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Spring Wellness

The winter is winding down, which means it's time for those of us living in the Valley to start winding up and looking ahead to warm afternoons and longer days. This issue's special Health & Wellness section will have you eager to dive back into an active, healthy lifestyle. We profile local doctors who can help you shake out the kinks and get ready to tackle all the Valley has to offer, such as the recreational biking scene and boutique gyms. We also visit the new PACE program for seniors at Element Care in Lowell. People from all walks of life will find something to serve their mind, body and spirit in this issue.

Parents will love our profiles of local summer camps beginning on page 46. Read on to unlock the mystery of Andover's white squirrels, travel with David Iverson on a craft beer tour through southern New Hampshire, and indulge your inner foodie with Dean Johnson at Elm Square Oyster Co. in Andover.



Kevin Harkins



Aurigh Blisson



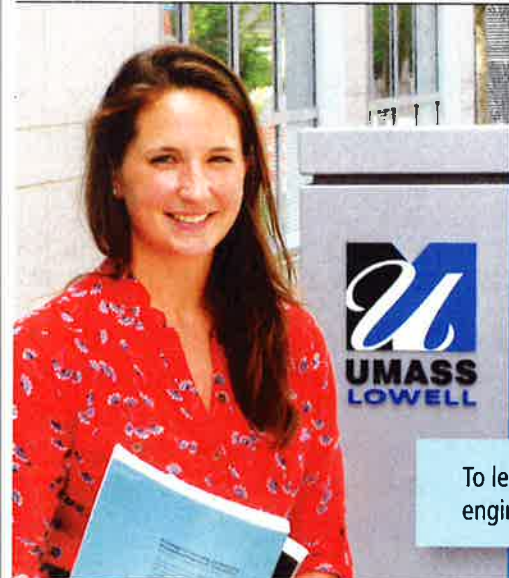
Kevin Harkins



On the cover: Start eating healthier this spring. Read Dean Johnson's article on local sources for organic dairy products, produce, groceries and more beginning on page 88.

Cover Photo: Kevin Harkins Photography, Londonderry, N.H.

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health wellness



Keeping PACE with Local Seniors

by **Scott Shurtleff**

photos by **Adrien Bisson**

Element Care

What the local senior community needs is a single location where all medical, social, home care and nutritional concerns are addressed. This facility also would offer cooking classes, rehab services, outdoor recreation and exercise equipment. And for those who qualify, this one-stop shop also would feature full-time physicians, a low participant-to-staff ratio, and assistance with transportation and medication procurement. And if it was conveniently located in downtown Lowell, that would be perfect.

Well, such a place exists. Located at 166 Central St., Element Care's PACE program is a coordinated care model designed to help seniors live longer, healthier lives.

PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) is a 40-year-old approach that began in San Francisco and is now available through more than 100 programs in 32 states."

The new Lowell facility is located in the recently renovated Appleton National Bank building in the heart of the city. The structure sat abandoned for several years before Arthur "Chip" Gonsalves, a local vascular surgeon, purchased it without any particular plan in mind. Then Lynn-based Element Care approached

him. After more than two years of renovations, the building is now as modern as ever while still maintaining its historic façade and traditional architecture.

"The primary mission is to keep people living in the community, to keep them healthy, and most importantly to keep them out of the hospital," says Lowell PACE physician Jenny Chiang. She emphasizes the importance of keeping people healthy — physically, mentally, socially and spiritually — in order to avoid the high costs of nursing homes and/or hospitals.

Home visits by nurses, doctors and social workers are provided to PACE participants. The team also trains family caregivers how to improve the lives and health of the people under their watch. Team members include experts in all clinical and social service areas. Organized activities such as crafts, Wii, yoga and exercise classes are frequently offered at the Central Street location. And the option to relax alone, watch television or surf the Web is always available. Medical specialists are part of a revolving roster of professionals — including podiatrists, dentists, nutritionists and other practitioners — who visit the facility regularly.

Having all of this available under one roof, Chiang says, "makes it certain that no person or detail falls through the cracks.

health + wellness



Previous page: Registered nurse, Stephanie Joubert (foreground), enjoys a light moment with Element Care participant, Soheap Luy. Another of the center's staff members, Johann Hepner, NP, chats with participant, Barbara Kelly. The new Lowell facility is located on Central Street in the remodeled Appleton National Bank building.

This page, top left: Dr. Jenny Chiang, MD, is Element Care Lowell's primary care physician. The new complex offers far more than medical care. Qualifying members have access to dozens of social and therapeutic programs throughout the 32,000-square-foot building. Top right: The historic Appleton National Bank building on Lowell's Central Street has been reimaged and is today the new home of Element Care. The downtown facility is part of the national PACE care program for seniors. Even the building's rooftop has been improved, allowing participants to safely relax outdoors while overlooking the city's canals and vistas. Bottom right: PACE member, Eileen Langlois, enjoys the craft facility at the Lowell facility. Crafts are just one of Element Care's several programs for seniors. Participants also have access to medical, mental health, nutritional, transportation, therapeutic and pharmaceutical services.





NEW ENGLAND CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

It also eliminates the need for expensive transportation costs and gets the patients seen quicker than in the traditional clinical process.”

The center has its own transportation service. In addition to operating as a shuttle to and from the 32,000-square-foot building, the service provides rides to pharmacies and appointments.

Element Care is an accountable care organization, or ACO, which is defined as a group of “doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers, who come together voluntarily to give coordinated high quality care to their Medicare patients,” according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website. The best comparison is to think of it as an auto insurance company that actually maintains the vehicles they cover, according to Chiang. The more proactive they are in preventing damages and breakdowns, the better the cars will run, and for far more miles. But the real advantage of the whole operation is in its cost. Administered by MassHealth and Medicare, Element Care’s PACE program and similar PACE facilities actually save the state millions of dollars, Chiang says. By keeping patients out of nursing homes and hospitals, the cost per participant is significantly lower than at other senior care models.

The Lowell center is the eighteenth and newest PACE establishment in the Commonwealth. In the Merrimack Valley, Element Care operates a PACE facility at Nevins Family of Services in Methuen. That location works cooperatively with other Valley agencies including Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, which provides primary care and prescription services to patients, and Mary Immaculate Health/Care Services in Lawrence, whose adult day health and transportation services are available to Element Care participants.

With an ability to handle more than 500 patients, many openings remain available in Lowell. For eligibility requirements, visit ElementCare.org or call (877) 803-5564.



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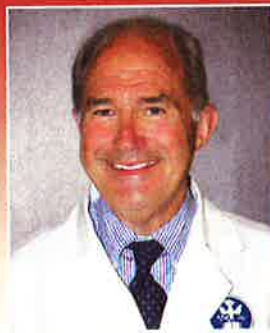
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Dr. Rissin attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. After 5 years of general practice, Dr. Rissin completed his specialty training at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. He was the Director of the Harvard-VA Prosthodontics Residency Program for many years prior to serving as the Director of the Implant Center at Tufts School of Dental Medicine from 1996-2009. Dr. Rissin is presently a Clinical Professor in the Dept. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Tufts Dental School in addition to his private practice.

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