

Population and Community Health News

# Advancing Health

MedStar Harbor Hospital



## Learning to live without tobacco.

Free cessation classes help participants become smoke-free.

All MedStar Health facilities are tobacco free.



Thank you for not smoking.

# Letter from the President.



Ensuring that our hospitals' patient populations and local communities have access to the resources they need to live long and healthy lives is integral at MedStar Health. We launched this publication, *Advancing Health*, earlier this year to create greater awareness of some of the many ways we are working to achieve this goal.

You'll read about several of these initiatives in this issue such as our efforts to help people go tobacco-free. Tobacco use can cause a host of serious health conditions, yet many individuals find it difficult to quit. Through our Tobacco Cessation program, we are hoping to motivate more people to stop.

We also feature a unique program we began in 2016 to address the issue of substance abuse in our region. Designed to identify and assist individuals struggling with addiction, it relies on the expertise of peer recovery coaches...individuals having personal experience with substance abuse...to provide them with the support and guidance they need to move toward recovery. In addition, we highlight some of our community outreach activities.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Advancing Health*, and welcome any input you may have as to how we can best meet the needs of the community in the years ahead. Working together, we can all live healthier lives.

In good health,

**Jill Donaldson, FACHE**

President, MedStar Harbor Hospital  
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

## Contents

- 3 Learning to live without tobacco.**
- 4 Shining a light on the path to recovery.**
- 5 Connecting with our community.**
- 6 Community class schedules.**

At MedStar Health, we offer easy access to great health care in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., via our 10 hospitals and more than 280 other care locations. We're also committed to advancing your care by continuously learning and applying new knowledge. We help our patients and their families feel understood, appreciated, and confident in their care. MedStar Harbor Hospital is proud to be part of MedStar Health. **It's how we treat people.**

Population and Community Health's mission: *Bridging gaps in health care by connecting the populations we serve with resources to enhance their health and wellbeing.*

**On the cover:** Pam Trombero, MBA, TTS, a tobacco treatment specialist and certified tumor registrar, quit smoking after 22 years and uses her experience to teach Tobacco Cessation classes at MedStar Harbor Hospital.





# Learning to **live without tobacco.**

*Free cessation classes help participants become smoke-free.*

Many individuals who have been using tobacco for a while wonder if quitting is worth dealing with the cravings and withdrawal symptoms that come with it. They may think, "The damage is done, so does it really make a difference?"

According to Karen Polite-Lamma, MSN, CTTS, RN program manager, Population and Community Health for MedStar Health, Baltimore region, the answer is absolutely. "Your body has an amazing ability to heal itself, and it happens quicker than you think—less than half an hour after you put out that last cigarette," she says. "But you're more likely to succeed if you have a plan to quit. Counseling and the use of medications may also increase your chances of quitting."

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Smoking is the most harmful to a user's health and has been shown to cause cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other health problems.

Reversing this trend by helping adults become tobacco-free is the goal of MedStar Health's free Tobacco Cessation program. "Currently, we offer 7 different group classes, both virtually and in-person, providing individuals who are ready to quit with a number of convenient options," Polite-Lamma says. "Classes are generally held over a 4- to 6-week period and are scheduled once a week for 1.5 to 2 hours."



**Tobacco cessation specialists from Population and Community Health work to help patients become smoke-free. Pictured from left to right are: Karen Polite-Lamma, MSN, CTTS, RN program manager for the Baltimore region; Pam Trombero, MBA, TTS, at MedStar Harbor Hospital; Michelle DiGennaro, RN, TTS, at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center; and Tracy Holcomb, MSN, RN program manager at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital.**

Designed for individuals who are motivated to quit, classes focus on helping participants stop smoking as quickly as possible while teaching them techniques for ending the physical and psychological need to smoke. "Through our classes, participants gain a better understanding of why they smoke, learn how to handle withdrawal and stress, and are counseled on ways to resist the urge to smoke," she explains.

"Plus, quitting is hard! The use of medications such as nicotine replacement therapies (NRT)—nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, nasal sprays and lozenges, or pills—are safe and effective ways to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms to quit for good. If participants are interested,

we can assist them in obtaining the appropriate medication," she adds.

"It's been proven that quitting smoking, no matter how long you've been using tobacco, does reduce your risk of smoking-related diseases and improves your health," says Polite-Lamma. "In fact, 5 years after quitting, the risk of a stroke or developing certain cancers decreases by almost half. People who quit smoking experience improved cardiovascular and lung function, which may mean lower blood pressure, less coughing, more energy, and enjoy a renewed sense of taste and smell. It's the single most important step you can take to improve the length and quality of your life."

MedStar Health offers free Tobacco Cessation programs throughout the Baltimore region. Visit [MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking) for details or call **855-218-2435**.

# Shining a light on the path to recovery.



**Jerry Gross provides non-judgmental support and resources to client Lakia Wallace in his role as a peer recovery coach at MedStar Harbor.**

Substance abuse is a public health crisis that has reached epidemic proportions nationally as well as in the Baltimore region. Individuals who have substance use disorders have more health complications, experience higher costs of care, and are admitted to the hospital more frequently than those not dealing with an addiction.

At MedStar Health, we have been working hard to address this problem since 2016 through our Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment program, also known as SBIRT. If an individual comes to us for care and is screened positive for substance use, one of our 24 hospital-based SBIRT peer recovery coaches—individuals who have personal experience with addiction—engage with that person, providing support, guidance, and a path to recovery.

A nationally recognized, evidence-based program, SBIRT is offered by MedStar Health at all four of our Baltimore hospitals: MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital, MedStar Harbor Hospital, and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital. Initially launched in the hospitals' Emergency departments, it has since been expanded to some Mother/Baby units, Behavioral Health, and large primary care practices with a focus on identifying and supporting patients with existing substance use disorders.

The peer recovery coaches are key to the success of the program, offering unique insight and valuable perspectives that are different from what is traditionally experienced in a clinical setting. Studies have shown that having guidance and support from someone who has "been there" is what many in recovery value the most about peer support services.

They serve not only as mentors, but also as sources of hope and inspiration to those who are beginning their journeys to recovery. They assist in completing referrals and promoting access to treatment services, as well.

Jerry Gross is the peer recovery coach team leader at MedStar Harbor and works in the Emergency department. When a patient comes in with drugs or alcohol present in their system, Gross' job is to engage that person in a supportive, no-judgment conversation. He attempts to first gain their trust by explaining that earlier in his life, he was in their shoes.

"I've been in recovery for 20 years," Gross explains. "I lost everything because of my addiction. But I got help and turned my life around. And now I am so fortunate that I get to help others. Being able to make that first connection with someone, even if they don't feel like they want or need help, is so important. It's about planting the seed and making that person feel like someone cares about them. That's what I needed a long time ago. And that's what I am giving now."

Today, MedStar Health screens about 280,000 individuals annually through the SBIRT program with many moving on to recovery, thanks to the support of their peer recovery coaches.

For more information about our services, visit [MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth).



# Connecting with our community.

Population and Community Health teams throughout the Baltimore region are dedicated to connecting neighbors with programs and services. Whether it's providing health information about tobacco cessation, diabetes prevention, and mental health materials—printed in English and Spanish—or sharing resources that can help with food disparities, legal services, or housing, our teams are bringing support to your neighborhoods.

Below are some of our recent outreach events.



Neighbors of all ages came to ConnectFest at Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School #124 on Saturday, Aug. 13 for a day of entertainment, food, fun, health screenings, and resources for financial literacy, jobs/workforce development, mental health/recovery, youth services, and more. MedStar Mobile Health Center was also present for healthcare services.



We're out in the community! The MedStar Health Mobile Health Center makes it easier than ever before to get care when you need it. Come see us between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Tuesdays at The Transformation Center in Brooklyn, on Wednesdays at Drink at The Well in Curtis Bay, or Thursdays at the Cherry Hill Tenant Association in Cherry Hill. Call 410-350-7511 for an appointment or visit [MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/MobileHealthCenter) to learn more.



MedStar Health and the Baltimore Ravens have joined forces on the Purple Ticket to Health program that provides Ravens Flock members entry into a sweepstakes for completing free diabetes and body mass index (BMI) screenings. Through an online health questionnaire provided by MedStar Health, Ravens Flock members can participate and learn about preventive health practices throughout the Ravens 2022 season. Upon completion of the screening, members are eligible to win prizes and experiences provided by the Ravens.

## Social needs program.

Find the resources you need and get connected... all in one place!



[SocialNeeds.MedStarHealth.org](https://www.SocialNeeds.MedStarHealth.org)

# Community class schedules.

At MedStar Health, we care about the health and wellness of our community. One of the ways we try to keep you healthy and active is by offering a variety of free and low-cost special classes, events, and screenings at our local MedStar Health hospitals. They include the following:

## CANCER PREVENTION

### Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings

Free mammograms, clinical breast exams, and pap tests for women ages 40 and older who live in Baltimore City.

Call **410-350-2066** for details.

### Colon Cancer Screening

Call **410-350-8216** to learn more.

### Lung Cancer Screening

Call **410-350-8216** for more information.



## DIABETES PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

### Diabetes Prevention Program

A program for people with pre-diabetes, who want to reduce their risk for type 2 diabetes. Lifestyle change, 12-month program. Offered virtually or in person.

Call **855-218-2435** for details.

### Diabetes Education

If you have diabetes, our educational classes can teach you about self-management of your disease, medical nutrition therapy, continuous glucose monitoring, and more. Virtual appointments are available.

Call **410-554-4511** for details.

## HEART AND LUNG HEALTH

### Free Blood Pressure Screenings

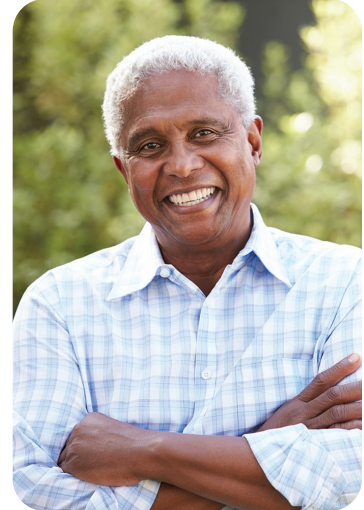
Call **443-444-4663** for more information.

### Cardiac Rehabilitation Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Call **443-444-3397** for more information.

### Congestive Heart Failure Clinic

Call **443-444-5993** for details.



## SUPPORT GROUPS

Contact the numbers below to see if the group is virtual or in person.

### Amputee Support Group

Email [jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net](mailto:jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net) for details.

### Concussion Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.

### Stroke Support Group

Email [kate.c.gerber@medstar.net](mailto:kate.c.gerber@medstar.net) for details.



## WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

### Tobacco Cessation

Learn to quit smoking with support from our certified tobacco cessation experts. Free virtual or in-person classes.

Call **855-218-2435** to register or visit [MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking).





## BIRTH AND FAMILY CLASSES

Birth and family services are offered within the MedStar Health, Baltimore region at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center and MedStar Harbor Hospital.

### Prepared Childbirth Weekend Express or 4-Week Series

Preparing mother and her birth partner for labor and childbirth. Offered 1 full day or as a 4-week series (1 night/week).

### Breastfeeding: Facts, Myths, and Techniques

Taught by a board-certified lactation consultant to help you get breastfeeding off to a good start.

### Infant Care and Safety Class

For expectant and new parents, grandparents, and babysitters. Learn bathing, diapering, and other skills to care for your baby.

### Infant and Child CPR

Ideal for expectant parents, daycare providers, and loved ones caring for your baby.

### Infant and Child First Aid

Classes can be taken separately or together with CPR (discount applies if taken at the same time). These classes meet the state requirement for daycare providers.

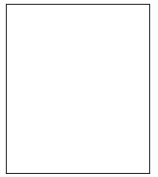
To learn more and register for these classes, visit [MedStarHealth.org/BirthFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthFamilyClasses) or call 888-746-2852.





MedStar Health

5601 Loch Raven Blvd. • Baltimore, MD 21239  
MedStarHealth.org/AdvancingHealth  
855-218-2435



# New 988 National Crisis Lifeline.

**Expanded network of centers to help people in emotional distress or experiencing a mental health crisis.**

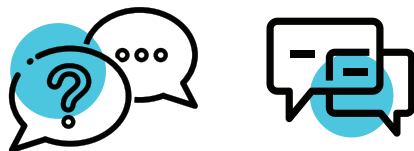
If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health, suicide-related or substance-use crisis, call or text **988** to reach the national Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also chat **988lifeline.org** for support.

Moving to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code will provide greater access to life-saving services. By dialing **988**, you can now be connected to free, confidential mental health crisis resources. The number **988** operates out of the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline,



which has been strengthened and expanded around the country with more than 200 local, independent, state-funded crisis centers. Dialing **988** serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.

*Talk with us.*



Need help for emotional distress or a mental health crisis? Call and text: **988** | Chat: **988lifeline.org**