



Cecelia Satar and Eugene Cash, RN

Giving and Receiving Care

Montefiore associates gain assistance through the Care Guidance Program.

ACCUSTOMED TO PROVIDING CARE to patients, some Montefiore associates have been surprised at how comforting it is to be on the receiving end of that care. Those who have enrolled in the Care Guidance Program for Montefiore Associates, an arm of Montefiore's To Your Health! program, are provided with free one-on-one health and lifestyle support from Montefiore's Care Guidance Team, which is composed of registered nurses, dietitians and other healthcare providers. A dedicated Personal Health Nurse works with associates to develop a personalized health plan, identify ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and provide health information and education resources. Through weekly or monthly phone calls, the nurse offers clinical support and can provide referrals to nutritionists, oncologists, pharmacists and other health professionals throughout Montefiore as needed.

The program, administered by CMO, Montefiore Care Management, has enrolled roughly 1,100 associates or their dependents, who have signed up for a range of reasons, including losing weight, managing diabetes or other chronic illnesses, recovering from surgery and finding support through cancer treatment.

"The majority of people in the program are well, but roughly 30 percent aren't well, and about 15 percent have chronic illnesses,"

says Mary Jo Maloney, RN, Assistant Director, Care Guidance Program, Montefiore.

The program is open to Montefiore associates and their dependents covered by Montefiore's Blue Cross Blue Shield health plans, including Monte Care EPO, Monte Care PPO, Monte Prime EPO and MMC Health Plan for Registered Nurses (NYSNA). CMO also manages the new 1199SEIU Montefiore Coordinated Care Program, which will offer care management services for members of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and their dependents who have a history of receiving care primarily from Montefiore physicians.

In addition to the Care Guidance Program, through Montefiore's Wellness Program, all associates have access to benefits such as smoking cessation programs, stress reduction classes and weight loss groups.

When an associate enrolls in the Care Guidance Program, he or she is paired with one of 10 registered nurses on the team. These nurses have backgrounds in specialties including cardiology, pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology.

Get to know some of the associates who have benefited from the Care Guidance Program.

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Naalla Schreiber, MD, and Taneika Smith, RN

Keeping Sugar Levels Down

**ERIC THOMAS, PHYSICIAN PRACTICE LIAISON, HOME CARE;
11 YEARS WITH MONTEFIORE**

Just after Eric Thomas was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, Care Guidance nurse Eugene Cash, RN, contacted him. "That was one of the best things that ever happened to me," recalls Mr. Thomas. Having someone take a vested interest in him helped Mr. Thomas make the kind of lifestyle changes needed to control his diabetes.

"Whenever Eugene calls, I want to be able to answer him truthfully and say I'm sticking to my diet, I'm doing my exercise and taking my medications," says Mr. Thomas. "He's like my coach; I want to be able to say, 'Okay, coach, I'm following the program.'"

Upon determining that Mr. Thomas would benefit from nutrition counseling, Mr. Cash referred him to Jessica Shapiro, RD, a nutritionist who helped him create lists of foods he should eat in moderation and those he should try to avoid. Once he cut out sweets, his sugar levels dropped considerably, although he does continue to take medications to control his blood sugar levels.

Mr. Thomas is acutely aware of what can happen when people with diabetes don't take care of their health. His mother lost a leg because of diabetes, and his father lost his eyesight. "I knew if I didn't take care of myself, I would end up like that," he says.

Mr. Cash calls regularly to make sure everything is going well and that Mr. Thomas is comfortable with the plan his nutritionist created for him. "Eugene is not judgmental; he talks to me as if he's my brother and has a vested interest in my well-being," says Mr. Thomas. "He's a tremendous source of support."

Gaining Support While Losing Weight

**NAALLA SCHREIBER, MD, PSYCHIATRIST, MOSES CAMPUS;
NINE YEARS WITH MONTEFIORE**

Three years ago, Naalla Schreiber, MD, didn't feel like herself. She was tired, her knees ached and she had gained so much weight that she avoided the scale altogether. When she heard about the Care Guidance Program and its focus on helping associates get healthier,

she decided to call. She spoke with Personal Health Nurse Taneika Smith, RN, who listened to Dr. Schreiber's concerns, determined that she would benefit from nutrition counseling, and paired her with Jessica Shapiro, RD.

When Dr. Schreiber met with Ms. Shapiro, they discussed strategies to lose weight and created a weekly meal plan. But for many months, Dr. Schreiber didn't lose much weight. "Jessica is extremely patient, always positive and always has another idea or a solution to try," says Dr. Schreiber.

One suggestion was to track her calories via a web-based calorie counting program. "For me, it was really helpful to be held accountable for what I ate," says Dr. Schreiber, who dropped roughly 40 pounds within the next 10 months. "Jessica really helped me rethink and reframe how I thought about food," says Dr. Schreiber.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all approach, like a diet plan," says Ms. Shapiro. "That doesn't work for most people. I help them evaluate their own eating habits and see where they can make small improvements that they're comfortable with and that they feel they can maintain over the long run."

As she lost weight, Dr. Schreiber no longer felt tired, her knee pain went away, and her cholesterol and blood sugar levels dropped to healthier levels. Now, Ms. Shapiro checks in with Dr. Schreiber once every few months to make sure she's maintaining her weight loss, and they're working on finding a way to squeeze exercise into her busy schedule.

"Montefiore is a hospital with a soul, and I really appreciate that they've made this resource available to us," says Dr. Schreiber.

Battling Post-Surgery Blues

**CECELIA SATAR, BLOOD BANK SUPERVISOR;
20 YEARS AT MONTEFIORE**

Cecelia Satar lost 35 pounds over a period of several months and was getting weaker and weaker. Though doctors initially thought she had asthma and then an adverse reaction to her medications that caused severe diarrhea and dehydration, she was finally diagnosed with

a gallbladder infection. Because she was so weak by the time she had surgery to remove her gallbladder, it took a heavy toll on her body. As she endured her lengthy recovery process, Ms. Satar became depressed by her illness. "I had always been a healthy person," she says. So when she saw the brochure for the Care Guidance Program, she decided to call. Eugene Cash, RN, answered the call.

"I told him my whole story and that I was looking for someone to talk to," recalls Ms. Satar. "I needed help finding specialists and nutritionists, and was too weak to make phone calls." One of the most helpful things Mr. Cash did was to find Ms. Satar a gastroenterologist located close to her home, as well as a nutritionist, who was essential in helping her gastrointestinal system heal.

When she expressed concerns that her medications were causing some of her symptoms, Mr. Cash referred her to Svetlana Korchevsky, PharmD, a pharmacist in the Care Guidance Program. Ms. Korchevsky took down the names of all her medications and explained why she needed each one, and how and when to take it to minimize symptoms. "Eugene was such a good listener. I needed someone outside of my family who would listen, talk to me and tell me it's okay," Ms. Satar says. "He would always find a way to help me and ease my pain and whatever it was that was bothering me. If he wasn't there for me, I would have felt a lot worse and had a slower recovery. He was my biggest support."

Lending a Sympathetic Ear

NASHEEM VASSELL, RN, MEDICAL SURGICAL, EINSTEIN CAMPUS; SEVEN YEARS AT MONTEFIORE

Nasheem Vassell, RN, was caring for multiple ill family members who were experiencing medical complications. While completing her normal work shifts, she also had to organize care for various family members, tend to them, and go to various medical appointments. "I reached out to Care Guidance because I needed assistance finding physicians and

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different services for them," Ms. Vassell recalls. "However, these tasks were very challenging at times to complete and Care Guidance was my lifeline," she says.

Ms. Vassell contacted her Personal Health Nurse Nancy Horsting, RN, for support. Ms. Horsting assisted her with finding physicians in various specialties and quickly became someone that Ms. Vassell could talk to. "Nancy understood what I was going through and was very compassionate and genuine," says Ms. Vassell.

Ms. Horsting also provided Ms. Vassell with resources for caregivers, such as retreats and getaways.

"Nancy is an outstanding individual and nurse who always treats me with tremendous respect and care. I view her as a sister/friend who goes far beyond the average individual and is really there for anyone in her care," says Ms. Vassell. ■

To take advantage of this free health program, call **1-855-MMC-WELL** or email mmccareguidance@montefiore.org. Visit the Care Guidance Program on the web at www.mymontebenefits.com/careguidance.



Nancy Horsting, RN, and Nasheem Vassell, RN