

## ‘Familiar Faces’ Come to Town



ANGELA BROOKS-WRIGHT



REBECCA NAZARIO



ANITA OSEI



CONNIE MUNOZ

A University Hospital patient felt his new medication wasn’t working so, based on long-standing experience, he was preparing to visit the Emergency Room to get it corrected. But instead, he first called his new community chaplain, Anita Osei who convinced him to call his physician directly and avoid the Emergency Room.

This episode marked a small but important early victory for University Hospital’s new “Friendly Faces” initiative to visit patients in their community in order to empower them to better manage their medical care and connect them with needed social services. Launched in February, the program works with frequent Emergency Room visitors who are screened by patient navigator Connie Munoz who then assigns suitable candidates to Osei or the other community chaplain, Angela Brooks-Wright. Project oversight is managed by Rebecca Nazario, Director of Ambulatory Care Services.

“We are excited about expanding the provision of care outside of the walls of our hospital and into the Newark community,” said Ray Brandes, UH Vice President for Population Health. “University Hospital is committed to doing better for our most vulnerable patients. Through this comprehensive approach, we will take into account the real world impact of local social and economic conditions and how those factors impact our patients’ medical needs.”

The goals of “Familiar Faces” are to improve health outcomes, lessen dependency on emergency services as a primary resource for medical attention and improve access to primary care services.

“We know how difficult it can be after you get discharged from the hospital to just get back on your feet and to live a healthier life,” said Brooks-Wright. “We assess their situation after they tell us their story and help them set any health goals. Sometimes this goes beyond the hospital setting, it might be something in the community they need help with, like housing or finding a primary care physician.”

For others, it can be as simple as finding someone to listen them.

“One of our patients was sexually abused by her father since she was 10 years old,” said Brooks-Wright. “There was always drugs and alcohol in the home. The dysfunction became part of her normality and she has been physically abusive to men and women. She told Anita, ‘If you can’t find me, it’s either because I’m in the hospital or I’m in jail.’

“That’s the environment that a lot of our patients are in. But she became comfortable with Anita and talking to her. She said thank you for listening because you’re the only one that ever listened to what I had to say.”

The patients initially enrolled in the program range in age from 19 to 61, are equally divided between men and women and experience a range of medical conditions. One was homeless and another has been “couch-hopping” without a permanent residence. Two did not have phones.

“There are a lot of emotional components when it comes to physical illness and I think as chaplains we are able to gain their trust,” said Osei. “They open up with us. Our patients will let us into places that they may not allow the physician or the social worker or the nurse. We come in in a different role and the level of expectation is different.”

The chaplains will each take on 15 to 20 patients at a time and work with them for three months.

“We do what we do because that’s our passion — to help everyone that we touch,” said Munoz. “It’s very rewarding to go home and say to ourselves, today, we were able to take care of this patient and it feels good.

“Do we look forward to the next day?” she added. “Yes, we do, because we want to know who else we can help. It’s not a job, it’s a passion.”



*Get Involved*

## MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MARCH 2019**

### NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

Cooking Demonstrations with Chef Jenny in The Bistro

#### Schedule of Events:

No Bake Energy Bites

**Thursday, March 12 – 10:30 am**

Edamame Guacamole with Veggies

**Thursday, March 21 – 2:30 pm**

Build Your Own Trail Mix

**Thursday, March 28 – 2:30 pm**

### DR. SEUSS READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

**8:30 am – 10:30 am**

**MAR 1** Read your favorite Dr. Seuss book to young

Newark students at Spencer Miller Community School

66 Muhammad Ali Avenue or Park Elementary School

120 Manchester Avenue

**12:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**MAR 5** New Community Corporation

180 South Orange Avenue

Educational session for Colon Cancer Prevention and Early Detection by Erica Alvarado, Health Educator

### WOMEN'S WELLNESS SUMMIT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEWARK BOARD OF EDUCATION

**FREE ~ 7:30 am – 2:00 pm**

**MAR 13** New Jersey Medical School, Rosemary Gellene Room,

185 South Orange Avenue, Newark

Workshops and screenings lead by an all-female team of doctors and educators. Free breakfast, lunch and giveaways. Call to register, 973-972-0496

### 6TH ANNUAL DIGESTIVE DISEASES:

**New Advances, A Continuing Medical Conference**

Philadelphia, PA – The Westin Philadelphia

Featuring Dr. Pysopoulos. To register and learn more go to [GlobalacademyCME.com/DDNA](http://GlobalacademyCME.com/DDNA)

**MAR 15-16**

**ASK THE EXPERT** – sponsored by the American Liver Foundation as part of Liver Cancer month.

Led by **Nikolaos Pysopoulos, MD, PhD, MBA, FACP, AGAF, FAASLD, FRCP (Edin)**

Professor of Medicine

Chief of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Professor of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience

Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Medical Director, Liver Transplantation

**University Hospital, Newark, NJ**

**MSB, B-610, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

**MAR 25**

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

#### PEARLS OF WISDOM DAY – WEAR PEARLS

**1:00 pm** Wear Your Pearls for a group picture and special "pearl" dessert in the Bistro Cafe

**MAR 29**

Submit your "Pearls of Wisdom", a valuable, wise and helpful piece of advice on any subject to [donohucm@uhnj.org](mailto:donohucm@uhnj.org) by March 13

### COLON CANCER AWARENESS DAY

**Wear Blue in recognition – Bistro Cafe**

**11:00 am - 11:30 am** Registration

**11:30 am - 12:00 pm** Wear Blue Day Photo - Everyone Welcome

**12:15 pm - 1:00 pm** Colon Cancer Screening Education

Presenter Dr. Luis Alzate- Duque

Academic Medicine Fellow

Trivia Give away

**1:15pm- 2:00pm** Colon Cancer Screening Education

Presenter Dr. Dhavani Doshi

Assistant Professor of Medicine,

Rutgers New Jersey Medical

School – Division of General

Internal Medicine

Trivia Give away

**MAR 29**

### SAVE THE DATE

**UH's Community Health and Wellness Festival**

May 4, Spencer Miller Elementary School

Join the UH team. A contribution is never required for participation.

**NJ Sharing Network – 5K Walk and Races**

May 19, Long Branch

June 2, New Providence

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS**



To Attend



To Volunteer



**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**  
Newark, New Jersey