

Summer 2004

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

# for your health

*Your resource for healthy living from Lowell General Hospital*

## TeamWalk for Cancer Care Makes a Difference in Your Community



Celebrating its fifth year, the TeamWalk for CancerCare has raised more than \$1.6 million for local cancer patients and their families. With the generous support of walkers, volunteers, sponsors, and donors, TeamWalk makes a difference in the lives of cancer patients every day. For more on TeamWalk please see pages 4 and 5.

## Five Years... 141,000 Lives... Unlimited Hope— The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital

The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital opened its doors five years ago, forever changing the face of cancer care in our region. Since then, The Cancer Center has touched the lives of more than 141,000 cancer patients and their families, making it the most trusted cancer center in greater Lowell.

During those five years, The Cancer Center has continuously expanded and enhanced cancer programs for our community. We recently renewed our clinical affiliation with Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare, the collaboration among Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Brigham and Women's Hospital.

### A Leader in Our Community

The Cancer Center has become a

community leader in providing clinical trials, giving patients access to cutting-edge treatments. It has developed a quality program for prostate seed implants, recently enhanced with innovative "Z-Med" technology.

In 2002, Lowell General announced positron emission tomography (PET) at The Cancer Center, bringing to patients the premiere technology for diagnosing cancer.

### Offering Support as Well as Care

Understanding that cancer touches virtually every aspect of an individual's life, as well as the lives of his or her family members, The Cancer Center has hired a second oncology social worker to assist patients and family members with issues, large or small, that affect the quality of their lives.

With the help of funds from the TeamWalk for CancerCare, the hospital started a new program for the treatment of lymphedema, the swelling of the body that can occur during the treatment of breast cancer.

Since 1998, people in our community have trusted their cancer care to Lowell General more than anywhere else. Fighting cancer is never easy. Fortunately, there is a place that does more to make it easier on you, and the people you love. ■

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# Americans Tip the Scales as Diabetes Rates Rise



**M**ore than 17 million Americans have diabetes. The number of people who will be diagnosed with diabetes is expected to double by 2050.

Health experts link the epidemic to a disturbing trend: Nearly two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese.

Carrying too much weight is one of the main risk factors for type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disorder. Four out of five people with type 2 diabetes are overweight.

“These figures are of concern because diabetes increases a patient’s risk of developing heart disease, kidney failure, blindness, and amputation. The good news is that these complications can be prevented with appropriate medical care,” says Hayward Zwerling, MD, an endocrinology and diabetes specialist with Lowell General Hospital.

If you want to reduce your risk for developing diabetes—

and complications such as heart disease, stroke, and blindness—try these strategies:

- **Shed extra pounds.** Losing just 5 to 7 percent of your weight may help ward off the disease. If you weigh 200 pounds, that’s 10 to 15 pounds.
- **Go for a walk.** Walking just 30 minutes a day may help prevent diabetes.
- **Watch how much you eat.** If you have trouble keeping your weight under control, try writing down what you eat and drink each day.

If you are concerned about getting diabetes, talk to your doctor about ways you can reduce your risk and live a healthier life. If necessary your primary care physician will refer you to an endocrinologist who specializes in diabetes care to help you manage your condition. ■

## LOOKING FOR A PHYSICIAN?

**Hayward Zwerling, MD, FACP, FACE,** is a board-certified endocrinologist. His office, **The Lowell Endocrinology and Diabetes Center,** is located on the campus of Lowell General Hospital. To reach Dr. Zwerling, call **978-459-0018** or e-mail him at **HZMD@mac.com.**

### LGH Unveils New Logo



LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

Lowell General Hospital is pleased to announce the hospital’s new look. The logo — a fresh, updated version of our previous logo — supports our hospital’s new vision to be recognized as one of the best community hospitals in the country.

## Join the Challenge!

*Announcing the 2004 LGH  
Challenge Golf Tournament*

**In tribute to John E.  
and Ruth C. Leggat**

**September 13**

**Sky Meadow Country Club  
Nashua, New Hampshire  
7 a.m. or 1:15 p.m. shotgun  
start Bramble Format**



Sponsored by Merrimack Valley Health Services

**Proceeds to benefit Lowell General  
Hospital**

**For more information about playing  
or sponsoring the LGH Challenge,  
visit [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org)  
or call 978-937-6696.**

# Tummy Troubles? It Could Be IBS

**P**eople with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) usually suffer from frequent bouts of constipation or diarrhea, or alternate between the two, for three months or more. Other symptoms include: abdominal cramps, bloating, gas, and bowel movements with mucus.

James Reichheld, MD, a gastroenterologist at Lowell General Hospital, explains, "In people with IBS, the intestines, or bowels, may not function normally. Sometimes, a person's intestines may contract too quickly or forcefully. Other times, the intestines may be too weak or slow."

While some disturbances can be caused by sensitivity to food and stress, your doctor can determine whether or not you have IBS or another intestinal problem.

## Help for IBS

Dr. Reichheld suggests a few tips that may help ease and prevent symptoms:

- Some foods can cause diarrhea. If dairy products bother you, your body may have trouble digesting lactose, the sugar in milk. Talk to your doctor if this is a problem.
- Try keeping a food journal to determine which foods you may need to remove from your diet.

- Eat more fiber-rich foods. But ask your doctor before taking a fiber supplement.
- Avoid foods high in fat.
- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Don't smoke.
- Exercise regularly.
- Be patient. It may take several

months for symptoms to improve.

If necessary, your doctor may prescribe medicines to help your intestines work more normally.

If your symptoms are new, have worsened, or are accompanied by weight loss, blood in the stool, or nighttime awakening, they may be caused by a more serious condition. If this is the case, you should see your doctor right away.



If preventative steps don't seem to work, your doctor may give you medication to help ease your symptoms.

## Taking Control of IBS: A Free Workshop

IBS affects nearly one in five Americans and is most common for women ages 25 to 49. A FREE workshop featuring James Reichheld, MD, a digestive health specialist at Lowell General Hospital, will provide the latest information on symptoms, causes, and treatment for those suffering with IBS. Learn how

your doctor can help you identify the problem and ways to help cope with it.

**September 15, 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
**Clark Auditorium, Lowell General Hospital. Register today at 978-937-6464 or online at [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org).**

## The Female Connection

IBS is at least twice as common in women than in men. Women with IBS may have more symptoms during their menstrual periods. This has led some experts to believe that hormones may trigger IBS symptoms in women. ■

**Dr. Reichheld practices at Digestive Health Specialists and may be reached at 978-454-9811.**

# The TeamWalk for Cancer

## Making a Difference 2004 TeamWalk for CancerCare



Annie Blake of Chelmsford celebrates life.

Everyone had a reason to be there. For some, it was an opportunity to honor the courage of a survivor or the memory of a loved one. For others, it was the chance to celebrate a personal triumph; it was a way to make a difference.

On Sunday, May 16, the 2004 TeamWalk for CancerCare celebrated its fifth year as more than 3,000 walkers, volunteers, and corporate sponsors raised more than \$340,000 to benefit patients at

The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital.

Through the generosity and support of walkers, volunteers, sponsors, and countless donors, the TeamWalk for CancerCare has raised more than \$1.6 million since its inception in 2000 to help

make a difference in the lives of cancer patients and their families in your local community. These funds will continue to ensure the highest quality of cancer care services at Lowell General Hospital as well as make a real difference in the quality of life for those facing a cancer diagnosis, according to Bruce Robinson of Fred C. Church Insurance, who served as TeamWalk 2004 Chairman.

Honorary Chair and LPGA Hall of Famer Pat Bradley led the 6-mile walkers along the scenic Riverwalk in Lowell, while Lowell City Mayor Armand Mercier took the 3-mile participants through the historic district of the city.

TeamWalk proceeds help develop and enhance cancer care programs, services, and equipment at The Cancer Center. The funds also help those patients with many of the needs — such as transportation, prescription drugs, and other quality of life expenses — that



Thousands of supporters joined together to make a difference.



The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital



Pro Golfer Pat Bradley, LPGA Hall of Famer and TeamWalk honorary chair, signs the Wall of Hope.

Heroes come in all sizes.



# Care 2004



insurance may not cover.

At the events closing ceremony, breast cancer survivor Kate McDonough of Dracut, wearing a navy blue *TeamWalk* survivor T-shirt, tearfully thanked those who had walked, sponsored, and volunteered.

“Each of you has contributed to the team effort of making the Lowell General Cancer Center the place for first class care in Lowell,” she said. “There are no words to express the gratitude of those of us who are wearing these blue T-shirts for what you have done for us. Thank you, because as a survivor, I can attest to the difference your contributions have made in my life.” ■



# Thanks!

## Lead Sponsor

McCallum Family Foundation

## Champions

The SunCity of Lowell

### Pacesetters

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### Patrons

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Bruce and Sue Robinson  
Salter School of Massage Therapy  
VNA of Greater Lowell  
Alex Wilson



Summer 2004

# Calendar

## Classes & Upcoming Events

### Health Education and Wellness Programs

Unless noted, you may register for all health education and wellness programs at 978-937-6464 or log on to [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org). Please note: You must be 18 or older to register.

#### ■ Taking Control of IBS

September 15, 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Clark Auditorium, Lowell General Hospital  
Register today at 978-937-6464 or online at [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org).

#### ■ Prenatal Yoga

Seven-week yoga class. Utilizes stretching, modified yoga postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques to help honor and support the body during pregnancy and the birthing process. Taught by a certified Kripalu Yoga instructor. Medical permission is recommended and women should be in their second or third trimester. Fee: \$70.  
Mondays, September 13 to October 25, 5:45 to 7 p.m.

#### ■ Childbirth Education

Including Hypnobirthing, Prepared Childbirth, Breastfeeding, Infant Massage, and Sibling classes. Call the Parent and Family Education Department at 978-937-6511 or log on to [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org).

#### ■ Infant Massage

Learn special strokes and moves to soothe and stimulate babies in a nurturing, bonding experience. For babies age 4

weeks to 6 months. Fee: \$60 (includes two sessions and instruction book).  
*Meets Wednesdays, July 7 and 14 or September 8 and 15, 10 to 11:30 a.m.*

#### ■ Baby-Sitting Basics

Baby-sitting skills for boys and girls age 10 and older. Fee: \$30.  
*Saturdays, July 17, August 21, or September 18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

#### ■ Body Fat Analysis

A computerized assessment to measure percentage of fat and lean body weight. Fee: \$15. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

#### ■ Nutrition Counseling

A one-on-one consultation with a registered dietitian to learn healthy eating habits for weight control and disease management. Requires a physician's referral. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

#### ■ Shopping Smart Tour

Are you confused when it comes to reading labels? Does it take you hours to go through the grocery store? Do you want to know what good health really means? Then jump into our shopping cart and let the dietitians from Lowell wheel you around the aisles to help you sort through the confusion and make your shopping experience an enjoyable one. Join us at Hannaford Grocery Store at Drum Hill. Fee: \$5. To register please call Ayn Berthiaume, MS, dietitian, at 978-937-6054.  
*Wednesday, September 15, 12:30 to 2 p.m.*



#### ■ Stress and Diabetes

Improve your overall lifestyle by learning how to decrease your stress and control your diabetes. Fee: \$5. To register please call Laura Z. Morris, RD, LDN, at 978-937-6227.  
*Speaker: Carol Legro, RN*  
*September 23, 12:30 to 2 p.m.*

#### ■ Eating for Excellence— A Program Just For Kids

Are you concerned about your child's health? Do you feel like they are not getting enough exercise or eating right? Then sign them up for our class which is specifically geared for children ages 6 to 14. This class will include physical activity, tips for healthy eating, and a cooking demonstration with healthy snacks provided. Class will be held in Clark Auditorium. Fee: \$25. To register please call Laura Z. Morris, RD, LDN, at 978-937-6227.  
*Wednesday, September 22, 5:30 to 7 p.m.*

## ■ The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at Lowell General Hospital

This program begins its seventh successful year at Lowell General Hospital. Based on the acclaimed program at the UMass Medical Schools Center for Mindfulness, participants come to discover deep inner psychological resources for self-care, high productivity, and stress reduction. Within the pace of everyday life as it is today, this educational program explores the possibility of developing attention and awareness as highly effective tools to be used in the midst of our ordinary lives.

### The program includes:

- meeting for 2 1/2 hours on eight consecutive Tuesdays, September 28 to November 16, 6:30 to 9 p.m., and one full day Saturday, November 6
- customized corporate programs

Cost is \$350 per individual. Some insurance plans reimburse. For further information or to register, call Jean at 978-937-6415 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Space is limited and registration is required by September 1.

## Support Groups

### ■ New Mothers Support Group

Lowell General Hospital offers a drop-in support group for new mothers.

*Meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon.*

### ■ Down Syndrome Support Group

Parents of children with Down syndrome support each other and enrich the lives of their children so they may reach their fullest potential. Parents of children of all ages are invited. Children are welcome.

For more information, please call 978-937-6511.

*Meets in the Clark Auditorium the third Monday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m.*

### ■ Arthritis Support Group

For more information, please call 978-937-6511.

*Meets the second Friday of each month from 8 to 9:30 a.m.*

### ■ Perinatal Loss Support Group

The Perinatal Loss support group provides support and comfort when your family has suffered a loss through miscarriage, ectopic, stillbirth, or neonatal death. Call Linda Jezak in the Mother Infant Unit 978-937-6324 for more information.

*Meets in the Lowell General Hospital Chapel the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.*

## Cancer Center Support Groups

Registration is required where indicated for Cancer Center support groups. For a complete listing of our current offerings, please call 978-937-6142 or visit [www.lowellgeneral.org](http://www.lowellgeneral.org) and click on Cancer Center.

### ■ What About Me

A support group for adolescents between the ages of 11 to 17 who have been affected by cancer in their family. A time to talk about the losses and changes in your home since cancer. Learn about cancer, and share your hopes and fears. To register, please call 978-937-6129.

*Meets the second Wednesday of every month at 4 p.m., November 10 to May 11.*

### ■ What About Me, Jr

A support group for children between the ages of 7 to 10 who have been effected by cancer in their family. A time to talk about the losses and changes in your home since cancer. Learn about cancer, and share your hopes and fears. To register, please call 978-937-6129.

*Meets the second Wednesday of every month at 4 p.m., October 13 to June 8.*

### ■ Now What? Life After Loss

A support group for people who have experienced a

significant loss. Group discussions include taking care of yourself, managing your grief, and moving on with life. Share your concerns, hopes, and fears. To register for this group, please call 978-937-6129.

*Meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m., October 13 to June 8.*

### ■ Patients/Families Living with Cancer

A general support group for patients, their families, and friends living with cancer.

*Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m., beginning October 12.*

### ■ I Can Cope

An educational program for adults with cancer and their family members and friends. Helps to increase knowledge, positive attitudes, and skills to deal with the cancer experience. Co-Sponsored with the American Cancer Society.

*Meets the second Monday of every month, 6:30 to 8 p.m., November 8 to April 11.*

Need a Doctor? Call our Physician Referral Line at 1-800-544-2424.

# Urinary Stress Incontinence: Awareness Encourages Women to Speak Up, Seek Help

It might happen the first time during an exercise class. Or even with a cough or sneeze. The sudden leaking of a small amount of urine is troubling for the many women who experience it. This problem is known as urinary stress incontinence.

Urinary stress incontinence is a legitimate medical condition, not a normal part of aging. On the contrary, women in the prime of life, ages 35 to 60, are affected by it.

Unfortunately only one out of 12 women seeks help for her condition, preferring instead to cope for years before discussing the disease with her doctor. Many women won't even mention it among themselves, although most women will experience some degree of urinary incontinence in their lifetime.

Dr. Nonnie Estella, an obstetrician and gynecologist with Lowell General Hospital says, "Urinary stress incontinence is not a life-threatening disease, but it can be embarrassing, socially isolating, and change behavior patterns. By addressing

the problem, a woman does not have to suffer in silence."

## What Causes Incontinence?

Stress incontinence typically occurs when the sphincter muscles, which restrict the flow of urine, are weakened. When sudden pressure from coughing, sneezing, or exercise stresses the muscle, urine can escape. Other causes may include weakened bladder muscle supports or medication. While childbirth, hormonal changes during menopause, and the design of the urinary tract may contribute to the condition, often young women and those who have never experienced childbirth suffer from stress incontinence.

## Gaining Control

Stress incontinence can now be managed more effectively than ever. Although there is no sure cure for all stress incontinence, new diagnostic techniques, surgery, and non-surgical therapies are boosting treatment success rates.

Treatment options range from a simple muscle exercise to surgery. In the mildest cases, simply emptying the bladder more often may prevent an accident. But that doesn't treat the underlying problem.

Kegel exercises—the squeeze-and-release action of the pelvic floor (perineal) muscles—can help. These exercises may strengthen muscles enough to restore bladder control for women with mild to moderate cases.

Biofeedback has proven even more successful. This therapy combines the



Kegel exercises with electronic equipment to identify when a woman is performing the exercise at its maximum effectiveness.

Surgical options may be a solution for the many women who do not respond to exercises or therapy. In addition to surgical repositioning of the bladder, less invasive techniques including injectable implants and the use of radio frequency energy may help correct anatomical causes of incontinence.

"There are so many new options to treat stress incontinence," says Dr. Estella, "It is a shame to have someone suffering in silence when there may be a solution at hand." ■

**Dr. Nonnie Estella practices obstetrics and gynecology at Lowell General Hospital. She is accepting new patients and may be reached at 978-459-8300.**

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