs, pedometers to enhance driver activity levels, and increased access to healthcare coverage.

Their senior program assists clients with Medicare- and Medicaid-related issues and connects them to benefits such as SSI and SNAP. SACSS spreads awareness of healthy aging, nutritious diet, and active lifestyle among seniors through interactive workshops, support groups, and community events across Queens. They provide educational workshops on topics such as recognizing early signs of cancer, dementia, and Alzheimer's; nutrition; positive thinking; and emotional wellness. These workshops are held in English and different South Asian languages at senior and community centers across Queens. They hold recreational activities such as Bollywood night for seniors to encourage peer engagement and collage making and book reading to enhance their creative expression. As community partners to MSK's Geriatric Resource Inter-professional Program, they assist in creating culturally competent educational material on health subjects for seniors and caregivers. In March, SACSS organized a focus group to understand the educational needs of South Asian caregivers of older adults. The findings helped develop a series of lectures on working with interpreters, safe patient handling, caring for loved ones with memory loss, and caring for the caregiver. This once-a-month series will kick off on July 9.

Located in the heart of the South Asian community in Flushing, SACSS



is surrounded by faith-based centers. Their office displays signage in different South Asian languages, which encourages clients to walk in. SACSS received multiple awards including the Union Square Award

(2003) for their 9/11 work, the India Abroad Gopal Raju Award for Community Service (March 2010), and the Changemaker Award by Domestic Harmony Foundation (May 2015). ■

### PATIENT RESOURCES

## Herbal Supplements



Many cancer survivors use complementary and alternative medicine including herbal supplements to improve their health and to relieve symptoms caused by cancer and its treatments.

Some herbs that are commonly used by people 65 and older are ginkgo biloba for improving memory, soy for relief from hot flashes, turmeric for reducing pain and inflammation associated with arthritis, saw palmetto for relief from urinary symptoms, and ginseng for reducing fatigue

Although clinical studies have shown the effectiveness of these products, there are safety concerns:

- **Standardization.** Many products are not standardized and their potencies are unknown.
- **Contamination and adulteration.** Because herbal supplements are not regulated as drugs by the FDA, there are many reports of contaminated and adulterated products on the market.
- **Dosage and toxicity.** Many herbs have not been studied in humans and so the proper dosages remain unclear. Overdose can increase the risk of toxicity.
- **Herb-drug interactions.** Herbs contain natural ingredients that can interfere with prescription drugs, making them less effective or more toxic.

To avoid potential side effects, consult with your doctor or pharmacist before using any herbal supplements. You can also visit the Integrative Medicine Service's About Herbs website ([www.abouterbs.com](http://www.abouterbs.com)) for more information on herbs and other dietary supplements. ■

## 65+ Team Spotlight

Nurse practitioner **Sincere McMillan** received the Travel Award from the John A. Hartford Foundation for the Hartford Change Agents Policy Institute in June. See more at: <https://v.gd/rA3fIE>

Project manager **Jeannine Nonailhada** defended her dissertation “*Educating Healthcare Providers and Hospital Staff on Geriatrics and Shared Decision-Making with Older Adult Oncology Patients: Evaluation of an Online Program*” in the PhD Social Work Program at Fordham University.

Senior occupational therapist **Chrysanne Eichner** and **Jeannine Nonailhada** presented at the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference held in Chicago in April.

Chrysanne presented “*Creative Interventions and Custom Adaptations within the Oncology Setting*” and Jeannine taught “*Things I Wish I’d Known before Working with Older Adults.*”

Geriatrician and service Chief **Beatriz Korc-Grodzicki**, geriatrician and oncologist **Armin Sharokni**, **Sincere McMillan** and **Jeannine Nonailhada** presented at the American Geriatrics Society Annual Scientific Meeting in May.

**Jeannine Nonailhada** authored “*The Role of Occupational and Physical Therapy in Geriatric Oncology*,” in the May 25 edition of ASCO POST. <https://v.gd/RLBhKR>

**Beatriz Korc-Grodzicki** led a Cancer.net podcast called “*Surgery for Older Adults: Things to Consider and How to Prepare.*” <http://bcove.me/jvygyn27>

Attending physician **Jimmie Holland** spoke at the World Economic Council Committee on Aging in Philadelphia in May and is now Co-Chair of the Committee on Media, Arts, and Culture of AgeFriendlyNYC, **Mindy Greenstein**, research associate with the Geriatric Research group, will serve on the committee as well.

**Jimmie Holland** presented “*Aging in America and Healthcare: A Silver Tsunami Approaches*” on April 13 at NIH Clinical Center Grand Rounds. <https://v.gd/8ZmuvV> ■

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### PATIENT RESOURCES

## Geriatric Resource Nurses Raising Awareness of Falls



The Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) team at MSK has launched an initiative to help educate staff about preventing falls in older adults. “We are concerned with keeping our older adults safe when they come into the hospital,” says Cody Landis, CNI, GRN. GRN was started by geriatric

nurse practitioner Heidi Yulico in 2009 and continues to educate staff regarding the care needs of older adults. Recently GRN hosted several interactive educational sessions with nursing staff to bring awareness to fall prevention. “The education sessions we provide specifically address how

staff can critically evaluate our older patients for factors that may put them at risk for falls,” says Laura Illich CNI, GRN. “There may be issues present in this population that may not be present in younger patients.”

“I had the opportunity to attend recent fall prevention in-service regarding our geriatric patient population and I was excited to see how we’ve been able to utilize our scope of practice to extend beyond the oncological aspects of the care for our patients,” says Nicholas Hendrickson, a current clinical nurse in the intensive care unit. “I have worked at MSK for about 6 years and have seen how assessing our patients’ needs and intervening appropriately can really decrease the risks of falls in the hospital setting.” The in-service was developed with input from the entire GRN team to shine a light on how we all can help keep our patients safe, active, and healthy to ultimately

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# Staying Safe In The Heat

As temperatures warm up this summer, it is important for older adults to stay safe. Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control to help keep you cool and healthy!

1. Stay in buildings with air-conditioning as much as possible.
2. Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device during a very hot day.
3. Avoid direct sunlight.
4. Drink more water than usual.
5. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink.
6. Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
7. Take cool showers or baths.
8. Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
9. Seek medical care immediately if you have symptoms of heat-related illness like muscle cramps, headaches, and nausea or vomiting.

For more tips, visit the Seniors section of the CDC's Extreme Heat website at: [www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/seniors.html](http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/seniors.html). ■

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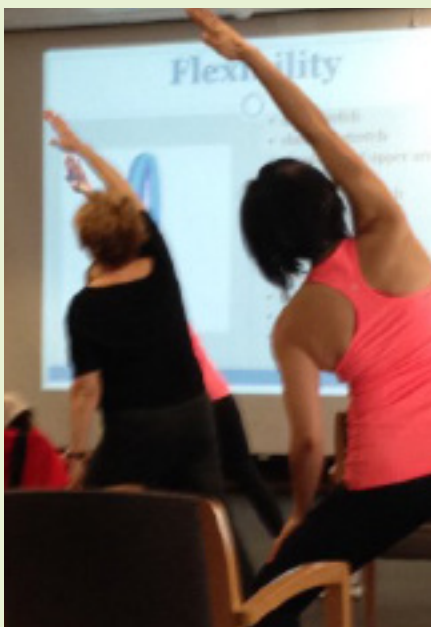
## Fall Awareness

decrease the risk of falling.

Among persons age 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death. Hospitalized patients have an increased risk of falling. Factors such as fatigue, malnutrition, multiple medications, and unsteady gait can make older adults particularly vulnerable to falls. As a patient, family member, or friend, you play a vital role in the prevention of falls. It is important to remember that there are many elements at play in the hospital that may not have been true at home — there are IV tubes, wound drains, urinary catheters, and other equipment that make it more likely to trip. Additionally, a new environment makes it more difficult to rely on familiar landmarks to prevent falls. Various medications and the recovery process can also make falls more likely. Your help in keeping everyone safe is appreciated. It is never a bother to call your team for assistance. We want you and your family to be safe and comfortable. ■

### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## National Senior Health and Fitness Day



For the first time this past May, the Geriatrics and Integrative Medicine Services of the Division of Survivorship and Supportive Care sponsored an event in honor of National Senior Health and Fitness Day. We held a free exercise class led by Clinical Fitness Specialist, Donna Wilson, and Client Services Representative, Cathryn Carino. The class was attended by older adults in our community, and began with a presentation on the importance of lifelong participation in exercise for optimal health. We hope this is the first of much collaboration within the Division of Survivorship and Supportive Care at MSK! ■