

# NEWS *Line*

A Publication of Monmouth Medical Center's Senior Health

## First Facility of Its Kind in Region

### Specialized Center Offers Coordination of Care for Brain, Spinal Cord Tumors

**M**onmouth Medical Center has established the region's first facility offering a multidisciplinary approach for leading-edge treatment of primary and metastatic tumors of the central nervous system (CNS).

The David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center at the Leon Hess Cancer Center will provide a full spectrum of comprehensive services to treat benign and malignant tumors originating in the brain and spinal cord — the major parts of the CNS — as well as neurological complications of systemic cancer that has spread to other regions of the body.

With its recent opening, Monmouth becomes the first hospital in central and southern New Jersey dedicated to the specialty of neuro-oncology, the branch of medical science focused on brain tumors and other tumors of the CNS.

"Brain tumors are a complex array of diseases, and their treatment depends on a number of factors, including the type, location and the size of the tumor," says Sumul N. Raval, M.D., a prominent neuro-oncologist who serves as medical director of the brain tumor center. The board-certified neurologist is among only 200 physicians in the United States fellowship trained in the highly specialized field. (See page 4.)

"Since treatment methods and schedules often vary, our goal is to develop a personalized treatment plan specific to a patient's diagnosis and needs to help ensure the best possible outcome," explains Dr. Raval, who leads the center's multidisciplinary team of specialists trained in providing care to patients with CNS tumors.

The team's members represent a broad range of specialized fields, including neuro-oncology, neurology, neurosurgery, radiation oncology, neuroradiology, medical oncology, pathology, psychiatry, social work,

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At a welcoming reception for Sumul N. Raval, M.D., at right, medical director of Monmouth Medical Center's newly established David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center, he is joined by, from left, MMC executive director Frank J. Vozos, M.D., FACS, vice president of development Lucia Baratta and Judy Zocchi of Manasquan. She also was recognized during the event, held at Cask 591 in Long Branch, for making a substantial donation to support the brain tumor center — which is named in honor of her late husband, David, who died in December 2005 from brain cancer.

#### Brain Tumor Backgrounder

- Nearly 19,000 Americans will learn this year they have malignant tumors of the brain and spinal cord. These cancers also will claim nearly 13,000 lives.
- Although brain tumors can occur at any age, they are detected most often in persons over age 69.
- While brain tumors are relatively rare, accounting for about 1.3 percent of all cancers, the prognosis for recovery is usually better the earlier the disease is diagnosed.

SOURCE: AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY



### Prescription Not Always Needed to Relieve Pain from Osteoarthritis

By Mutahir Abidi, M.D.

Medical Director

Center for Arthritis and Rheumatologic Disorders  
Monmouth Medical Center

*Editor's note: In this second of a two-part series on osteoarthritis, Dr. Abidi explores how certain medications and new surgical techniques can alleviate the most disabling disease among older adults. The first part was published in the April/May 2006 issue of NewsLine.*

**F**or many patients with osteoarthritis, mild pain relievers may be sufficient treatment to help relieve the joint pain and inflammation caused by the condition, which affects more than 20 million Americans.

Since acetaminophen has fewer gastrointestinal side effects than aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), especially among the elderly patients, it is generally the preferred initial drug that is given to patients with osteoarthritis.

Studies have shown that acetaminophen given in adequate doses can often be equally as effective as prescription anti-inflammatory medications in relieving pain resulting from osteoarthritis of the knees.

If you have any underlying liver disease, talk to your doctor before taking acetaminophen (Tylenol, Anacin, Excedrin).

Pain-relieving creams applied to the skin over the joints can provide relief of minor arthritis pain. Examples include capsaicin (Arthricare, Zostrix), salicyin (Aspercreme), methyl salicylate (Bengay, Icy Hot) and menthol (Flexall).

It is sometimes possible to use NSAIDs to reduce pain and inflammation in the joints for a while and then discontinue them for periods of

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#### A Sizzling Summer

MMC will participate in Long Branch's sizzling slate of summer fun for two popular events — the 16th annual Oceanfest and West End Cruise Night.

As an encore sponsor of **Oceanfest**, to be held on **Tuesday, July 4**, MMC will offer free gifts, activities for children and a wealth of health-related information at its display along the beachfront promenade.

Ten hours of family-oriented festivities, which begin at 10 a.m., will culminate with a concert and spectacular fireworks display.

MMC's Center For Kids & Family will make another stop — at the annual **West End Cruise Night on Saturday, July 15**. From 6 to 10 p.m., the clock will be turned back 60 years on Brighton Avenue, where classic cars and the sounds of yesterday will return for an evening of lively entertainment.

## 55 Alive: Mature Driving

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS (AARP)



**Tuesday, June 6 and Wednesday, June 7**

10 a.m.-3 p.m.

\$10/person (made payable to AARP)

Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch.

Since class size is limited, early registration is recommended; call 1-888-SBHS-123.

## Hypnosis to Stop Smoking

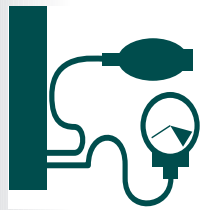
**Thursday, June 8 • 7-9 p.m. • \$35/person**

Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch. To register, call 1-888-SBHS-123.

## Hypertension: The Silent Killer

**Friday, June 9 • 9:30 a.m.**

PRESENTED BY: GAUTAM DESAI, M.D., INTERNAL MEDICINE  
Marlboro Township Community Center, 1996 Recreation Way. Senior Program membership and registration required; call 732-617-0100.



## Free Blood Pressure Screenings

(two locations)

CONDUCTED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS FROM MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

**Monday, June 12 and July 10**

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Long Branch Senior Center (age 60 and over), 85 Second Avenue. No registration required.

**Wednesday, June 14 and July 12**

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Monmouth Mall, Eatontown (near the food court in front of the Sony Theatre). No registration required.



THESE PROGRAMS ARE BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**The Center For Kids & Family at Monmouth**

## Osteoarthritis continued from page 1

time without recurrent symptoms, thereby decreasing side effect risks.

The most common side effects of NSAIDs that increase among older adults involve gastrointestinal distress, such as stomach upset, cramping diarrhea, ulcers and even bleeding.

Examples of NSAIDs include aspirin (Ecotrin), ibuprofen (Motrin), nabumetone (Relafen) and naproxen (Naprosyn). Newer NSAIDs, called Cox-2 inhibitors, have been designed to have less toxicity to the stomach and bowels.

Because osteoarthritis symptoms vary and can be intermittent, these medicines might be given only when joint pains occur or prior to activities that have traditionally brought on symptoms. Also, avoid NSAIDs if you have underlying kidney disease.

Oral glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate have also been shown to protect joint cartilage from further deterioration and to stimulate cartilage production. These supplements are available in pharmacies and health food stores without a prescription, although there is no certainty about the

## Surgical Options for Weight Loss

**Wednesday, June 14 • 7-9 p.m.**

PRESENTED BY: FRANK BORAO, M.D., DIRECTOR OF LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch.

To register, call 1-888-SBHS-123.

(See page at right for details on Monmouth's Bariatric Surgery Support Group.)

## Getting a Good Night's Sleep

**Wednesday, July 19 • 1-3 p.m.**

SCAN Learning Center (age 50 and over), Monmouth Mall, Eatontown. Membership not required.

## "To Your Health" Monthly Showcases

PRESENTED BY: MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

at Monmouth Mall, Routes 35 and 36, Eatontown (near the food court in front of the Sony Theatre)

**Wednesday, June 14 • 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.**

### Men's Health: Front and Center

In recognition of National Men's Health Week, this showcase will place the focus on heightening awareness of the preventable health problems among men and boys. As a way to stress the importance of early detection and treatment of disease, free blood pressure screenings also will be offered (see below).

**Wednesday, July 12 • 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.**

### Checking Up on Your Blood Pressure

One in four Americans suffer from hypertension, which is indicated by a blood pressure reading of 140/90 or higher and can lead to a heart attack, heart failure, stroke and kidney disease without any warning signs. Find out whether your blood pressure is elevated through a free screening conducted by health care professionals from Monmouth Medical Center.

purity of the products or the dose of the active ingredients because they are not monitored by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

Patients taking blood thinners should be careful when taking chondroitin as it can promote blood thinning and cause excessive bleeding. Fish oil supplements have been shown to have some anti-inflammation properties, and increasing dietary fish intake and/or fish oil capsules (omega-3) can sometimes reduce inflammation of arthritis.

### Injections: Proving Effective in Easing Pain

While oral cortisone is generally not used in treating osteoarthritis, when injected directly into the inflamed joints, it can rapidly decrease pain and restore function. These injections usually can be administered three to four times a year to provide two to three months of pain relief without any major side effects.

For persisting pain of severe osteoarthritis of the knee that does not respond to weight reduction, exercise or medications, a series of injections of hyaluronic acid (Synvisc, Hyalgan) into the joint can sometimes be helpful, especially if surgery is not being considered. These products seem to

### Standing Up to Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis causes bones to break in 40 percent of all women over age 50. This deterioration of bone tissue also affects more than 50 percent of all older Americans. Those two statistics alone underscore the need for protection against this commonly characterized "silent disease."

Seniors are invited to participate in a free osteoporosis screening on **Thursday, June 8** at the Center for Arthritis and Rheumatologic Disorders at Monmouth Medical Center. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the center will conduct personalized evaluations of bone mineral density — a major indicator of the presence of the disease, which is a progressive bone loss associated with an increased risk of fractures.

**Mutahir Abidi, M.D.**, the center's medical director, and staff members will answer questions about the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of osteoporosis, which affects 44 million Americans.

**Appointments are required and can be made by calling the center, located on the hospital's main campus at 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch, at 732-923-7550.**

**Dr. Abidi** also will present a program on osteoporosis on **Wednesday, July 26** at SCAN Learning Center (age 50 and over), Monmouth Mall, Eatontown.

**To register for the 1 p.m. program, call 732-542-1326.**

**MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED.**

work by temporarily restoring the thickness of the joint fluid, allowing better joint lubrication and impact capability, and perhaps by directly affecting pain receptors. They usually provide longer pain relief than traditional cortisone injections.

Surgery is generally reserved for those patients with osteoarthritis that is particularly severe and unresponsive to conservative treatment methods. Arthroscopy can be beneficial when cartilage tears are suspected. Osteotomy is a bone removal procedure that can help realign some of the deformity in selected patients, usually those with knee disease.

In some cases, severely degenerated joints are best treated by fusion (arthrodesis) or replacement with an artificial joint (arthroplasty).

**If you have a question on arthritis that you would like Dr. Abidi to address, please call 732-923-7550.**

**M**onmouth Medical Center sponsors or hosts a wide variety of support groups that are led by professionals in their field. Sessions are held regularly, bringing people together to discuss concerns and share ideas.

*Unless otherwise indicated, sessions are held at Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch.*

*Here's a list of groups of particular interest to seniors, including meeting times and telephone numbers. For more information, call The Center For Kids & Family at Monmouth at 732-923-6990.*

### GENERAL HEALTH

#### Bereavement Support

For persons who have lost a loved one in the past year. **Six-week program meets periodically. Call 732-923-6463 for availability and registration.**

#### Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

For persons with this serious, often disabling syndrome, which is characterized by unrelenting exhaustion and unexplained fatigue that lasts more than 24 hours, and their family members. **Third Tuesday, 7-8:30 p.m. • 732-923-6990**

#### Diabetes Insulin Pump Support Group

For persons who wear an insulin pump and for those whose physician has suggested they begin wearing the device to control diabetes. **First Wednesday in July, September and November, 7:30-9 p.m. 732-923-6990**

#### Diabetes Support

For persons with diabetes, their family members and friends to learn how to be self-sufficient in the daily management of the disease. **Third Wednesday, 7:30-9 p.m. • 732-923-6990**

#### Shore Area Stroke Survivors

For stroke patients and their family members and friends, featuring monthly speakers on stroke-related topics. *Co-sponsored by Rehabilitation Hospital of Tinton Falls* **Second Wednesday, 2-4 p.m. (No July or August meeting.) 732-460-5377**  
*Rehabilitation Hospital of Tinton Falls cafeteria, 2 Centre Plaza.*

#### Smoke-Free Support

For persons who have recently quit smoking, are struggling in their attempts to quit or contemplating stopping the habit. **Fourth Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. • 732-923-6990**

### CANCER SERVICES

#### Early-Stage Breast Cancer Support

**Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7:15-9 p.m. 732-923-7711**

#### Hope, Survival and Strength

For newly or recently diagnosed cancer patients and/or their loved ones. **First Thursday, 6-7:30 p.m. • 732-923-6727**

#### Metastatic Breast Cancer Support

**First and third Tuesdays, 1-2:30 p.m. • 732-923-7711**

#### Colorectal Cancer Support

**First Wednesday (No June meeting), 7:30-9 p.m. • 732-923-7711**

#### Us TOO: Prostate Cancer Support

**First Thursday, 7-9 p.m. • 732-923-6575**

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

#### Adult Attention Deficit Disorder Support

**Fourth Thursday, 7:30-9 p.m. • 732-842-4553**

#### IN THE SPOTLIGHT Bariatric Surgery Support

For persons who have undergone bariatric surgery for weight management or for those considering the procedure. **Fourth Thursday, 7-9 p.m. • 1-888-SBHS-123**

**Brain Tumor Center** *continued from page 1*

advanced practice nursing, speech therapy and rehabilitation.

“These qualified experts will work together in close collaboration to provide patients and their family members with the care they need in a comfortable and supportive setting,” Dr. Raval says.

During regular multidisciplinary brain tumor conferences, members of the neuro-oncology board map out the optimal course of treatment individually tailored for each patient. Recommendations for treatment are made after a thorough review of the therapeutic options, which can include surgery, radiation therapy, radiosurgery and chemotherapy. Experimental treatments and participation in research protocols also are explored.

Since the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center falls under the ever-widening umbrella of comprehensive cancer services offered through the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth, patients have centralized access to the most advanced diagnostic tools to locate cancer and the latest in sophisticated methods of neurosurgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy found anywhere in the region.

While many CNS tumors are most effectively treated with a combination of therapies, surgery is considered the initial treatment and involves removing as much of the abnormal growth as possible with minimal damage to surrounding healthy tissue.

In 1999, Monmouth Medical Center became the first hospital in central and southern New Jersey to offer stereotactic radiosurgery — a highly precise, incisionless alternative to traditional brain surgery.

Performed by its expertly skilled neurosurgery team, the minimally invasive technique is often referred to as “brain surgery without the knife” because of its precision in pinpointing the exact location of the tumor.

Monmouth’s neurosurgery team — whose members are affiliated with the Neurological Institute of New York at Columbia University Medical Center — brings to Monmouth Medical Center some of the most progressive surgeries to manage tumors of the CNS.

Among their specialties is the performance of highly specialized “awake brain surgery” for deep lesions in the brain. Monmouth recently joined a handful of hospitals in the country offering this procedure, which allows neurosurgeons to delineate or “map” exact locations of the most delicate areas of the brain’s cortex so they can be preserved during surgical removal of the tumor.

*For more information about the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center, call 1-877-577-9800.*

**Profiles in Senior Health** • SUMUL N. RAVAL, M.D. • NEURO-ONCOLOGY



**N**euro-oncologist Sumul N. Raval, M.D., is the medical director of the David S. Zocchi Brain Tumor Center at the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth, where he works with other medical specialists to develop treatment strategies for brain cancer.

The board-certified neurologist earned his medical degree at India’s M.P. Shah Medical College, Saurashtra University in Jamnagar and completed a residency in neurology at the Department of Neurosciences, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), Newark, where he served as administrative chief resident.

Fellowship trained in neuro-oncology from the Department of Neurology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, Dr. Raval also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in multiple sclerosis at UMDNJ’s Department of Neurosciences.

Dr. Raval joins Monmouth Medical Center from Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Neptune, where he was an attending neurologist and neuro-oncologist for two years. Prior to that, he was an attending physician with the Department of Neurology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

He is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, Society for Neuro-Oncology, American Academy of Neurology and National Brain Tumor Foundation.

*The material in this newsletter is designed to inform the community of senior programs and services of Monmouth Medical Center, an affiliate of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System. It is intended for general purposes only. Always consult a physician for individualized medical advice.*

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