

BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN



DEAR NEIGHBORS,

Happy new year! The beginning of each year presents an opportunity to discuss new year's resolutions, particularly as they relate to improving our health. In this first issue of 2024 we discuss healthy habit formation as many of us are getting motivated about making positive changes in our day-to-day living. We want to emphasize the importance of continuing to maintain hand hygiene, masking, and vaccination to protect ourselves and those around us from serious respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, the flu and RSV infections, which are on the rise. We are excited to continue to be part of your health journey in 2024!

-The Brancati Center Team

COVID CORNER

The number of COVID infections and hospitalizations are rising in Baltimore.

<https://health.maryland.gov/covid/Pages/Maryland-COVID-19-Data.aspx>

Given the ongoing risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death related to COVID infection for older and immune compromised individuals, it is important to wear a mask if you are experiencing respiratory symptoms (i.e. cough, runny nose, fever) and avoid exposing others to infection. The best way to stay protected from COVID-19 infection is to get vaccinated and practice good hand hygiene.

There are 3 different vaccines currently FDA approved and available in the United States.

- Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines
- Novavax COVID-19 vaccine

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [Centers for Disease Control website](#).

You can use the locator tool at vaccines.gov to find a location near you where COVID vaccines are being administered.

FORMING HEALTHY HABITS

The new year is a time when many of us like to set resolutions or create new healthy habits, so here is our take on healthy habit formation.

How can creating a new habit improve our health?

While we often hear advice to eat more vegetables or exercise regularly to improve our health, we should be consistent with these behaviors to see health benefits. For example, if we create a habit of walking for 10 minutes after dinner each day, we are more likely to improve our fitness level than if we walked only occasionally. Additionally, because habits are behaviors that become a natural part of our routine, they are difficult to break. That means it is easier to maintain the healthy habit once it is formed.

We created a guide for how to successfully develop a healthy habit:

- 1. Decide on a specific goal you would like to achieve for your health.** An example goal: to improve blood sugar.
- 2. Pick a simple action that will help you reach your goal which you can do daily.** Example action: replace 1 sweet tea per day with a glass of water.
- 3. Plan when and where you will do the chosen action.** Try to choose a time and place that you will encounter every day of the week so that the action can be more consistent. Example time and place: drink a glass of water instead of sweet tea before breakfast every morning.
- 4. Do the action at your specified time and place.** Keeping a visual cue of your action, such as a cup for water at your breakfast table, will help you remember it.
- 5. Give yourself at least 8 weeks for this action to feel more like a habit (something you do without having to think about it).**

Congratulations, you have made a healthy habit!





Spotlight:

Smoking Cessation Study in Public Housing – C-Raven

C-Raven is an interactive computer-delivered counseling intervention for tobacco smoking cessation. In 2023, the Brancati Center received funding from the Cigarette Restitution Fund to: 1) conduct focus groups to develop a shared decision-making tool for low-dose chest CT to screen for lung cancer, and 2) conduct a pilot study of the virtual C-Raven program among people living in public housing with the addition of community health worker intervention. The study is being led by Drs. Jeanne Clark and Alejandra Ellison-Barnes. We are excited to deliver this important intervention to address smoking cessation rates in public housing.

Brancati Center Annual Report

Please visit our website to read our 2022-2023 annual report. We celebrated continued success and growth with new funding and health programming. Thank you for all of your support as we work together to improve the health of our communities!

The Sydney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center Education Sessions

Join our Webinar:

Cancer Risk Reduction: What You Need to Know

February 20, 2024
at 6:00 pm

REGISTER
HERE



Diabetes Prevention Program Recruitment

Do you know your risk for prediabetes? Our Diabetes Prevention Program offers education and support to help improve your health.

What is it? A yearlong lifestyle change program that lowers the risk of diabetes

Who can join? Adults with prediabetes and an elevated body mass index (BMI)

Does my insurance cover it? The Brancati Center is contracted with the following insurance providers: Medicare, Priority Partners, Jai, Maryland Physicians Care, Wellpoint, and the Johns Hopkins Employee Health Plan.

How do I learn more? Visit our website: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/populationhealth/dpep/diabetes-prevention-program/>

We will be offering both in-person and remote options in 2024. If you are interested in joining the program, please call us at 410-614-2701.



Upcoming Community Events

February 10th at 10am: B'More Healthy Expo, Baltimore Convention Center

February 25th at 12:00pm: Family and Friends Day at Liberty Grace Church of God