

Healthy Communities



A publication for people who care about improving the health of our community

Spring 2021

A Note from the Director



W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D.
Director, Healthy
Community Partnership

The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated the news over the past year and continues to be a major concern throughout our communities. What has been clear during this time is that health systems and medical professionals cannot address this serious health crisis by themselves. They need to work closely with trusted community partners.

In this newsletter, the **Rev. Dr. Paula Teague**, senior director for spiritual care and chaplaincy, and the **Rev. William Johnson**, community chaplain, report on some of the ways Johns Hopkins health professionals have partnered with local faith communities to provide reliable information and resources that are critical in addressing the pandemic and saving lives.

While COVID-19 has received most of the attention during the past year, we must not ignore the other serious health concerns that continue to impact our communities. One of these is substance use disorders which will be the focus of our first-ever virtual William S. Perper

Faith-Health Symposium. Even though the conference will not be held in-person, we are excited to host an outstanding group of speakers, who will share their professional and personal experiences with alcohol and drug use. More information, including a list of speakers and topics, can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Another health concern we must draw our attention to is depression. As a psychologist, I have not only treated individuals with depression, but I've also experienced it personally – as an individual who has had two serious depressive episodes and as a father who lost a daughter to this terrible illness. I have made it my personal mission to educate as many people as possible about depression and to reduce the stigma associated with it. One of these efforts is the Congregational Depression Awareness Program, a program for faith communities to help them identify and support those impacted directly or indirectly by depression. **Kimberly Monson**, program coordinator for the Healthy Community Partnership, played a key role in developing this program and has provided a brief overview on page 5.

Finally, whether it's COVID-19, substance use disorder, depression or any other medical condition, family members often take on a major role caring for their loved one. We sometimes refer to them as health care's invisible workforce. It's important that we recognize their role and provide the education and support they need. If you are caring for an older loved one, I invite you to participate in the programs and activities listed on page 4. I think you will find them valuable and informative.

Stay safe and be well,

9TH ANNUAL PERPER FAITH-HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

Substance use disorder continues to be a serious problem in our community and across the country. It seems like every day we hear stories about how it has wrecked relationships, destroyed careers and even killed. It's hard not to be discouraged when we hear these stories and look at the statistics. But in the midst of all the bad news, there is good news – substance use disorder is a treatable condition. This is a message that needs to be heard – and we want to help faith communities spread the message.

Join us from the comfort of your home or office as we present the **first-ever virtual William S. Perper Faith-Health Symposium**. This year's conference will focus solely on substance use disorder and will feature health professionals, clergy and individuals who have "lived experience" with substance use. We invite you to tune in to one or all of the keynote presentations listed below.

9th Annual William S. Perper Faith-Health Symposium *Understanding Substance Use Disorder: A Community Approach to Healing*

A **free virtual series** for individuals who are concerned about the current substance use crisis in our country, and for those who are personally facing challenges of substance use disorders

April 29
12 – 1:30 p.m.



History of Opioids

Renee Blanding, M.D.
*Vice President, Medical Affairs
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center*



Epidemic of Loneliness

Michael Fingerhood, M.D.
*Chief, Division of Addiction Medicine
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center*

May 6
12 – 1:30 p.m.



Re-Painting the Canvas: Recovery From Alcohol Use Disorder

Denis Antoine II, M.D.
*Medical Director, Addiction Treatment Services
& Center for Addiction and Pregnancy
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center*



Choosing to be Present

Kate Dunn, M.Div.
*Associate Pastor for Congregational Care
& Outreach
Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church*

May 13
12 – 1:30 p.m.



Ministry and Addiction

William Johnson, M.Div.
*Community Chaplain
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center*

Stephen Dutton, D.Min.
*Manager of Pastoral Services
Christiana Care Health System*

For more information or to register, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmcp/perper.

RELIABLE INFORMATION IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

At the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, there were a lot of questions – and often conflicting information – about the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Many found it hard to navigate or find reliable health information, and even more difficult to differentiate fact from fiction. Not knowing where else to go, many faith leaders turned to Johns Hopkins as a trusted resource for both health information and emotional support.

“In the beginning of the pandemic, information about COVID-19 was constantly changing. What was believed to be true one day would be completely different the next,” says the **Rev. William Johnson**, community chaplain. “It was obvious that we needed to connect with our medical-religious partners to provide the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 that we could.”



Valued Relationships

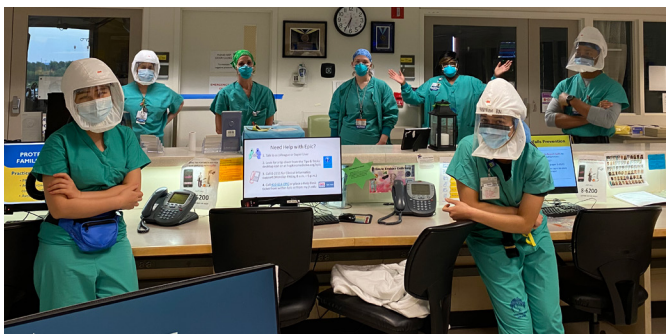
Since its launch in 2013, the goal of the Medical-Religious Partnership Program (MRP) has been to provide reliable health information and resources to faith communities. As part of the program, Johns Hopkins providers would often deliver sermons about the importance of early screening and detection, or offer their medical expertise at health fairs and other events. These relationships would ultimately impart a sense of trust between the medical and faith communities.

When COVID-19 arrived in the U.S. last year, it was no surprise that area congregations reached out to Johns Hopkins Bayview as a trusted resource for both health information and emotional support. Faith leaders would participate in twice-weekly calls that addressed the latest news about the pandemic and shared strategies for coping with conditions stemming from the virus. Additionally, congregations were invited to join panel discussions featuring mental health professionals and learn how to respond to the increase in anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns because of the pandemic.

Sharon Baptist Church has actively participated in these programs, often reaching out to Rev. Johnson for additional support and guidance. “Rev. Johnson has provided invaluable resources that have been instrumental in assisting our congregation obtain medical and emotional help, clear information and a pathway for our well-being,” says congregant **Valerie G.** “We have benefited greatly from his expertise and are all the better for it.”

MRP will continue to engage faith communities as news of COVID variants and vaccines develops. If you would like to become a medical-religious partner, please call **410-550-7569**.

Chaplaincy on the Front Lines of COVID-19



Rev. Denise White, pictured above with raised hands, shares a moment of peace with staff.

“A hallmark of chaplaincy is that we meet people where they are,” says the **Rev. Dr. Paula Teague**, senior director of spiritual care and chaplaincy. “You want people to tap into what they already value spiritually, in the ways that make sense for them. We encourage them to just pause and take a breath.”

Chaplains are embedded within units and work individually, with the teams, in huddles or during quiet moments. Their work takes on whatever expression is requested: prayer, expressions of gratitude, sharing inspirational thoughts and moments of mindful silence, or breathing exercises.

Programs & Activities For Family Caregivers

Connect with other caregivers, learn new skills and receive updates on timely topics from experts to help you care for yourself and older adult loved ones.



Dementia and Powerful Tools for Caregivers (7-session course)

Presented by Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities and Maryland Living Well Center of Excellence

Tuesdays, April 6 – May 18, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Evidenced-based program for those caring for a loved one with dementia. Sessions focus on self-care, making tough caregiving decisions and accessing community resources.

Info./Register: agtilg88@aacounty.org



Medicine and Vaccine Safety During the Pandemic: Putting Your Plan Into Action

Thursday, April 15, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Dr. Chanel Whittaker, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, and **Dr. Sierra Simpkins**, VA of Maryland, will review principles of medicine and vaccine safety for older adults, caregivers and the care team. This includes having a wellness plan to manage your medicines, avoid side effects and decide which vaccines are right for you. Learn how to create an action plan to help you make good choices to protect your health during the pandemic and beyond.

Info./Register: 410-550-1660



Caregiver Café

Wednesday, April 28, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Join the Called to Care team for an engaging, supportive telephone conversation about caregiver well-being, problem solving and resources. No registration required.

Dial-in at 11 a.m.: 888-651-5908; enter participant code 3569812#



Healthy at Home: 8 Strategies for Caregivers

Thursday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Dr. Kendra Heatwole Shank, Towson University, will present strategies for creating in-home engagement activities that caregivers and providers can use to combat social isolation, stimulate the mind and keep loved ones active.

Info./Register: 410-550-1660



All programs listed above are sponsored by the Johns Hopkins Geriatric Workforce Development Program, Called to Care, Hopkins ElderPlus and Maryland Commission on Caregiving.

CONGREGATIONAL DEPRESSION AWARENESS PROGRAM

Depression is now recognized as a significant public health concern, with more than 10 percent of American adults experiencing a major depressive episode each year and more than 20 percent experiencing at least one episode over their lifetime. While most individuals can be successfully treated, many people who suffer from depression do not receive effective treatments due to obstacles, such as failing to recognize the symptoms; the stigma attached to depression and other mental illnesses; pessimism and misconceptions about treatment; and difficulty accessing mental health services.

The **Congregational Depression Awareness Program (CDAP)** strives to overcome these obstacles by training volunteers from faith communities to share important information about depression with their congregations and communities, and to also provide support for individuals directly and indirectly impacted by depression. The pilot program was offered virtually in the fall. Nineteen volunteers from 12 area congregations participated in the 5-week training, which provided instruction and resources on topics such as recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression; medical and psychosocial treatment; and recognizing and responding to suicide warning signs.

Tangela Robinson, a member of Israel Baptist Church, completed the training and used what she learned to enhance her congregation's mental health programs. Below, she discusses one of Israel Baptist's programs, "Mind Talks in a Safe Place."

Why were you interested in CDAP?

Our church was already reaching out to our congregation and community to raise awareness about mental health. We were offering "Mind Talks in a Safe Place" to break through the silence and get people talking. I wanted to participate in CDAP so that we could enhance what we were already doing within our health and wellness ministry.

Tell us more about your "Mind Talks."

In November 2019, we starting hosting "Mind Talks in a Safe Place" in our fellowship hall. Due to the pandemic, they are now held virtually.

We usually have guest speakers join our sessions. **Dr. Dan Hale** was one of our speakers in January, and he provided an overview of CDAP. Other guest speakers included **Apostle Flanagan** and **Dr. Eric Holmes**, who spoke on men's health.

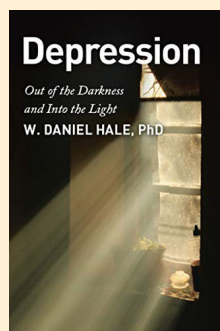
Aside from "Mind Talks," do you have any other plans to share resources gained from CDAP?

Absolutely! Our goal is to grow outside of our virtual "Mind Talks in a Safe Place" and to host other events once we can hold them in-person. We want to get people talking to help reduce the stigma associated with depression and other mental illnesses.

For more information about CDAP, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmc/cdap.



Robinson, bottom left, is pictured with other leaders of Israel Baptist's health and wellness ministry.



Depression: Out of the Darkness and Into the Light offers a first-hand account of **W. Daniel Hale's** own struggles with depression, his work as a psychotherapist and his experiences as a father who lost a daughter to depression.

As a token of appreciation, each CDAP participant received a complimentary copy of the book to inspire their ministries and help guide conversations about mental health with their congregations.

For more information about Healthy Community Partnership, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/jhbmc/hcp.

TREATING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER DURING COVID-19

Helping people fight the battle against addiction is hard enough without a global pandemic and nearly universal stay-at-home orders. But medical and mental health professionals at Johns Hopkins continue to provide care, counseling and services to patients working to beat substance use disorder.

As people adhere to physical distancing guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus, most outpatient programs at Johns Hopkins-affiliated facilities have switched to online communication for patient visits.

Michael Fingerhood, M.D., chief, Division of Chemical Dependence at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, says that isolation is the exact opposite of what he would recommend to his patients in normal times. “But these are not normal times,” he says. “I’m doing telemedicine visits from my office. Patients understand. The video offers a connection that’s at least better than a telephone call.”

Dr. Fingerhood adds, “We all feel stressed. But for patients with addiction, coping with life is an active and stressful state every day, regardless of COVID-19.”

To learn more about substance use treatment at Johns Hopkins during COVID-19, visit hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/articles/treating-substance-use-disorder.

