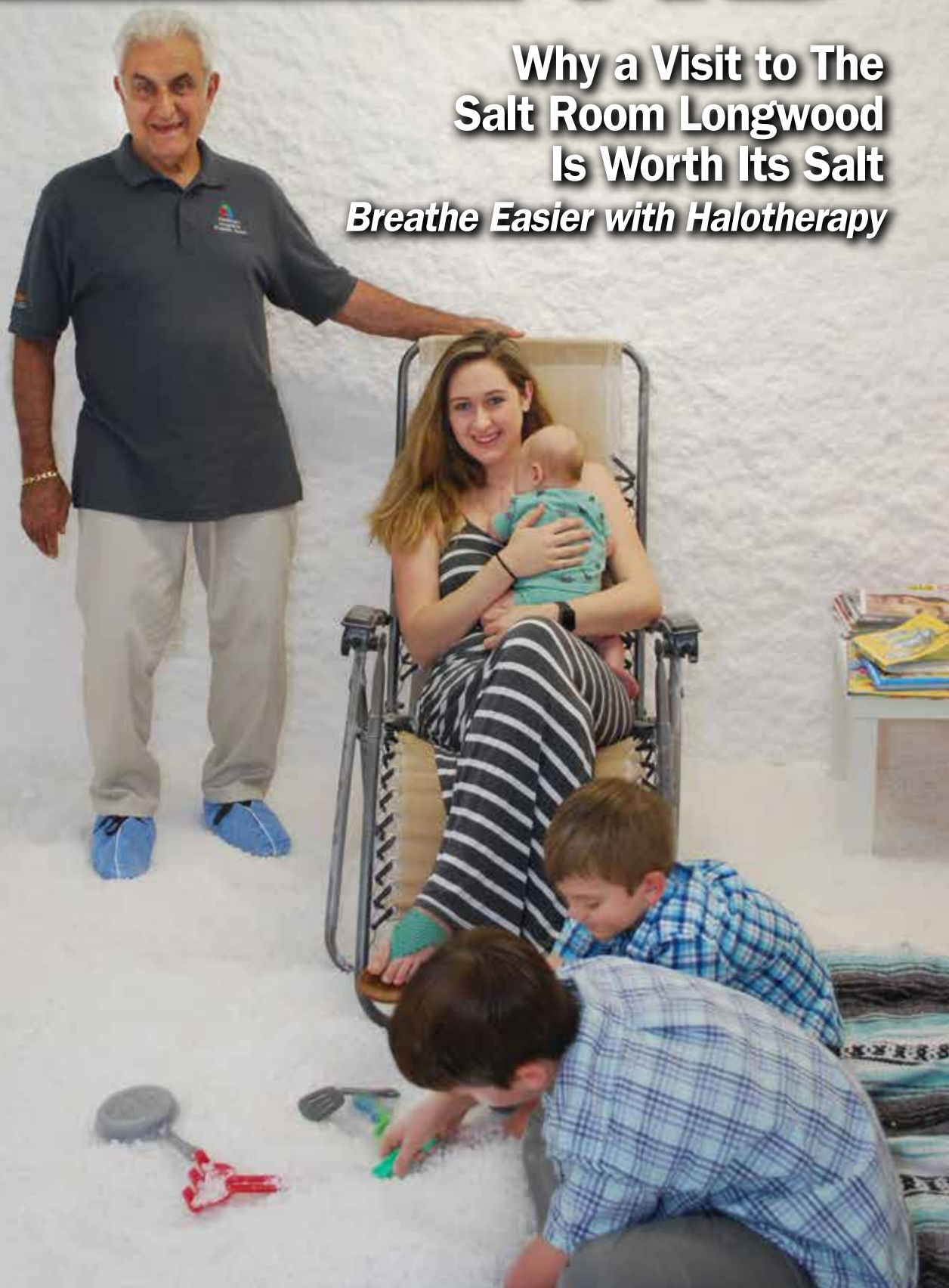


FloridaMD

JUNE/JULY 2019 • COVERING THE I-4 CORRIDOR

**Why a Visit to The
Salt Room Longwood
Is Worth Its Salt**
Breathe Easier with Halotherapy



- **MEDICAL ARTICLES**
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AND OFFICES**
- **MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS—
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I am pleased to bring you another issue of *Florida MD*. If you think about it, breathing is something we take for granted. We don't consciously think about every breath we take. This is not the case for people with cystic fibrosis who struggle for each breath. The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation works to assure the development of the means to cure and control cystic fibrosis (CF) and to improve the quality of life for those with the disease. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization and their mission to better the lives of millions of Americans.

Best regards,



Donald B. Rauhofer
Publisher



Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is Making an Impact

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is the world's leader in the search for a cure for cystic fibrosis. The Foundation funds more CF research than any other organization, and nearly every CF drug available today was made possible because of Foundation support. Based in Bethesda, Md., the Foundation also supports and accredits a national care center network that has been recognized by the National Institutes of Health as a model of care for a chronic disease.

But what is cystic fibrosis? The genetic disease affects the lungs and digestive systems of tens of thousands of young people. One in 31 Americans, more than 10 million people, is an unknowing, symptomless "carrier" of the defective CF gene. Each time two carriers conceive, there is a 25 percent chance that they will have a child with cystic fibrosis.

Through its unique venture philanthropy approach, the Foundation funds promising CF research with leading academic researchers and pharmaceutical companies to accelerate treatment for this rare disease. The result is a robust pipeline of potential therapies, in various stages of development and testing, aimed at targeting the disease from every angle. Three drugs that treat the underlying cause of the disease have been approved in the last five years, with another treatment expected in 2020. The science behind these therapies has opened new doors to research and development that may eventually lead to a cure for all people with CF.

Although the outlook for a child born with CF today has improved tremendously over the years, it is not good enough. That's why the CF Foundation holds fundraising events throughout the year to make sure momentum in CF research continues. Every dollar raised brings us closer to our ultimate goal of a cure for CF.

For information and upcoming events visit Orlando.cff.org. The Central Florida office of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is located at 1850 Lee Rd, Suite 111, Winter Park, FL 32789.

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We can all attest to the healing properties of salt. You may have gargled with the table variety to ease the rawness of an achy, scratchy, sore throat, or maybe you have taken the plunge into a salt-filled bath to soothe your stinging muscles after a strenuous day or vigorous workout. The Salt Room® Longwood, part of a national salt room movement, has taken the healing properties of salt to the next level.

What is halotherapy? In January 2018, the Cannizzaro Integrative Pediatric Center (CIPC) became the newest location for The Salt Room® in Central Florida. Though CIPC specializes in treating children, the salt room is available to and beneficial for clients of all ages. Salt therapy is performed in this special spa-like room with salt-coated walls and floor, called a halochamber (from the Greek halos, meaning salt). Pharmaceutical-grade salt is pulverized into microscopic particles and pushed into the room by a halogenerator. This is why it is also called halotherapy.

During a 45-minute halotherapy session, salt particles enter the lungs and nasal passages, which has been reported to accelerate mucus clearance and improve lung function, while killing harmful bacteria and soothing the respiratory system. According to CIPC, this 100% drug-free treatment is effective, has no side-effects, and may lessen the need for prescription antihistamines, inhalers, and nasal sprays.

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PHOTO: DONALD RAUHOFFER / FLORIDA MD

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Why a Visit to The Salt Room Longwood Is Worth Its Salt – *Breathe Easier with Halotherapy*

By Pamela Ruben

We can all attest to the healing properties of salt. You may have gargled with the table variety to ease the rawness of an achy, scratchy, sore throat, or maybe you have taken the plunge into a salt-filled bath to soothe your stinging muscles after a strenuous day or vigorous workout. The Salt Room® Longwood, part of a national salt room movement, has taken the healing properties of salt to the next level.

WHAT IS HALOTHERAPY?

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As a classically-trained primary care physician who practices functional medicine, Dr. Joseph Cannizzaro, founder of Longwood's Cannizzaro Integrative Pediatric Center since 1981, believes integrative medicine, including halotherapy, can combine conventional and complementary healing modalities to benefit all patients. With a far-flung patient base, from Daytona Beach to Palm Beach Shores, Cannizzaro and his colleagues have created a highly personalized and high-touch healing environment that patients travel to find. It is no coincidence that several of Cannizzaro's patients have referred to him as "the salt of the

Adults relax and kids play while breathing in pulverized salt particles. Salt therapy has been reported to accelerate mucus clearance and improve lung function while killing harmful bacteria and soothing the respiratory system.



PHOTO: DONALD RAUHOFFER / FLORIDA MD

earth.” Practicing for over 40 years, Cannizzaro believes in living life with the same health advice provided to his patients.

Melanie Confusione, RN, pediatric nurse and Practice Administrator of CIPC, shares that Dr. Cannizzaro and his team regularly use the salt room themselves when a respiratory or skin disorder flairs. During allergy season or when she feels a cold coming on, Confusione will come to the office early and “take a breather” in the salt room. Throughout the day, she experiences drainage, which helps relieve her system and clears her passages. Patients may experience the same type of drainage and loosened congestion as the reduction in inflammation allows the body to heal naturally. She comments that another staff member with a child on the autism spectrum will take her son in for the healing and tactile nature of the room. “Her son loves to sit in the soothing environment, which is a safe indoor play space, and feel the salt run between his fingers as his respiratory system is cleared.” She adds that any physicians who call in after reading this article are “welcome to try the soothing, healing, and spa-like benefits for themselves.”

Dr. Cannizzaro notes that he first became aware of halotherapy when a salt room opened in the Orlando area about ten years ago. After researching its history and learning about its healing modalities, he began to refer patients with respiratory and skin disorders. Observing improved rates of recovery and healing, Cannizzaro franchised a salt room from the Orlando location for CIPC, built onsite at his Longwood center two years ago. He notes that the particles of salt in the halochamber are pulverized so small they can enter the alveoli (the smallest respiratory pathways). He comments that the salt room is so safe that they bring newborns in to enhance their breathing and other developing systems.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A PATIENT VISIT THE SALT ROOM?

According to Dr. Cannizzaro, patients with asthma and allergies should visit two to four times per week during high pollen or reactive periods. “This reduces severity and offers prevention. The salt room is complementary to conventional medicine, and patients who use it take less medication and rely less on inhalers.”

He remarks that healthy geriatric patients and patients with COPD and emphysema have found relief in the salt room and are scheduling appointments year-round for maintenance. In-



Joseph Cannizzaro, MD, Orlando pediatrician for almost 40 years, installed a salt room in his practice after observing improved rates of recovery and healing for various respiratory and skin disorders.

PHOTO: DONALD RAUHOFFER / FLORIDA MD

dividual sessions are \$20 and \$45 per session for pediatric and adult clients, respectively; 3-month and 12-month unlimited usage memberships are affordable options for most patients.

WHO CAN USE THE SALT ROOM?

Recently, Melanie Confusione was invited to share the benefits of the salt room on local podcast, *It's All Fine and Danjee*, where hosts Dan & Anjee (Danjee) talk “community, health & wellness, and culture.” <https://www.fineanddanjee.com/podcast/episode/1b8b873d/episode-5-the-salt-room-special-guest-melanie-confusione> (minutes 19.25-32.20)

The RN, with almost twenty years of pediatric experience, discussed the healthful benefits of salt therapy with the interviewers. When asked, “Who can use a salt room?” Confusione shared, “From newborns to geriatrics.” She added, “We have patients ranging from just a few days old to 90 years plus.” Dan asked if patients are ever resistant or skeptical of the treatment. She commented, “Some kids were reserved after seeing the salt-covered room for the first time. When we first opened, it was around Christmas time, and many patients (of all ages) took joy in the snow-like effect of all the white powder.” Unlike snow, she remarks, the fine layer of salt that lands on the skin brushes off easily after the salt therapy session (due to the lack of humidity).

According to Confusione, one of the greatest advantages of having a salt room onsite is that patients can come in right after an appointment. “If patients are uncomfortable, the salt room can lessen their symptoms even before medicinal effects can kick

in. The salt room is very effective with respiratory ‘stuff’. Patients feel relief, if not immediately, then by the end of the day when they start to drain. By the next day, they often report feeling ‘amazing’.” Dr. Cannizzaro also commented that patient compliance is increased when a salt room is in close proximity.

When the podcasters enquired how long the respiratory relief lasts, Confusione noted that, if something is acute, like a respiratory infection, one visit is usually sufficient. With bronchitis, psoriasis, or eczema, the CIPC staff recommends 2-3 visits per week until the infection or condition clears. Then, patients should return for maintenance as needed.

Dan and Anjee share that the overall benefits of the salt room are a balance between traditional and alternative medicines. Confusione comments that a patient with pneumonia will still need prescription meds but can experience pain and symptom relief following a visit to the salt room and begin feeling better before antibiotics take effect. With 45-minute appointments scheduled on the hour, a black light sterilizes the room for 15 minutes between patients, ensuring germs are not passed on. Salt room patients are also given sterile shoe covers to keep the room as clean and germ-free as possible.

Dr. Cannizzaro and his colleagues recommend halotherapy

as a complementary treatment for many breathing and skin ailments. Articles and podcasts on the value of salt rooms and a variety of salt therapies have appeared in *Time* magazine and *The Wall Street Journal*, and on CNN and ABC News. *The New England Journal of Medicine* published a study in 2006 that found the breathing of salt to be an effective complementary treatment for cystic fibrosis.

WHAT ARE THE SECRETS OF SALT THERAPY?

In a *Good Morning America* (GMA) news piece aired in 2016, anchorwoman Kayna Whitworth explored the paths of patients whose lives had changed following salt therapy. Client Dominique Hargreaves (who appeared in the piece) thinks “salt rooms are the world’s best-kept secret.” Hargreaves had tried “everything for a painful, inflammatory skin condition” from which she was constantly itching, until her experience with halotherapy. GMA’s resident expert, Dr. Jennifer Ashton, noted that salt has been used medically through aerosolized nebulizers for years. She reported that the risks of salt therapy are low when used as a complementary therapy, mentioning that she is even willing to try a salt therapy experience. Dr. Norman Edelman, Senior Scientific Advisor to the American Lung Association commented, “We are talking about something that may, based on patient

Salt therapy is performed in a spa-like room with salt-coated walls and floor. It is safe for all ages, from newborns to geriatrics. The Salt Room Longwood serves the Orlando community by appointment.



PHOTO: DONALD RAUHOFFER / FLORIDA MD

reports, improve symptoms of chronic lung diseases of various kinds.” (<https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/salt-room-therapy-work-44429596>) *Good Morning America. American Broadcast Network. ABC, New York. 28 Dec. 2016. Television.*

Like in the GMA report, the strongest support for the Longwood salt room comes from patients, with 87% of those surveyed writing that they plan to return for additional halotherapy. Typical comments reported that patients were breathing more freely, with one satisfied mother stating, “My son looked and felt better after just one session. His cough wasn’t as bad. I felt he could breathe so much better.” Other clients benefitted from the spa-like setting, penning halotherapy as “A relaxing way to support health,” and “Next time, I would like to try (it) for the element of relaxation.” Allergy and eczema patients also reported relief, with comments like, “It really helps with respiratory allergies and even mild eczema.”

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SALT ROOM?

Salt treatment involves lounging in a cozy environment and passively breathing in the particles while listening to soothing music, reading, or just relaxing in a zero-gravity chair. Adults can de-stress. Toys are provided so children can play with the salt in the room, much like sand at the beach. Kids can play, and adults can lounge while reading or resting. Salt therapy is safe for all ages, even infants.

The benefits of salt therapy are wide-ranging, and it has been used to treat patients with a variety of ailments including:

- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Cold/Flu
- Cough (particularly at night or after exercise)
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Dermatitis
- Eczema/Psoriasis
- Ear Infections
- Emphysema
- Multi-Chemical Sensitivity Syndrome
- Pharyngitis
- Respiratory Infections
- Rhinitis/Respiratory Allergies

ARE SALT ROOMS A TREND?

While you may have only heard of salt rooms or halotherapy recently, their history goes back to ancient healers and philosophers, who recommended salt therapy as a way to treat respiratory and breathing ailments. The first modern inquiry into salt therapy came in the 1840’s, when a Polish physician, Dr. Feliks Boczkowski, documented the low rate of respiratory illness in salt mine workers at the Wieliczka Salt Mine. Dr. Boczkowski took note of the robust bronchial health of local salt miners, who didn’t suffer from lung diseases (unlike other types of miners). A natural grotto was carved underground from the original mines. This grotto or salt cave became popular with those suffering from respiratory disorders and is a natural salt room still used as a therapy source. Salt caves, and now salt rooms, have been

frequented in Europe, as one source puts it, “since ‘toga times’.”

HOW ELSE CAN SALT ROOMS IMPROVE OVERALL HEALTH?

If you’ve ever wondered why an oceanside resort is so relaxing, the salt in the air may provide a clue. Dr. Cannizzaro comments, “Salt air from the beach is so therapeutic and beneficial for the skin. People feel better after a day at the beach, much like they feel better after time in the salt room. Many find the peaceful atmosphere as beneficial psychologically as physically.” Salt therapy has been reported to have a relaxing effect on the nervous system. Soft music, dimmed lights, zero-gravity chairs, and the absence of electronic devices for a solid 45 minutes lend to its spa-like atmosphere, and patients find it just as relaxing. The fact that halotherapy reduces stress and promotes an overall feeling of well-being may explain how it helps decrease the inflammatory response of the body and the flare-ups of respiratory and skin conditions.

To find out more information about The Salt Room Longwood or to refer a patient, call Cannizzaro Integrative Pediatric Center at 407-862-1163. Patients can also make direct appointments at www.SaltRoomLongwood.com. ■

SALT THERAPY RELIEVES SYMPTOMS OF:

- Acne
- Allergies
- Asthma
- COPD
- Cold & Flu
- Cough
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Dermatitis
- Ear Infections
- Eczema
- Sinusitis

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Why You Should Train Your Multi-Generational Workforce

By Jennifer Thompson

What does having a multi-generational workforce have to do with marketing your medical practice, creating a positive office culture, and improving the overall patient experience? Everything.

Today's workforce is comprised of a multi-generational collection of people who come together out of a variety of needs and motivations. In today's economy, people are increasingly working past age 60 or even 65, creating generational mixes in the office never seen before; and the characteristics of each generation can vary broadly in terms of:

- Communication and learning styles
- Values and expectations
- Definitions of success
- Interpersonal skills

This multi-generational workforce shift has been influenced by several factors, including increased longevity, advanced medical treatments, higher quality of life, and the need for adequate retirement money.

MULTI-LAYERED CHALLENGES

The assimilation of many different generations under a single practice banner creates significant organizational, managerial, and instructional challenges. Unless these complications are recognized and addressed, gaps between age groups can create obstacles to communication that will impede an organization's long-term success.

- 97% of employees and executives believe that lack of alignment within a team directly impacts the outcome of a task or project
- 86% of employees and executives cite lack of collaboration or ineffective communication for workplace failures

The key to avoiding 1-star reviews is to focus on getting to the root of the problem. Differences in communication styles can impact critical patient-employee interactions, not to mention back-office challenges amongst employees. Understanding the differences between millennial, Gen X, and Baby Boomer patients and employees will allow you to focus on the cause rather than wasting time and money trying to 'market' your way into a more positive reputation.

THE SOLUTION

As a practice manager, you need to understand what makes each generation tick to create a harmonious and efficient working environment to serve patients. Each generation brings incredible value to your office, and it's essential for you to understand how those different generational groups can function together in the workplace and best meet the needs of your multi-generational patients.

Whether it's getting buy-in and engagement from your employees or providing the best quality services to your patients, marketing is now a team sport where everyone on your staff (regardless of when they grew up) can have a significant impact on your long-term success and profitability.

KEY TAKEAWAYS TO CONNECT TO YOUR WORKFORCE AND IMPROVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Today's most successful medical practice managers realize their entire team now plays a role in marketing and managing the practice, including customer service, communication, patient expectations, and reputation management.

Oftentimes, it's the little things you do for your employees that make a huge difference in terms of employee engagement and loyalty, including:

- Special events (with cake!) to celebrate employee birthdays and anniversaries
- Organizing fun activities like a monthly work-time bingo game or scavenger hunt (where employees can win prizes and practice swag!)
- In-person or on-demand training

Having a strategy in place to engage and educate employees is the difference between a 3-star and a 5+-star review. For example, engaging your employees with the right kind of training and professional development programs will help them understand the critical role they play in the overall patient experience and equip them with the knowledge and tools to deliver the goods.

Jennifer Thompson is the President of Insight Marketing Group and Insight Training Solutions and can be reached at 321.228.9686 or jennifer@insightmg.com. ■



Is It Melanoma?

By John "Lucky" Meisenheimer, MD and John Meisenheimer, VII

Probably the most feared word in the dermatology world is "melanoma." The very word brings up the specter of certain death in many people's minds. Everyone has a story of a family member or person they knew that died from melanoma. Yes, there is an abundant volume of truth to melanoma's lousy reputation. Melanomas kill over nine thousand Americans each year. This kill rate is the equivalent to the entire population of key largo dying in one year.

There is good news though. Melanomas are often curable if detected and treated early, and even late-stage melanomas that have metastasized now have treatment options that were not available five years ago. If you consider over 90,000 new cases are diagnosed each year with a death rate of about a tenth of this number, then the majority of folks with the diagnosis survive. Again, the key is early detection.

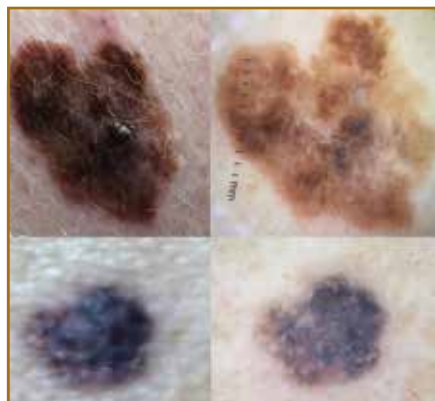
Why are dermatologists so good at picking up melanomas on skin exams while other specialties may struggle? The ABCDEs of melanoma are known not only to physicians but lay people as well. To review, the acronym is Asymmetry, Border, Color, Di-

ameter, and Evolution. But here's the thing, dermatologists don't go through a checklist for each lesion they examine. The reason is that we are using intuitive thinking versus rational thinking. Just as you can intuitively pick your mom out of a group of a hundred women with a quick look, we do the same with melanomas. You can list the features of melanoma just as you can describe characteristics of your mother but picking them out using rational thinking is much more difficult.

Remember that diseases don't read textbooks. Just because it is not black, bleeding or symptomatic does not rule out melanoma.

Below are some photos of various melanomas for your viewing pleasure.

Lucky Meisenheimer, M.D. is a board-certified dermatologist specializing in Mohs Surgery. He is the director of the Meisenheimer Clinic - Dermatology and Mohs Surgery. He is a former chairman of the Division of Dermatology at ORHS.



Melanomas with their dermoscopic images next to them. Notice how more detail of the subsurface structures can be observed under epiluminescence microscopy.

PHOTO: JOHN MEISENHEIMER, VII



Superficial spreading melanoma.

Lentigo Maligna melanoma. These melanomas can grow slowly sometimes taking years before the diagnosis occurs.



PHOTO: JOHN MEISENHEIMER, VII

Nodular melanoma. In some cases, nodular melanomas can grow and metastasize rapidly.



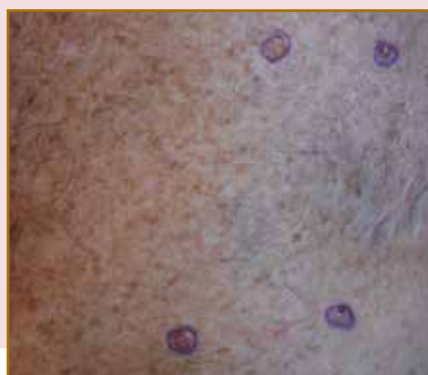
PHOTO: JOHN MEISENHEIMER, VII

Melanoma-in-situ in the scalp. In patients with a history of melanoma, scalp exams should be part of the follow-up screening.



PHOTO: JOHN MEISENHEIMER, VII

PHOTO: JOHN MEISENHEIMER, VII



Metastatic melanoma. Circled areas are localized metastatic lesions near a previous melanoma excision site. Notice that these lesions are not darkly pigmented. Melanoma does not have to be black.

Florida Health Care Legislation 2019

By Julie A. Tyk, JD.

Several weeks have passed since the Florida Legislature ended its 2019 session. More than 3,400 bills were introduced, but fewer than 200 were passed and sent to Gov. Ron DeSantis for his signature. Here's a breakdown of some of the bills that effect healthcare in Florida:

Telehealth—HB 23/SB 1526

The Florida State Legislature passed a telehealth bill providing additional guidelines on the use of telehealth in the Sunshine State. The bill creates section 456.47, Florida Statutes, which establishes standards of practice for telehealth providers, creates a registration process for out-of-state providers, venue requirements and exemptions and introduces commercial reimbursement provisions. This bill also creates the definition of telehealth in Florida law.

If approved by the Governor the bill will take effect July 1, 2019.

Additionally, effective July 1, 2020, the Department shall annually review the amount of any fees collected under section 456.47, Florida Statutes, to determine whether such fees are sufficient for the Department and Boards to implement the section

Office Surgery Centers—SB 732/HB 933

Following the deaths of several patients in cosmetic office surgery centers, the Florida State Legislature passed sweeping legislation. The bill authorizes the Department of Health to register and regulate office surgery centers. The bill requires the Department of Health to issue an emergency order suspending or restricting the registration of certain facilities when the office is found not in compliance with the standards of practice for office surgery. The bill requires the registration of offices in which more than 1,000 cubic centimeters of supernatant fat is removed, level II office surgery, or a level III office surgery. These offices must register with the Department of Health, unless the office is licensed as a facility under Chapter 395, Florida Statutes. Additionally, the bill requires the designation of physicians for the registered office's compliance. The bill permits the inspection, suspension, revocation, and penalty of surgery centers. Additionally, if an office registration is revoked, it allows the Department of Health to deny any owner or operator the ability to register another office for 5 years. The bill also requires an office and physicians practicing at the office to meet certain financial responsibility requirements.

If approved by the Governor, the bill will take effect January 1, 2020.

Health Care Legislation—HB 843/SB 7078

This bill concerns many different areas of health care regulation. The bill includes, but not limited to, provisions related to:

- Establishing the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program to support dentists who practice in public health programs located in certain underserved areas;
- Requiring the Department of Health to establish the Donated

Dental Services Program to provide comprehensive dental care to certain eligible individuals;

- Requiring a hospital to notify a patient's primary care provider within a specified timeframe after the patient's admission;
- Requiring a hospital to inform a patient, upon admission, of the option to request consultation between the hospital's treating physician and the patient's primary care provider or specialist provider;
- Requiring a hospital to notify a patient's primary care provider of the patient's discharge within a specified timeframe after discharge;
- Requiring a hospital to provide specified information and records to the primary care provider within a specified timeframe after completion of the patient's discharge summary;
- Requiring the Agency for Health Care Administration to adopt rules that establish standards related to the delivery of surgical care to children in ambulatory surgical center;
- Specifying that ambulatory surgical centers may provide certain procedures only if authorized by agency rule;
- Requiring a licensed facility, upon placing a patient on observation status, to immediately notify the patient of such status using a specified form; and
- Prohibiting certain health maintenance organizations from employing step-therapy protocols under certain circumstances.

Except as otherwise specified, the bill will take effect July 1, 2019, if approved by the Governor.

Prescription Drug Importation Programs—HB 19/ SB 1528

The legislature directed the Agency for Health Care Administration to begin to explore and create two drug importation programs, the Canadian Drug Importation Program and the International Prescription Drug Importation Program, with the aim of reducing drug costs. The two programs would allow for the importation of federal Food and Drug Administration approved prescription drugs into Florida.

The first program established, the Canadian Prescription Drug Importation Program (CPDI Program), would be controlled by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). The CPDI Program's main focus will be on providing savings and options for specific public programs, including, but not limited to: Medicaid recipients, county health department and free clinic clients, Department of Correction inmates, developmental disability center clients, and certain mental health facility clients.

The other program, to be established by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), and the Department of Health (DOH), is the International Prescription Drug



Importation Program (IPDI Program).

Both programs will be required to adhere to specific bonding requirements and federal product tracing requirements. The programs must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration before they become effective.

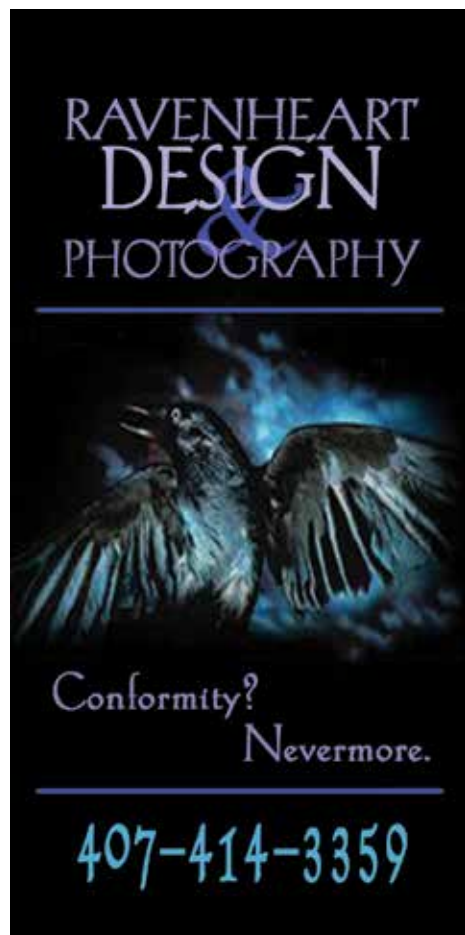
Mental Health – SB 1418

Requires a psychiatrist to disclose patient communications to the extent necessary to warn law enforcement of a threat of serious bodily injury or death made by a patient or client. Requires law enforcement to notify potential victims of the threat and provides that such disclosure of confidential communications may not be the basis of legal action or any civil or criminal liability against the psychiatrist or psychologist.

If approved by the Governor the bill will take effect July 1, 2019.

A medical malpractice claim can have far reaching implications on a physician's medical license. The Health Care Practice Group at Pearson Doyle Mohre & Pastis, LLP is committed to assisting Clients in navigating and defending medical malpractice claims. For more information and assistance, please contact David Doyle and Julie Tyk at Pearson Doyle Mohre & Pastis, LLP.

Julie A. Tyk, JD, is a Partner with Pearson Doyle Mohre & Pastis, LLP. Julie concentrates her practice in medical practice defense litigation, insurance defense litigation and health care law. She has represented physicians, hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, nurses and other health care providers across the state of Florida. She may be contacted by calling (407) 951-8523; jtyk@pdmplaw.com.



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Physicians and Medical Marijuana Certifications

By Michael Patterson, NHA, OTR/L, CEAS



As of June 7th 2019, there are over 300,000 Florida residents who are registered in the Florida Department of Health, Office of Medical Marijuana Use (OMMU) to legally receive Medical Marijuana. Also, there are over 2,300 Physicians who have completed the 2-hour online training required to write Medical Marijuana (MMJ) Certifications for qualifying patients. That may sound like a lot of physicians, but just because a physician completed the MMJ training does not mean they are writing MMJ Certifications. In fact, few FL Physicians advertise that they perform MMJ Certifications.

The numbers of qualifying MMJ patients continue to increase between 3,000-5,000 patients per week, and with experts estimating the MMJ patient population being north of 750,000 upon maturation, Florida will soon become the largest MMJ market in the country!

As physician groups and medical practices look to new sources to increase revenue, MMJ Certifications could be an area to increase the bottom line of the practice, as well as provide quality healthcare to an ever-increasing demographic.

If you are considering writing MMJ Certifications in your medical practice, keep in mind the following recommendations.

1) What are you trying to accomplish? - Your answer to this question will determine how to setup your MMJ Certification business. For example, are you looking to service your current patient population only? Do you want to create an entirely new division of your practice and service as many patients for MMJ Certifications as possible? Or, do you just want to make more money from services that do not require insurance? Your answer to this question will guide you in setting up your business properly.

2) Setup a separate LLC to handle all of your MMJ Certifications- Marijuana is still considered illegal at the federal level. All health insurance companies must follow federal law, and most insurance providers have clauses which state that providers must follow the law. This means that if you perform a MMJ Certification evaluation (recommending an illegal drug) and bill it to the patient's insurance, you have the possibility of getting that money clawed back months or years later by the insurance company. Setup a different company and lease at least one room in your practice to perform all the evaluations (at fair market value). Require patients to pay cash and/or using a separate merchant processing identification. Furthermore, code certain employees to the new MMJ Certification company for running the business.

3) Banking- after speaking at the first ever Cannabis Banking Summit in Pittsburgh last week, banks are looking strongly into the Cannabis/CBD space. If your MD practice is looking to start MMJ Certifications, it is critical to separate your MMJ Certification income from your practice income. (this is easily accomplished by creating a separate LLC and a separate bank account for MMJ certifications). If you do not separate your income for MMJ Certifications, it is very possible for the bank to drop all of your accounts because (in their mind) you are dealing with the Cannabis industry which is still federally illegal (even though you never touch the plant). Nikki Fried, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, lost 2 bank accounts in 2018 for her campaign just because she accepted money from Florida MMJ providers.

4) Determine your fee schedule for evaluations and required follow up re-certification visits- Currently, MMJ Physicians in Florida are charging anywhere from \$150-\$350 for an initial MMJ Certification evaluation and \$75-\$300 for required follow up visits. By law, patients must be recertified every 30 weeks and are not allowed to have more than one MMJ Physician at any time. Therefore, do the math on how many patients you will need to see to break even, bring on more staff, and make a profit.

5) Have more than one certified Physician and staff member to work your MMJ Certification business- When patients find out your practice is writing MMJ Certifications, patients will have a ton of questions, which will require a lot of time to answer. Most successful MMJ Physician groups have an online questionnaire that prospective patients can fill out ahead of time to see if they qualify (and save your staff time). If you plan on having existing support staff and one physician handling all of the new MMJ Certification business (as well as keep up all their current duties), then your business will be a very expensive and frustrating failure. Take the time to bring on at least one dedicated staff member and physician to start your MMJ Certification business, as well as cross-training other staff with plans to rapidly bring on more hires.

6) Get educated on MMJ products and dosing of products for your patients- Out of everything with starting a new MMJ Certification business, this is probably the easiest. All of the licensed Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MMTC) will be more than happy to provide your MDs and staff with any training on dosing, products, technology, etc. for your patients. All of the MMTCs will fight to train you as much as needed for the hope of you recommending their products to patients.

7) If you write MMJ Certifications, you cannot have a financial interest in a Florida MMTC or MMJ laboratory- This is similar to the "Starke Law" or inability to self-refer. Either you write MMJ Certifications or you can invest in a FL MMTC and/or Florida Marijuana testing laboratory. Florida law does not allow you to do both.

8) Market other services of your practice to potential MMJ patients- Use your MMJ Certification business to increase your patient base in your other practice areas (internal medicine, labs, x-ray, nutritional counseling, anti-aging, etc.). If your new MMJ patients like your practice and have a good experience while they are on-site, they will be more likely to use your company for the other medical services you offer.

The MMJ Certification business can be a very profitable and beneficial business to your patients. If setup properly, your practice can reap the rewards of this new legal line of business for many years to come.

Michael Patterson NHA, OTR/L, CEAS is CEO of US Cannabis Pharmaceutical Research and Development LLC. (uscprd.com). Mr. Patterson is a healthcare executive with over 25 years experience in the following areas: Cannabis-Hemp investment, Law, Regulation, Compliance, Operations, and Management, Skilled Nursing, Pharmacy, Laboratory, Assisted Living, Home Healthcare, and Healthcare Analytics. Michael is a subject matter expert in the Global Cannabis and Hemp Industry with Gerson Lehrman Group (glg.it) and Guidepoint. Mr. Patterson is an editorial board member of the American Journal of Medical Cannabis, licensed Nursing Home Administrator, and licensed Occupational Therapist in 4 states.

Patient Assistance Resource Center

To make sure people with CF have the support, information and access to resources they need to take advantage of the best treatments available, the CF Foundation has developed a network of access to care programs called the Patient Assistance Resource Center.

- **CF Patient Assistance Foundation (CFPAF)** helps patients meet their co-pay requirements and provides financial assistance to those in need.
- **CF Social Security Project** provides support for patients applying for SSI or SSDI.
- **Case Management** helps patients, their families and CF care centers understand and navigate insurance and reimbursement terms and coverage. It also provides guidance with coordination of benefits, prior authorizations, appeals and network exceptions.
- **CF Legal Information Hotline** serves as a free information resource about the laws that protect the rights of individuals with CF.
- **Mutation Analysis Program (MAP)** offers free genetic testing to people with a CF diagnosis who do not know both of their mutations.
- **Patient Assistance Resource Library (PARL)** is a self-service online resource with up-to-date materials on coverage and care for patients, their families and CF care providers.
- **CoverMyMeds** assists health care providers expedite and streamline the submission of prior authorization requests.



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Nurses:

Up to **1.5 Nursing Continuing Education Credit Hours** have been applied for Saturday, August 24th and **5.5 Nursing Continuing Education Credit Hours** have been applied for Sunday, August 25th through the Florida State Board of Nursing Provider Number NCE2012/CEBroker Provider Number #50-724.

Low Dose Naltrexone: New Tricks for an Old Dog

By Juan Lopez, PharmD, FIACP

ReVia® (naltrexone hydrochloride) was approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) in 1984, available as a 50mg tablet. ReVia® and its generic, naltrexone, is indicated for the treatment of ethanol dependence and to block the effects of externally administered opioids, such as morphine. Naltrexone can also be found in various other FDA approved medications such as

Contrave® (bupropion/naltrexone) for weight loss as well as Troxyca® ER (oxycodone/naltrexone) and Embeda® (morphine/naltrexone) for pain.

Orphan drug designation has been granted to naltrexone for the treatment of autoimmune hepatitis and postherpetic neuralgia.



PIONEERING NALTREXONE AT LOW DOSES

As early as 1985, Bernard Bihari, MD, a New York physician, found that smaller doses of naltrexone (~3mg) influenced the immune system. He prescribed low doses naltrexone (LDN) at bedtime for HIV patients to enhance their immune response to HIV infection. He found that LDN alone slowed disease progression. Additionally, as an add-on therapy to antiretroviral treatment, LDN accelerated immune system healing. Since that time, Dr. Bihari also used LDN to treat

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cancer and autoimmune diseases with successful results. Other practitioners have seen notable benefits with LDN in several disease states including: Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), fibromyalgia, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Endogenous opioids, specifically β -endorphins, are important regulators of the body's immune system. Naltrexone, an opioid antagonist, blocks opioid receptors in the body. When low doses of naltrexone are given at bedtime, opioid receptors are blocked for several hours and endogenous opioids cannot bind to their receptors. This causes the body to compensate by upregulation of endogenous opioids, including β -endorphins. Once naltrexone is metabolized, the body is left with normal amounts of β -endorphins. This rebound production of β -endorphins normalizes the immune system of individuals with diseases that are characterized by immunodeficiency.

Low dose naltrexone has been called a novel atypical anti-inflammatory as it is one of the first glial cell modulators. Microglia are central nervous system immune cells that, once activated, produce inflammatory and excitatory factors that can cause pain sensitivity, fatigue, cognitive disruption, sleep disorders, mood disorders, and general malaise. Naltrexone has an antagonist effect on nonopioid receptors (Toll-like receptor 4 or TLR4) that are found on macrophages such as microglia. By inhibiting microglia activation, naltrexone displays neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory action.

USES OF LDN IN INFLAMMATORY & DIGESTIVE CONDITIONS

A recent study (Mitchell 2018) evaluated the use of LDN to induce remission in Irritable Bowel Disease patients not responding to conventional therapy. Clinical improvement was seen in 74.5% of patients with remission achieved in 25.5% of participants. Naltrexone improved wound healing and reduced stress-induced intestinal inflammation. A 10-week trial (Parkitny 2017) evaluated the immune effects of LDN in fibromyalgia patients with a 15% reduction of fibromyalgia-associated pain and 18% reduction in overall symptoms. LDN was associated with reduced blood concentrations of several key pro-inflammatory cytokines known to promote hyperalgesia and allodynia.

FORMULATION MATTERS

Since Dr. Bihari's original discovery of LDN, a better understanding of dosing and medication preparation best practices have been identified. Typical adult therapeutic dosing ranges between 1.5mg to 4.5mg taken at bedtime. LDN must be prepared

accurately at lower doses as an immediate release dosage form. Slow-release or timed-released formulations will not achieve the required "spike" in the bloodstream that is essential for LDN to have therapeutic results. Choice of filler is imperative as it should be hypoallergenic to avoid patient intolerances or interference with LDN absorption, as seen with calcium carbonate.

Finding new uses for medications that are generic can provide a cost-effective approach to optimizing therapy. Our goal as personalized medicine pharmacists is to provide practitioners with therapy options that meet unique patient needs.

References available upon request.

For more information on how our pharmacists can help, please call 407-260-7002.

Juan Lopez, PharmD, FIACP is a personalized medicine pharmacist with Pharmacy Specialists Compounding Pharmacy in Altamonte Springs, FL. For more information on how personalized medicine can help you, please call 407-260-7002 or email us at Info@MakeRx.com. ■

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A Pain-Free Answer for Toenail Fungus

By Biff Kramer, DPM



Dr. Kramer treating a patient with the Q-Clear Laser.

How many times have you tried to get rid of stubborn fungus nails? Do you find yourself saying, "I have tried everything and I can't get rid of these ugly nails"? I can't tell you the hundreds of times I have heard that statement throughout the past 51+ years I have been in practice.

Until a few years ago, there were next to no answers. In 2009 Orlando Foot and Ankle Clinics began using a revolutionary new technology to treat nail fungus. This new technology was a laser and the results were quite good. As the years pass, technology has enabled us to continue to upgrade, and we are now on our third laser device. Our latest laser, the Q-Clear, has a 95% success rate (as defined by the FDA), is FDA approved, and is painless.

The procedure is quick and easy. It takes about 20 minutes and there are no restrictions or limitations afterwards. As a matter of fact, some of my female patients go for a pedicure immediately after the treatment. There are no contraindications and no side effects.

We follow up with six month checkups until the new healthy nail is completely grown in, about 18 months to 2 years. Should a second treatment be necessary, which is rarely the case, it is provided as part of the follow up.

In the over five years that I have been using this technology, the results have been very gratifying, and as we have upgraded the results have improved. The Q-Clear gives us fantastic results with no discomfort and most importantly my patients love it. I believe the 90+% success speaks for itself, but not as loudly as the smiles on my patients faces. The Q-Clear laser also works well removing superficial spider veins, and tattoos. We offer this treatment plan at two of our 18 locations in the Metro Orlando area.

Biff Kramer, DPM holds his podiatric degree from New York College of Podiatric Medicine. Fellow of American College of Laser Medicine and Surgery. He has been in practice for over 51 years and treats patients suffering from toe nail fungus at two of Orlando Foot and Ankle Clinics 18 convenient locations. For more information on this revolutionary treatment please visit us at our website www.orlando-laser.com or call us at 407-423-1234 to make an appointment. ■



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It is hard to be aware of everything happening in the rapidly changing medical profession and doctors want to know more about new medical developments and technology, procedures, techniques, case studies, research, etc. in the different specialties. Especially when the information comes from a local physician specialist who they can call and discuss the column with or refer a patient. They also want to read about wealth management, financial issues, healthcare law, insurance issues and real estate opportunities. Again, they prefer it when that information comes from a local professional they can call and do business with. All advertisers have the opportunity to have a column or article related to their specialty or profession.

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