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HCQU Staff

# HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CONNECTIONS

FALL 2009



## Go Ahead...ASK THE HCQU!

By: **Leslie Dollman, MIS Administrator**

Do you support a person who has recently been diagnosed with MRSA and are wondering how to keep them, yourself, and your family safe? Do you know what community resources are available for someone with Autism? The HCQU knows, and through our website we're here for you, 24 hours a day! Do you have a question about medication interactions;

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Temple Grandin: No Translation Required

By: **Mary Nau, HCQU Director**

I'm not accustomed to picking up rock stars at the airport. In our field of developmental disabilities, Dr. Temple Grandin is a virtual rock star, and there I was waiting in the airport for her to arrive from Colorado. My job was to deliver her safely to her hotel room near our speaking venue, which was over an hour drive away in torrential rain. My car wasn't great, certainly not adequate to transport such a distinguished person. (If you ever watched Columbo, then you have a sense of my vehicle's condition.) Anyway, I wasn't sure my ability to hold a conversation rated much better than my car. Nonetheless, the opportunity I had to spend some time with Dr. Grandin didn't escape me. I knew this was a gift.

Besides being a brilliant engineer, Dr. Grandin is herself on the Autism Spectrum with a diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder.

There is no arguing that her achievements are stellar. She has appeared on television shows such as *20/20*, *48 Hours*, *CNN Larry King Live*, *PrimeTime Live*, *The Today Show*, and many shows in other countries. She has been featured in *People Magazine*, the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time Magazine*, the *New York Times* book review, and *Discover* magazine. Her books "Animals in Translation" and "Animals

Make Us Human" were both on the New York Times bestseller list. Dr. Grandin also maintains an intensive and global speaking schedule, and we were on it.

Her plane touched down during a thunderstorm. Shortly thereafter, my cell phone rang. A somewhat matter-of-fact voice responded when I answered. "My

*(Continued on page 2)*



Dr. Temple Grandin

want to know how to schedule training at your agency, or how to request an Intensive Technical Assistance for someone you support? Log on to our website at [www.hcqu.org](http://www.hcqu.org) and click on the “Ask the HCQU” link. Just fill out your contact information so that we can reach you with an answer and ask away! It’s that easy! Our helpful staff is waiting to hear from you! So go ahead...

### ASK THE HCQU!

[www.hcqu.org](http://www.hcqu.org)

Ask the HCQU

plane arrived, but they’re not letting us off because of the storm.” It was Dr. Grandin and she sounded exactly like I’d heard her on her video lectures. She had information and she communicated it without fanfare. About 40 minutes later, I saw her walking purposefully along the corridor past the security gate in her characteristic cowgirl fashion. I held up my office-made sign, “CHC DR. GRANDIN” so that she would easily see me. It went very smoothly. I helped with her bags and then we both purposefully made our way to the Colombo car. Dr. Grandin didn’t really notice the car or the fact that I was stuttering a bit. In between cell phone calls and checking her paper calendar awash with black ink, she shared personal stories from anecdotes about a friend who put tranquilizers in her husband’s coffee to advice on how best to treat Meniere’s disease. Our conversation continued over



Mary Nau & Dr. Temple Grandin

dinner. By the end of our visit, I mentioned to her that I felt a bit intimidated before meeting her and I appreciated that she was so approachable. She said, in that matter-of-fact way of hers, “Well, I don’t want to be stuck up, you know.”

On stage the next day, Dr. Grandin delivered another worthy lecture to

a packed crowd. There was no incongruity from the person I’d met the day before and the person she was on stage. In a world where “star” means make-believe, it was refreshing to witness true authenticity. No translation required.

Please treat yourself to a magnificent lecture on Autism. Enter the following into your web browser and benefit from a Dr. Grandin lecture very similar to what she delivered for us in Butler on July 22<sup>nd</sup>: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgEAhMEgGOQ>. We’re confident you will find the information quite practical.

## New Community Medical Resources

By: Natalie Symons, RN; Clinical Services Coordinator

Most of us dread going to the emergency room for a cough or cold that just won’t go away with over-the-counter medications. The wait alone is usually long and tedious and I always wonder what else I am being exposed to just by sitting there with all the other sick people. For those we support, waiting in the ER can be even worse and cause a tremendous amount of anxiety. There are some new alternatives in the community that just may be able to prevent a trip to the ER.

Walgreens has introduced the “Take Care Clinics”. They are located inside participating Walgreens and are staffed with Nurse Practitioners. They treat ear infections, rashes, sprains, and will administer vaccines among other things. They accept most insurances including Medicaid/Access, Aetna, HealthAmerica/Health Assurance, and High Mark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. If you don’t have insurance, most visits cost between \$59 to \$74. They are open Monday-Friday, 8AM to 7:30PM, Saturday and Sunday from 9:30AM to 5PM. For more information about “Take Care Clinics” call 1-866-Take-Care (1-866-825-3227).



Med Express Urgent Care also has sites in Center Township and Mars, PA, that are walk-in clinics offering medical treatment to all ages for illness and injury. Medical Doctors are available to treat illnesses, injuries, take x-rays, and administer IV fluids. Most insurances are accepted and they are open from 9AM to 9PM everyday. For more information about Med Express Urgent Care, see their website at [www.greatcarefast.com](http://www.greatcarefast.com).

# H1N1 Flu

By: Carol Oslosky, RN; HSC



Don't think the H1N1 flu (previously called the Swine flu) is past history. There have been fewer cases throughout the summer, but the experts expect to see an increase as the flu season approaches. Flu season usually begins in October and peaks in February, but that is often unpredictable.

H1N1 flu has been a concern because, unlike the seasonal flu there is limited immunity to it. The CDC announced that vaccines are expected to be available in October.

Because of the limited supply of vaccines, the CDC recommends that the first doses go to priority groups such as pregnant women, those who live or care for babies under six months, children six months to four years, and health care workers. It is believed that those over 60 may have some immunity. It is important to understand that the H1N1 vaccine does not protect you from the seasonal flu. It will require another vaccine.

To protect yourself from any flu and avoid spreading it to others:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, or cough into your elbow. Throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Wash hands thoroughly and

frequently. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are effective against the flu.

- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose. By doing that you can pick up and/or spread germs.
- If you get sick--stay home and limit contact with others.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.
- CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone; expect to get medical care or other necessities.

The signs and symptoms of the H1N1 flu are like any other seasonal flu--fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, stuffy nose, chills, and fatigue. With this flu sometimes vomiting and diarrhea also occur.

Antibiotics are not effective against the flu. There are two antivirals that may be prescribed but must be started within 48 hours from the onset of the flu symptoms. They are Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Zanamivir (Relenza) and must be prescribed by a physician.



In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention

include difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, inability to keep fluids down (severe or persistent vomiting) and flu symptoms that improve but return with fever and worsening cough.

For additional and updated information on H1N1 flu, contact Community Health Connections at [www.hcqu.org](http://www.hcqu.org) or call us at (724) 283-0990.

## H1N1 Statistics

Do you know how many cases of H1N1 flu there are in your county? Community Health Connections has the latest statistics for the nine counties that we serve. (As of October 7th.)

* Armstrong	3
* Beaver	13
* Butler	27
* Clarion	4
* Crawford	15
* Indiana	8
* Lawrence	19
* Mercer	13
* Venango	1

There has been one death in these counties. Allegheny County has 369 cases. The total confirmed cases for PA is 2,862 with 14 deaths.

*\*Information obtained from CDC website.*

# Obesity and Healthcare Costs

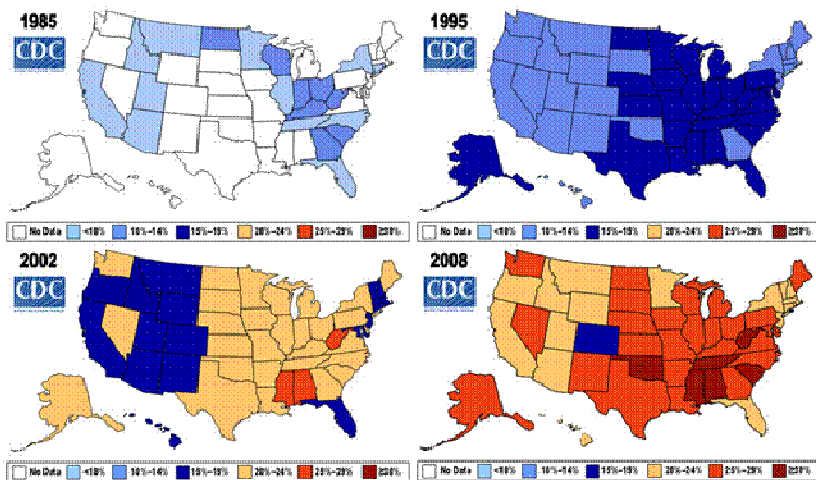
By: Christina Irwin, RN; HSC

## Obesity Is On The Rise

### Over Half Of The United States Population Is Obese!

The news covers it daily, but what does that really mean? What are the consequences of such lifestyle choices?

Obesity is considered a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. BMI is calculated by a person's weight and height. The BMI is an indicator of body fatness and risk for health problems. Obesity can have a negative impact on a person's health, lifestyle, and well being. By looking at the maps of the United States for 1995 to 2008, you can see the change that is occurring.



All states have seen a significant increase in BMI in the past 23 years. The state of Pennsylvania now has a population that is 27.7 percent obese, which means that approximately 1 of every 4 people in Pennsylvania has too much weight on their body.

Health insurance companies are extremely concerned about these rates because obesity puts people at an

increased risk for many diseases and health conditions. These include hypertension,

type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Obesity is even shown to be an underlying cause of complications in individuals who contract H1N1.

The estimated direct and indirect costs of obesity and being overweight in the US are \$117 Billion and rising rapidly, along with being the cause of approximately 400,000 deaths. These figures are causing a lot of concern among companies who also have to help pay the medical bills. Profits are being eaten up daily and many

companies are unable to keep up. The state of Alabama is trying to get back some of these costs by pushing individuals to make changes.

They feel a \$25 monthly fee will help someone make changes in their lifestyle that can lead to a healthier, more productive person. Individuals will have one year to show they are making progress. This will be shown through health screenings that monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and BMI. Some insurance companies are also trying to offer reductions on life

#### Medical Problems related to excess body fat:

- Insulin resistance
- Type 2 diabetes
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Sleep apnea
- Gallbladder disease
- Gout (pain and stiffness in the joints)
- Osteoarthritis
- Colorectal and prostate cancer in men
- Endometrial, breast and gallbladder cancer in women
- Infertility
- Depression
- Complications from pregnancy
- Hormone abnormalities

\*\*List taken from: <http://ph.state.al.us/chs/HealthStatistics/Reports/obesity%20fact%20sheet.PDF>

insurance to employees that are at their proper BMI for their age and weight.

If we can all begin to make one change a day, there could be a huge difference for everyone in our health and in our pockets. The cost for health insurance isn't just coming out of your employers pocket--more and more is being deducted from your pay. This is now a concern for the employer and employee. We need to work together to find a way to reduce health care costs.

## HCQU Happenings



### “Aspergers From A Person Not Just A Textbook”

**Presented by:** Robyn Steward

**Date:** October 29, 2009

**Time:** 10AM - 12PM

**Location:** The CDC - Butler, PA

**\*\*Registration for this event is full. If you are interested in attending, please call the HCQU at (724) 283-**

**0990; we would be happy to add your name to the waiting list.\*\***



### Dr. Peter Bulova

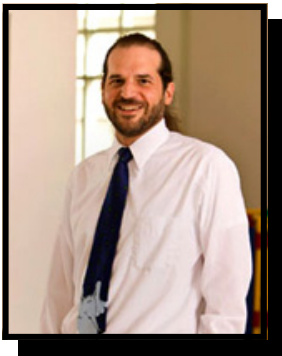
**Topic:** Down Syndrome

**Date:** December 8, 2009

**Time:** 9AM - 11AM

**Location:** The Atrium—  
Prospect, PA

To register for any of the trainings listed here or for a complete list of the Fall 2009 Syllabus classes, please visit our website at [www.hcqu.org](http://www.hcqu.org).



### Self-Injurious Behaviors

**Presented by:** Dr. Gregory Cherpes

**Cherpes**

**Date:** December 3, 2009

**Time:** 1PM - 3PM

**Location:** The CDC - Butler, PA



Please look for our handwashing insert in this issue of Healthy Connections.

## Wellness is Everyone's Game

Lark Enterprises in conjunction with former four time Superbowl winner and Pittsburgh Steeler, Jon Kolb, have recognized that there is a health crisis in the ID/DD community and they have created a solution. They have joined forces to develop a core strength building program for people with ID/DD. The 50 minute DVD teaching module is to be used by staff to assist in improving quality of life and increasing wellness for those they support. Mr. Kolb used his many years of experience as an Exercise Physiologist in developing a program that can be used in Residential, Vocational, and Educational Facilities as well as community programs such as the YMCA's and fitness centers, or even in home settings. Not only are employees of Lark Enterprises featured in the DVD, they are also responsible for receiving and shipping the orders. If you would like more information about *Tackling Wellness*, please call (724) 658-5676 or email at [Wellness@Larkent.org](mailto:Wellness@Larkent.org).

If you have a product or service that you would like highlighted in an upcoming issue, please give us a call or



Jon Kolb with Lark Enterprises for *Tackle Wellness*

## Ten Ways To Be Med Wise

By: Margie Fend, RN; HSC

There are more than 100,000 over-the-counter (OTC) drugs that you can buy without a prescription that all have one thing in common--they are serious medicines that need to be taken with care. That is why it's important to be Med wise every time you buy and use an OTC drug. Here are ten simple ways to get the most from your OTC medicine.

1. Reading the label--all of it. Reading the label will help you decide if you have selected the right product for your symptoms, understand the dosing instructions, and are aware of any warnings that may apply to you.



2. Look for an OTC medicine that will only treat the symptoms you have. The formulations of OTC drugs are very specific and should not be mixed and matched.



3. Know what to avoid while taking an OTC medicine. Like prescription medications, some OTC drugs can cause side effects or reactions. Read the label to see what to avoid while you are taking an OTC drug.

4. When in doubt, ask before you buy or use an OTC medicine. Taking an OTC medicine safely is too important for guess-work. If any questions, ask your pharmacist or doctor.



5. Take the medicine exactly as stated on the label. Only take the recommended amount and at the exact intervals stated on the label. When it comes to OTC medicines, more is not better! Taking too much of a nonprescription medicine can be harmful.



6. Use extra caution when taking more than one OTC drug product at a time. Many OTC medicines contain the same active ingredients, which means you may be getting more than the recommended dose without even knowing it. Always compare active ingredients before taking more than one OTC medicine at the same time.
7. Don't combine prescription medicines and OTC drugs without

talking to your doctor first. Sometimes combining drugs can cause adverse reactions or one drug can interfere with the other drug's effectiveness. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist to play it safe.



8. Make sure that each of your doctors has a list of all the medicines you are taking. This includes not only prescription medicines, but also any OTC drugs and dietary supplements that you may be taking.
9. Always use proper dosing methods that are formulated for age and weight when using OTC medicines.
10. Don't use OTC medicines after their expiration date. Always check expiration date before using OTC medicines.



**Special thanks to Marilyn at DFS and Julie the pharmacist from the Medicine Shoppe for their time and gracious help with this article. It was a pleasure to work with both of you!!**

## Featured Resource



Arguments over government funded health care versus private health care continue to rage. One thing that can't be argued is the ever rising cost of insurance. It used to be that everyone paid the same co-pays, deductibles, and costs. Now, some insurance companies are basing what you pay on your over all health status and habits. Community Health Connections is offering classes in smoking cessation to help you take control of your health and health care costs. We are offering eight one hour classes that can be brought to your agency for free. Contact us today to schedule classes. If you would like free copies of the poster pictured at left, please feel free to call or email us with your request. We'll be sure to send your posters promptly.

## Anal Cancer

By: Natalie Symons, RN; Clinical Services Coordinator

One of the most famous pictures, one of the most famous faces, ones of the least known cancers--Anal Cancer.

Anal cancer is diagnosed in about 5,000 people per year. According to the American Cancer Society, 85 percent of anal cancers are associated with persistent infection with a sexually transmitted virus. Anal infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) is a major risk factor for the cancer. Although there is a vaccine for HPV to prevent cervical cancer, it is not currently used to prevent anal cancer.

According to both the American Cancer Society and National Cancer Institute, other risk factors for anal cancer include being over 50 years old, having many sexual partners, having receptive anal intercourse, having a weakened immune system, frequent anal redness and soreness, and being a smoker. Signs of anal cancer can include, pain or pressure in the anal area, unusual discharge or bleeding from the anus, lumps, itching, and a change in bowel habits.

A study done by Sobsey concluded that more than 90 percent of people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual abuse sometime in their life. This fact would indicate that people with developmental disabilities are not to be excluded from the risk factors of developing anal cancer. Also many people with disabilities lack friendships and relationships and are misguided by thinking that having sex will ensure they are liked by others. This could also be considered a high-risk behavior.

If you are supporting someone that is a non-traditional communicator and is exhibiting signs like rectal digging, fecal smearing, or behavioral changes, you may want to consider consulting with the physician. Be sure to let the physician know that there is a difference in behavior. If you are supporting someone that has been sexually abused or has had multiple partners, encourage them to share this with their physician. The earlier that anal cancer is detected, the greater the survival rate. For more information about cancer go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or [www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org).



*Farrah Fawcett died of anal cancer in July 2009.*

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# COMMUNITY HEALTH

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## A Note From The Director

*Mary A. Nau*

Dear Valued Readers,

Thom Gressman and Christina Chamberlain of TRCIL set out a wide array of assistive devices that stretched across a 10-foot span of tables. From devices that can tell you what color clothing you're wearing to others that can transform a whisper into a loud, clear-as-a-bell voice and yet others that transform your computer into a sophisticated 2-way interpreter. Assistive Technology is just one piece of TRCIL's business and passion. What matters to them most is that those with limited financial resources who can benefit from assistive technology, or who can benefit from even the simplest durable medical equipment like walkers, tub rails, wheelchairs, get the help they need. TRCIL even will arrange for a device demonstration so a person can test a variety of items to see which works best for his/her individual needs. To learn more about these services and so much more, visit the TRCIL website at [www.trcil.org](http://www.trcil.org). You may find just the right thing to help those you serve open a door to a new level of freedom and independence.

