

BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN



DEAR NEIGHBORS,

May is a beautiful time of year in Baltimore, and in this issue, we encourage you to get out and enjoy the spring weather. This month, we say goodbye to Dr. May Maw and Mamadou Sy. May has served as our data manager in the Brancati Center since 2018 and has really contributed to our success; this is a bittersweet farewell, but we truly wish her all the best and know that she won't be a stranger. Mamadou Sy joined us this year while he was completing his Master's in Health Behavior and Society at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. He really made an impression with his hard work and his welcoming spirit; we know he will do great things in his Ph.D. We do want to remind you that COVID-19 is still with us, and many of you are eligible for a second bivalent booster. Finally, let's take a moment to remember that issues with mental health affect our community, even if they're not obvious. Be sure to extend a helping hand and support to all of your loved ones. As always, please let us know what you'd like to see in the next issue of the Bulletin.

-The Brancati Center Team

COVID CORNER

Although the number of COVID-19 cases decreased, the COVID-19 virus is still out there. It continues to be a threat, especially for those who are unvaccinated and those who are immunocompromised. As we continue to adapt to life after the end of the national COVID-19 emergency, we must take steps to protect ourselves and our loved ones. Here are the latest CDC recommendations:

- If you're 65 years or older, you are eligible for a second COVID-19 booster shot. The time between your last vaccine and the new one should be at least 4 months
- If you are immunocompromised, you are eligible for a second COVID-19 booster. The time between your last vaccine and the new one should be at least 2 months
- If you are not vaccinated yet, it's not too late to get up to date on your vaccine

For now, the COVID-19 vaccines are free and recommended to anyone 6 months and above.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Mental health is a major public health problem in the US. Roughly one in five American adults is affected by a mental illness. Unfortunately, young people are not spared from it, as one in every five young individuals experiences a severely debilitating mental illness at some stage in their life.

What is it?

Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social state, influencing our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It plays a significant role in our ability to manage stress, form relationships, and make positive decisions.

Who is at risk?

Everybody is at risk throughout all stages of life, including childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The risk is increased by:

- Experience of trauma or abuse (child abuse, violence, or sexual assault).
- Experiences associated with chronic medical conditions like cancer or diabetes.
- Substance abuse involving alcohol or drugs.
- Feelings of loneliness or isolation.

How to prevent it?

- Practice self-care by prioritizing activities that promote emotional well-being, relaxation, and stress reduction
- Eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and prioritize adequate sleep
- Stay connected with your loved ones (family, friends, community)
- Avoid excessive alcohol or drug use
- Seek professional help if you experience persistent symptoms of mental illness





Brancati Departures

Two members of the Brancati Center team will be leaving the Brancati Center. We would like to thank them for their passion and commitment to improving the health of the communities we serve. Please join us in wishing them well in the next phase of their careers!

May Maw, Sr. Research Data Analyst, joined the Brancati Center in March 2018. She has been responsible for all data related tasks for the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), including creating and managing REDCap databases, data analysis, and reporting to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Her responsibilities grew to include data support for multiple Brancati Center studies, including the FEED Study and the DECIDE Diabetes Self-Management Program. Her passion and attention to detail has played a vital role in securing CDC recognition for our DPPs. May has a medical degree from the University of Medicine in Mandalay, Myanmar, and will begin her clinical residency program in internal medicine at the University of Maryland Capital Region Health in June.

Mamadou Sy is a Master of Science in Public Health, Education and Health Communication student at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He joined the Brancati Center in June 2022 as a Graduate Research Assistant. He was instrumental in obtaining funding from the Baltimore City Health Department to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in East Baltimore neighborhoods. He has worked closely with our community partners to implement vaccine education strategies and improve vaccination rates. As a result of his commitment, he was the 2023 recipient of the Melvin B. Tuggle East Baltimore Community Excellence Award. Mamadou will be leaving Johns Hopkins to pursue his Ph.D. at George Mason University.

The Sydney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center Education Sessions

Join our Webinar:

Cervical Cancer: What You
Need to Know

June 20, 2023
at 6:00 pm
**REGISTER
HERE**



Spring into Summer!

Participants in the Diabetes Prevention Program are springing into summer.

See below for examples of how they an increase healthy behaviors as the weather warms up:

- Taking a walk with a loved one
- Flying a kite
- Dancing in the rain
- Planting a garden
- Visiting a farmer's market – get some activity and healthy food!
- Taking a walk to watch the sunset
- Making a healthy dessert with spring/summer fruit
- Going roller skating
- Finishing one of those home projects

Spring is a time that you can spend more time outdoors and shake up your usual routines. Take a picture of yourself doing one of these healthy activities and share it with a loved one in your community. Share with us your creative ways to get healthier and use these same strategies year-round!

Baltimore's AFRAM Festival is back!

Mayor Brandon M. Scott announced the return of the AFRAM Festival! The event celebrates African American heritage and culture in Baltimore City. It will take place at Druid Hill Park on June 17 and June 18, from 12:00 noon to 9:00 pm. Join Baltimoreans in this free event featuring local talents and artists. Find more information about this event [here](#).

Upcoming Community Events

June 3rd at 11:00 am: Shiloh AME Church Community Health Fair

June 18th at 11:30 am: Walk with a Doc (Dr. Nisa Maruthur), Lake Montebello