

# BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN



## DEAR NEIGHBORS,

Happy fall everyone! In this issue of the Brancati Center Bulletin we review the latest on COVID vaccination recommendations. As COVID cases are rising again and we enter colder months, we must all ensure we are fully protected against COVID and other respiratory infections such as the flu by getting updated vaccines this fall. If you are an older individual or immunocompromised, you are also eligible to receive the RSV vaccine. We also want to make you aware of the availability of over-the-counter Narcan (naloxone), which is a medication to reverse opioid overdose. Residents of Baltimore City who accrued water bill debt during the COVID pandemic may be eligible to receive debt relief through the Mayor's Office and the Department of Public Works (DPW). Finally, we discuss the importance of transplantation and organ donation.

-The Brancati Center Team

## COVID CORNER

The CDC just announced a new recommendation that all individuals 6 months or older receive 1 updated COVID-19 vaccine (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) this fall regardless of whether they received the original COVID-19 vaccine.

Make sure you're UP-TO-DATE with your vaccine:

- Children who are younger than 6 years old should get recommendations on vaccination from their pediatricians.
- People aged 65 years and older may receive 1 additional COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months after receiving the 1st updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- People who have weakened immune systems (moderately or severely immunocompromised) may receive 1 additional COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months after receiving the 1st updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Visit the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov) for updated information on COVID-19 vaccination.

## TRANSPLANTATION AND ORGAN DONATION

More than 100,000 Americans are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant, and nearly 60% of people on the national transplant waiting list are from multicultural communities.

### What is organ transplantation?

A transplant is a surgical operation to give a functioning human organ to someone whose organ has stopped working or is close to failing. In some cases, a living person can donate all or part of a functioning organ. In other instances, the donor would be someone who has recently passed away.

### Who can become an organ donor?

People of all ages can become an organ donor, and donors are needed from all races and ethnic groups. Organs and tissue that can be donated include heart, kidneys, lungs, pancreas, liver, intestines, corneas, skin, etc. Your medical history will determine what organs and tissue can be donated.

### How can you learn more about transplantation and donation?

There are several organizations and groups working to increase education about transplantation and organ donation. Resources from the United Network for Organ Sharing may be found here: <https://unos.org/transplant/>. Educational videos from the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program may be found here: <http://www.natlmottep.org/>.





## Spotlight:

### NALOXONE AVAILABLE OVER THE COUNTER

In March 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of nonprescription naloxone. Naloxone is commonly known as the brand name Narcan, and it is now available to be purchased over the counter (without a prescription) in the 4 milligram (4mg) dose nasal spray. Anyone can get naloxone over the counter without a prescription, certification or training.

#### What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a medication that helps to reverse the effects of opioid toxicity or overdose. Opioids are a class of drugs often prescribed for pain relief or anesthesia, and may include medications such as Vicodin, Percocet and Norco. There are also illicit opioid drugs, such as heroin or illicitly manufactured fentanyl. These opioid drugs may slow down someone's breathing to the point that they stop breathing, and Naloxone has therefore been used by healthcare and emergency care providers for years to reverse this potentially lethal drug effect.

#### Who should consider keeping naloxone on hand?

Anyone who is concerned about the risk of an opioid overdose should have naloxone readily available. This includes individuals who use prescription or illicit opioids, friends, family members, caregivers or concerned members of the public.

#### How much does nonprescription naloxone cost?

The out-of-pocket cost of nonprescription Narcan is \$44.99 at most retail locations, however many insurance plans and Maryland Medicaid cover Narcan, making it more affordable or free of cost. Overdose Response Programs (ORP) also provide Narcan free of charge. You can locate the nearest ORP to you by using the ORP map on Maryland.gov - <https://health.maryland.gov/pha/NALOXONE/Pages/Approved-Entities.aspx>.

You can learn more about nonprescription Narcan at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Website <https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/medications-counseling-related-conditions/naloxone/faqs>.



### CDC DPP RECOGNITION

We are proud to announce that the Brancati Center's in-person Diabetes Prevention Programs have achieved full plus recognition (five years) by the Centers for Disease Control. More than 60% of our participants met outcomes and we surpassed the retention goal by more than 200%. Thank you to our participants, partners, and the Brancati Center DPP team for all of their hard work and passion for improving the health of our communities!

### WATER BILL DEBT RELIEF

On August 24th, 2023, Mayor Brandon M. Scott and Department of Public Works (DPW) Interim Director Richard J. Luna announced that 75,811 Baltimore City and County residents who accumulated water bill debt during the COVID-19 pandemic will receive debt relief on their upcoming water bills. The DPW is mailing letters to notify eligible City and County residents who will receive the debt relief credit. Residents will receive an average credit of \$209 of debt relief per customer. The grant distribution has been prioritized for City and County customers currently participating in financial water assistance programs, Water4All, and the State Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). The remaining funds will be distributed among residents who live in single-family low-income housing and those who live in a Qualified Census Tract zip code.

To explore how you may be able to receive water bill assistance, you can visit the DPW's Water Affordability Portal at <https://baltimore.promise-pay.com/>.

### The Sydney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center Education Sessions

#### Join the Webinar:

What You Need to  
Know About Breast  
Cancer

October 17, 2023  
at 6:00 pm

REGISTER  
HERE

