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FOCUS ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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**WHEN DEPRESSION AFFECTS
UNEMPLOYED MEN**

**ADDRESSING THE
“INVISIBLE WOUNDS OF WAR”
FOR VETS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**FROM PRESCRIPTION
PILLS TO STREET DRUGS:
RECOGNIZING ADDICTION**

The Paternal Influence

Health care providers can help families identify positive male role models for children when fathers are absent.

“Fathers play a powerful role in the family dynamic. An engaged father helps establish a child’s self-esteem, sense of security and self-control,” said Ken Corbin, LCSW, director of child and adolescent services at South Oaks Hospital. “The paternal relationship helps children establish what’s acceptable and not acceptable in future relationships. If a father figure is unavailable, children may suffer from attachment or relationship issues down the line.”

When a father is not present, other men — such as uncles or grandparents — can help ward off negative behavioral effects, according to Peter D’Amico, PhD, director of child and adolescent psychology at The Zucker Hillside Hospital. He added: “Blended families are becoming more and more common. A father figure who can model positive behaviors can satisfy a child’s needs.”

The Paternal Role in Diagnosis and Treatment

Beyond heightening a child’s risk for behavioral health problems such as anxiety and depression, a father’s absence has a more nuanced effect: a missing parental perspective. This can influence diagnosis and treatment for children with existing or developing behavioral health issues

“Mothers and fathers have different perspectives,” said Laura Braider, PhD, clinical psychologist and director of Zucker Hillside’s Behavioral Health College Partnership. “Both parents’ viewpoints are important. If both are watchful and aware, they can identify red flags and get their children the help they need.”

But in addition to offering a unique perspective, fathers may present a unique obstacle. According to Mr. Corbin, if a child is diagnosed with a behavioral health issue, fathers may be particularly hesitant to accept the diagnosis. A father might feel there is a stigma attached to treatment or view it as a parental failure.

“It is not a child-rearing failure if an emotional or behavioral health problem develops. However, knowing there may be an issue but not addressing it is a failure,” said Mr. Corbin. “It’s imperative that physicians

Dr. Braider added, “One of the most important things parents can do today is engage their kids and be on the same page. They need to discuss limits and boundaries and enforce them in a loving way.” Parents, and fathers in particular, should be encouraged to teach rather than blame and to administer discipline fairly, consistently and with love, Mr. Corbin noted.

When meeting a new pediatric patient, Dr. D’Amico said he immediately evaluates the child’s family life. “Any time there is a pediatric behavioral health issue, the

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work with parents to ensure that children receive appropriate care.”

Physicians should bring the paternal role into the spotlight by asking questions about the father and requesting that dads attend appointments whenever possible.

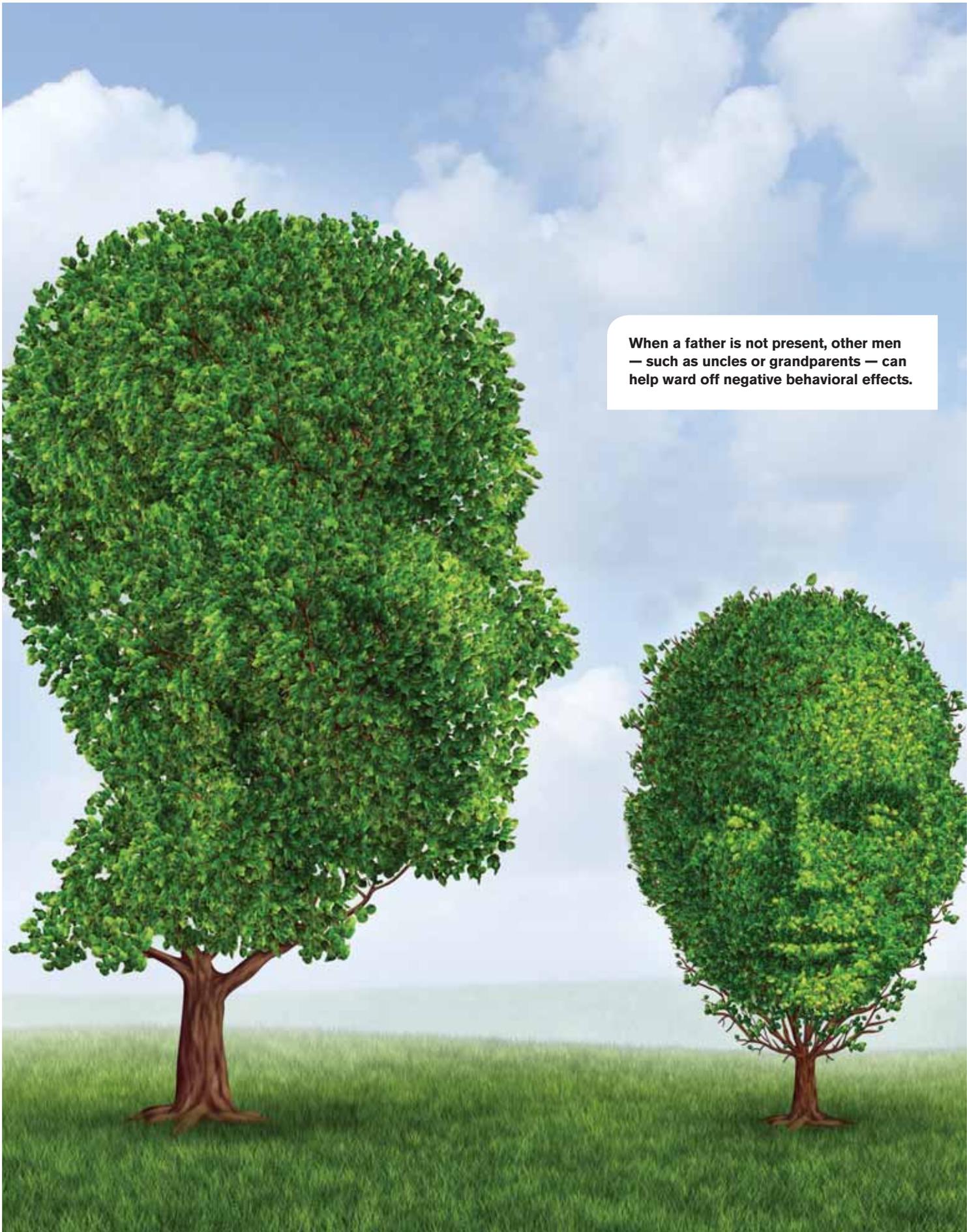
Encouraging Engagement

While paternal figures are critical to children’s behavioral health, more essential is parental cooperation to present a united front. Children benefit most when parents work in concert and are accessible, responsive and show interest in their children’s activities, Mr. Corbin said.

entire family should be involved,” said Dr. D’Amico.

Similarly, child and adolescent therapy at South Oaks may involve programs where behavioral health professionals meet families at home to assess the environment and treat both parents and children.

“We must be careful not to contribute to the stereotype of fathers as the secondary parent, by both acknowledging their vital contributions and assisting fathers to be emotionally available and engaged,” Dr. D’Amico said. “In whatever way possible, physicians need to involve fathers in a child’s care.” <<



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Detecting Depression in Older Men

Among any patient population, depression hurts social interactions, physical health and general well-being. But the geriatric male population faces unique risks associated with depression.

“Older men are at the highest risk for suicide,” said Meera Joseph, MD, a psychiatrist at South Oaks Hospital who specializes in geriatrics. “It’s extremely important that physicians are aware and watchful of depression in older men. Not acting can be dangerous for the patient.”

Besides men’s reluctance to visit physicians and the stigma attached to men seeking behavioral health care, many older men are unable to identify depression.

“Men don’t always have the language for identifying depression,” said Leah Siskin, PhD, senior psychologist in geriatric psychiatry at

The Zucker Hillside Hospital. “They may not see themselves as depressed because their symptoms don’t fit their personal definition or perception of the illness. For example, older men may think of depression as a problem in which someone cries all the time — a characteristic they don’t associate with.



“Men don’t always have the language for identifying depression,” said Leah Siskin, PhD, senior psychologist in geriatric psychiatry at The Zucker Hillside Hospital.

“To identify those at risk for depression, physicians need to become detectives. Instead of asking if patients are sad or depressed, ask open-ended questions about daily habits, sleep patterns and social interactions. Look for functional changes that can signify depression in older men.”

Recognizing Unusual Symptoms

In addition to common depression symptoms — withdrawal, irritability, sleeplessness, low energy or poor personal hygiene — depressed older men may also complain of chronic physical ailments.

“Physicians should take a closer look if an older male patient comes in with repeated complaints of pronounced pain, such as stomachaches or arthritis pain,” said Evangeline Sayo, RN, case coordinator for senior adult units at South Oaks Hospital. “Physicians may try to treat the problem, only to be met with additional complaints.”

Older men with depression may also seem confused or have memory problems. “Symptoms of depression can mimic early stages of dementia, making the diagnosis of older men that much more difficult,” Ms. Sayo said.

Pinpointing a Threshold

Dr. Siskin noted it may be difficult to differentiate between depression in older men and grief or disappointment stemming from a loved one’s death, role changes due to retirement, or declining physical health and independence.

To help concerned families identify genuine depression risk, physicians should ask relatives to consider their loved one’s threshold — the point of change that is no longer normal for the individual. Perhaps the patient never cared much about his hair or clothing, but has now stopped bathing. Or a patient may have had a history of irritability, but his anger has become more pronounced.

“In everything, there is a question of

degree,” said Dr. Siskin. “The key is to identify the person’s threshold. If someone has moved beyond it, it is wise to take a closer look. These men are not going to raise their hands and tell others they are depressed. It’s our responsibility to help families identify loved ones at risk for depression and help them take the necessary steps.”

Guiding Patients to Treatment

Because much of this population perceives a social stigma for behavioral health issues, encouraging patients to accept treatment can be challenging. Physicians may need to take extra steps to facilitate the process.

“It’s not enough to refer older male patients to a behavioral health provider,” said Dr. Siskin. “Whenever possible, make the appointment or introduce the patient to the provider. It may take a more hands-on approach to get this population into treatment.”

Hillside also offer recreational therapy, psychotherapy and other techniques based on each individual’s needs. If a patient is experiencing severe depression that threatens his physical health, Dr. Joseph recommended electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), which is offered at Zucker Hillside.

“Unlike antidepressants, which can take weeks to produce results, ECT works more quickly and is very effective in the older population,” Dr. Joseph said. “If a patient’s health is in danger due to depression — for example, if he is not eating or drinking or is at high risk for suicide — this therapy can be lifesaving.”

Neither harmful nor painful, ECT also benefits chronically depressed patients whose symptoms have been unresponsive to medication. The Zucker Hillside Hospital’s 4,000-square-foot ECT suite offers inpatient as well as outpatient ECT, as many patients with medication-resistant

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Multifaceted Care

Determining the underlying cause of depression is the primary step in planning effective treatment.

“Depression can be a side effect of medication or vitamin D insufficiency,” said Dr. Joseph. “It can also develop as a result of dementia or a neurological cause. For example, stroke victims have a higher depression risk.”

While antidepressants are often the first line of treatment for depression in older men, specialists at South Oaks and Zucker

depression do not require hospitalization.

Social support is another integral facet of depression treatment. Behavioral health professionals collaborate with home care specialists to help patients navigate age-related obstacles.

“We don’t just treat the depression, we identify psychosocial needs and work with our Home Care Network to provide support,” said Dr. Joseph. “If a patient lives alone, we can help coordinate meals, ensure he is taking his medication and connect him with opportunities to socialize.” <<

When Depression Affects Unemployed Men

The stress of losing a job or long-term unemployment can spark behavioral health issues. The Zucker Hillside and South Oaks hospitals provide programs to help.

Ignoring feelings about unemployment (or underemployment) can cause some men to spiral into depression.

"All men are not alike, but when trouble arises, they often avoid asking for help, expressing emotions or accessing behavioral health services," said Carmine DeSena, director of psychiatric rehabilitation at The Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, NY.

"Unemployment may affect men differently than women," said Teri Hughes, program director of vocational and school-based services at South Oaks Hospital in Amityville, NY. "This is not only because men are typically less vocal about their feelings, but also because there are still social and cultural expectations of the man as the breadwinner, especially if there is a family to provide for."

Specialized vocational and psychological services at Zucker Hillside and South Oaks boost efforts toward gainful employment. The programs help men cope with joblessness and treat their depression or other behavioral health issues. Licensed mental health counselors provide therapy and, if needed, psychiatrists prescribe medications to treat depression and start the healing process.

"For many men, work is much more than a job. Employment has a lot to do with how people feel about themselves because they often identify who they are by what they do," said Ms. Hughes. "So we support those who have lost their jobs and help them rebuild their lives."

Recognizing Depression Associated with Unemployment

"For some men, debilitating depression can cause a loss of function, so they may show clear signs of the condition, such as missing



numerous medical appointments, developing poor hygiene or appearing withdrawn," said Mr. DeSena. "And if they have other factors weighing on them, such as family issues or medical concerns, this can further complicate the depression."

Recognizing that a man is depressed due to employment issues and connecting him to experts who can help is essential to recovery.

"Someone who is 'down in the dumps' can still pull themselves together somewhat," said Ms. Hughes. "But if someone's clinically depressed, they're stuck. Our multifaceted services can help them move forward."

Vocational Expertise

Experienced vocational specialists are crucial members of the treatment teams

in the Zucker Hillside and South Oaks programs.

“The job market is constantly changing and there is so much to keep up with, but we are on top of the tricks of the trade and offer ongoing support in the employment arena, even after someone with behavioral health issues is stabilized,” said Mr. DeSena. “And many of our career services involve no charge to patients.”

Continuing support and a positive attitude all help to boost a man's feelings of self-worth during his job search.

“We encourage men to make job hunting the first item on their daily agendas and to get busy by volunteering, consulting or doing whatever it takes to add to their résumés,” said Mr. DeSena. “We are big on keeping active, because when people are depressed, they can get in a rut and prospective employers notice when applicants' skills have atrophied.”

Services provided by the vocational and employment programs are confidential. Participants are not required to disclose their behavioral health conditions to future employers or discuss their participation in hospital-sponsored employment services.

Although losing a job or enduring long-term unemployment can be a major setback, receiving treatment and vocational guidance can help them turn a corner.

“With proper direction, therapy and medication for those who require it, the prognosis for men who are depressed because of work issues is very good,” said Mr. DeSena. “We have had great results helping men improve psychologically and navigate the job market.” <<

Zucker Hillside's Services for the Unemployed

Zucker Hillside centers offer comprehensive services for those seeking employment while managing behavioral health issues, including:

- assisted competitive employment program;
- individualized training program;
- ACCES-VR, New York State's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation sponsored five- to 10-day diagnostic vocational evaluation;
- 40-day work readiness assessment;
- prevocational services, employment readiness, skills development and recovery-based activities; and
- supported employment.

Zucker Hillside offers two community-based ambulatory centers that focus on helping individuals re-enter the workforce:

- **Sign-On Village**, a program in Hollis that treats and coaches individuals with medical, psychological or cognitive issues that impede their ability to function effectively at work. For details, contact Evan Feuer at [718-264-1789](tel:718-264-1789), ext. 10107.
- **Nassau Day Training Center**, a community-based program in West Hempstead that offers vocational and employment services for anyone older than 18 with physical, emotional, learning or substance abuse issues. Contact Lisa Lumia at [516-939-2290](tel:516-939-2290), ext. 22316 for more information.

Vocational Program at South Oaks Hospital

Anyone who seeks vocational rehabilitation and career guidance — whether or not behavioral health issues are also a challenge — can find help at South Oaks' Career and Educational Counseling Center (CECC).

Located on the Nassau/Suffolk border, CECC addresses a wide range of employment-related issues, including:

- ACCES-VR five- to 10-day diagnostic vocational evaluation, which includes individual career, ability, interest and vocational testing;
- career guidance and career research activities;
- interview techniques and mock interviews;
- techniques for coping with stress at work;
- tools for improving personal and social skills at work;
- job placement services;
- assertiveness training;
- résumé and cover letter development;
- computer and fax access; and
- 90-day follow-up.

South Oaks' CECC uses tools such as assessment, observation and counseling to give all clients insight about their individual strengths in the job market.

Services provided by both Zucker Hillside and the South Oaks' CECC are confidential — participants are not required to disclose their behavioral health status to a future employer — and [many services are available at no charge](#).

Addressing the “Invisible Wounds of War” for Vets and Their Families

After returning home from active duty, military veterans can be at risk of developing behavioral health issues commonly referred to as the “invisible wounds of war.”

“I know many veterans who feel that it is tougher to live with a psychological wound than a physical injury,” said Andy Roberts, director of the Office of Military and Veterans Services at The Zucker Hillside Hospital. “Post-traumatic stress disorder is the most recognized behavioral health issue that affects veterans — particularly those who have been in combat. But there is a whole spectrum of other conditions that can affect vets, including depression, sleep disorders, mood changes and anxiety.

Himself a US Army veteran of the Iraq War, Mr. Roberts said that military veterans who struggle emotionally after returning home can greatly benefit from behavioral health care.

“Leaving the military and reintegrating back into the civilian world generates a lot of stress,” said Mr. Roberts. That can leave veterans feeling isolated and without a sense of purpose as they struggle to resume their former lives.

Two Centers, One Purpose

Long Island’s 150,000 military veterans can find comprehensive care and support at two locations: the Florence and Robert A. Rosen Family Wellness Center and the Mildred and Frank Feinberg Division of the Unified Behavioral Health Center for Military Veterans and Their Families.

Founded in 2006, the Rosen Family Wellness Center meets the unique needs of military veterans, active duty military personnel and their families. The Manhasset center also caters to local, state and federal law enforcement officers and their families.

Based in Bay Shore, the Mildred and Frank Feinberg Division of the Unified Behavioral Health Center is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the North Shore-LIJ Health System and the Northport Veterans Administration (VA). Since 2012, the Zucker Hillside team has collaborated with the VA team to evaluate and treat military personnel and their relatives.

Clinicians with specialized training in trauma psychology provide care at both centers. They focus on challenges specific to veterans, including long-term exposure to stressful or traumatic events, difficulty finding employment and reintegration with family after long periods apart.

“When a soldier deploys two or three times, the family has to learn to live without mom or dad in the house. Then they must readjust their lives when that person returns from duty,” said Mr. Roberts. “If the veteran comes back with an emotional or psychological wound, that increases the stress for everyone. So we don’t just care for veterans — we treat the family as a whole because every member needs support.”

The Rosen Family Wellness Center and Unified Behavioral Health Center offer a variety of services, including:

- » assessments and treatments;
- » individual, couples, group and family psychotherapy for children, adolescents and adults;
- » evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapies, including trauma-focused therapy;
- » psychiatric evaluations;

- » neuropsychological assessments;
- » medication management;
- » health and wellness workshops; and
- » referrals for physical and specialized longer-term behavioral health care.

The centers also train health care professionals and community members to increase the public’s understanding of the challenges many military veterans endure due to combat-related behavioral challenges.

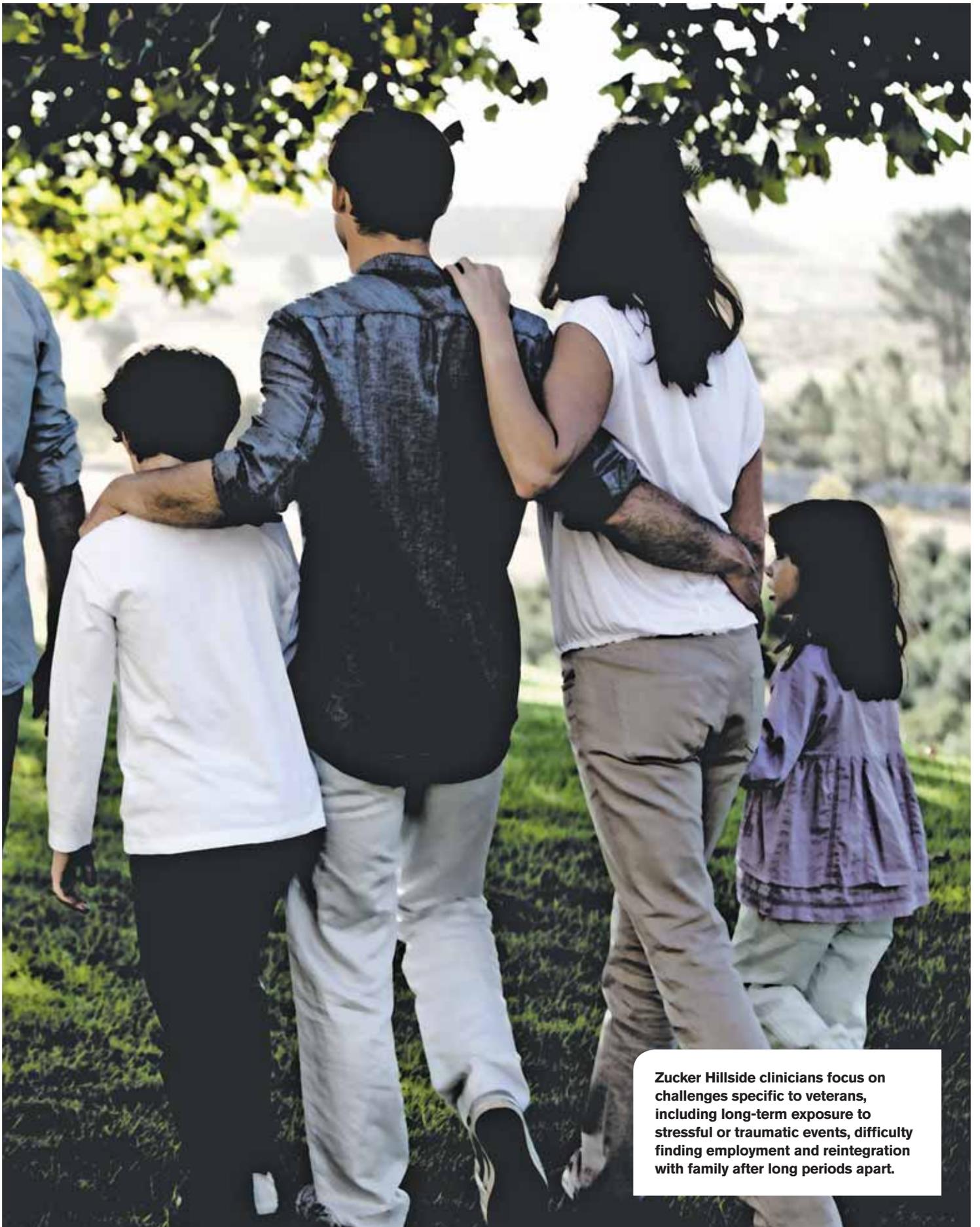
Providing Well-Deserved Care

Primary care providers can help veterans receive the services they need by asking each patient, “Have you or a family member served in the military?” Mr. Roberts said.

“The health care community can help connect vets or their loved ones with Zucker Hillside’s life-changing services,” said Mr. Roberts. He added that veterans are very resilient, but they may not recognize how they have been affected or understand the significant difference that behavioral therapy can make.

“US military service members are all volunteers,” he added. “Our mission is to support our service members and their families who have sacrificed so much, so they have the best opportunity to achieve their full potential.” <<

Reach the Rosen Center via email at rosencenter@nshs.edu or call 516-562-3260. Contact the Unified Behavioral Health Center at 631-647-2530.



Zucker Hillside clinicians focus on challenges specific to veterans, including long-term exposure to stressful or traumatic events, difficulty finding employment and reintegration with family after long periods apart.



After the School Break: Helping Students Adjust

Children with behavioral health issues may feel particularly anxious about going back to school after a break or vacation.

Every child is different, but generally speaking, young people with behavioral health conditions often experience increased unease about academic and social pressures or simply adjusting to a higher-demand situation when they return to school, said Peter D'Amico, PhD, director of child and adolescent psychology at The Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks.

"When kids with behavioral health conditions go through any type of transition, such as returning to school after a break, their concerns are often magnified," said Teri Hughes, program director of vocational and school-based services at South Oaks Hospital in Amityville.

Easing the Transition

Whatever stage of development children are in, it's crucial for parents to listen to their concerns.

"All children need reassurance from their parents that school is a safe place," said Judith Hirsch, MD, medical director of the outpatient child and adolescent psychiatry service at South Oaks Hospital. "By spending extra time with children, parents can help children with lingering anxiety about the unknown."

However, if children face significant challenges, families should seek help.

"If a child experiences major anxiety, it's worth having a consultation or evaluation with one of our child and adolescent specialists," Dr. D'Amico said. "Even if therapy isn't necessary, the meeting helps parents

"We use the latest evidence-based behavioral health practices to offer children and adolescents effective, tailored treatment," said Dr. D'Amico. "Young people who struggle with issues like anxiety, depression or behavior problems can make a positive turnaround with guidance from our team of pediatric experts."

get on the right track."

Zucker Hillside and South Oaks offer services designed to help students of all ages improve their functional abilities. A team of experienced pediatric and adolescent psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists provides comprehensive and compassionate care to help children adapt to school. Both facilities help ease difficult transitions for children and families through:

- » behavioral plans;
- » therapeutic rehabilitation;
- » one-on-one counseling sessions;
- » family counseling sessions;
- » specialized support and education groups for families and children; and
- » medication management and education.

"We use the latest evidence-based behavioral health practices to offer children and adolescents effective, tailored treatment," said Dr. D'Amico. "Young people who struggle with issues like anxiety, depression or behavior problems can make a positive turnaround with guidance from our team of pediatric experts."

Focused Care for Significant Needs

The child and adolescent psychiatry clinics at South Oaks and Zucker Hillside treat young patients with behavioral health issues related to negative experiences at school, including school refusal and associated anxieties.

Specialized services within the Zucker Hillside clinic include an anxiety center for children with conditions that significantly impair their interactions or performance, such as separation anxiety, selective mutism and obsessive-compulsive disorder. South Oaks' Outpatient Behavioral Program offers comprehensive services in the child's home, where the treatment team can observe the home environment and parent-child interactions.

Young people who need more intensive treatment can enter partial hospitalization at South Oaks. In this program, adolescents receive care five days per week — with services including intensive therapy, medication evaluation and medicine management — while residing in their own homes at night. Zucker Hillside and South Oaks also

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BACK TO SCHOOL: HELPING STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES ADJUST

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have facilities to provide inpatient treatment and support.

South Oaks offers a specialty children's inpatient unit for adolescents younger than 13, as well as separate coed and single-sex units for teens ages 13 to 17. The units provide unique programming geared toward sensitive issues involving trauma and abuse that many hospitalized youth face.

Zucker Hillside also has an adolescent inpatient unit for teens ages 13 to 17 requiring close monitoring and intensive evaluation and treatment. The unit

is led by a multidisciplinary team, including psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, social workers and other specialists. The team works with patients' primary care providers to create a comprehensive plan to help patients become stable and return home.

Through the Behavioral Health College Partnership, Zucker Hillside collaborates with 23 local colleges and universities to implement emergency protocols and specialized evaluation and treatment for students grappling with serious behavioral health issues. <<

For information about services for children and adolescents who struggle socially or academically at school, call Zucker Hillside Hospital's Child and Adolescent Health Center at [516-718-8100](tel:516-718-8100) or South Oaks' Child and Adolescent Center of Excellence in Amityville at [631-608-5610](tel:631-608-5610).

For Affected Schoolchildren, Sandy Aid to the Rescue

The Zucker Hillside Hospital was awarded a million-dollar New York State grant to assist students in the Long Beach and Far Rockaway school districts who developed emotional and behavioral adjustment problems caused by Hurricane Sandy. “After the storm hit, we provided many psychological and support services for children and their families, including evaluations for children who were impacted by the hurricane,” said Peter D’Amico, director of child and adolescent psychology at Zucker Hillside. “But this grant enables us to offer much-needed long-term support to children, families and school staff who have been affected by Hurricane Sandy in our coastal communities.”



+ SUPPORT GROUPS

The Zucker Hillside Hospital hosts a variety of support groups, including:

National Alliance on Mental Illness hosts Queens/Nassau monthly meetings with guest speakers, including a Sharing and Caring support group. Family-to-Family classes are held in the spring and fall at various locations. Support groups for those with bipolar disorder meet twice monthly in the Ambulatory Care Pavilion, and for those with anxiety/depression twice a month in the Kaufmann Building. Learn more at namiqn.org or **516-326-0797**.

The Consumer Support Network offers social support especially for Zucker Hillside patients. Meetings take place from 11 a.m. to noon and from 3 to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Call Vivian Weiser, program coordinator, at **718-470-8244** to learn more.

To learn more about our support groups at Zucker Hillside Hospital, please call (516/718) 470-8241.

South Oaks Hospital in Amityville also hosts support groups, including:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meets weekly at South Oaks. To contact the Nassau County Intergroup of AA, call **516-292-3045** or visit nassauny-aa.org.

Gamblers Anonymous holds weekly meetings at South Oaks. To talk with someone at the Long Island Gamblers Anonymous Hotline, call **855-2CALLGA (855-222-5542)**.

Cocaine Anonymous also meets weekly at South Oaks. For general information, call **347-292-7225**.

Families Anonymous, a group for family and friends of those with a substance abuse problem, meets twice a week at South Oaks. For details, call Donna at **631-589-3790**.

To see a full list of the organizations that hold meetings at South Oaks, visit south-oaks.org/support.

From Prescription Pills to Street Drugs: Recognizing Addiction

Prescription pain medication misuse has become an epidemic in this country.

“Prescription pain medication, or opiates, seem nonthreatening because they are legal and most users begin taking them for legitimate reasons,” explained Bruce Goldman, LCSW, director of substance abuse services at The Zucker Hillside Hospital. “But many users don’t appreciate opiates’ strong addictive quality and begin to experiment with them. This can quickly progress to addiction.”

Clinicians at Zucker Hillside and South Oaks hospitals noted a dramatic increase in opiate misuse in the region and throughout the country in recent years.

“More than half of high school seniors in the United States report nonmedical use of prescription pain pills, and adults are just as much at risk,” said Jean Jackson, administrative director of the substance use disorder service line at South Oaks Hospital. “Opiates are an excellent analgesic when used appropriately. But because they are addictive, they can easily become dangerous.”

Misused opiates can cause a host of serious side effects. They affect the central nervous system, causing drowsiness, dizziness, fever, confusion, headache and impaired cognitive function. Other common side effects include unusual dry mouth, constipation and GERD.

“Opiates can be fatal when overdosed; this is sadly and especially true when a patient relapses after quitting,” said Mr. Goldman. “During a relapse, patients may take the same amount that got them high at the peak of their addiction, and their detoxed bodies can’t handle it.”

Ms. Jackson added, “Besides the physical risks, the social impact among opiate abusers is great. Drug addiction can seep into

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every part of life — including getting out of bed in the morning, going to work and interacting with family.”

The danger increases when opiates lead to other forms of substance abuse.

Decreased Access, Dangerous Alternatives

New York State’s I-STOP database lets physicians check a patient’s current prescriptions before writing another. But this safeguard may have unintended results: It can motivate those addicted to opiates to pursue illegal — and expensive — channels for pills.

“When prices become unaffordable, those who suffer from addiction look to other drugs to ease withdrawal and discomfort. Often, that jump is to heroin,” said Ms. Jackson.

Heroin is inexpensive compared to black-market opiates. Because of how it’s processed, heroin comes in a form that lets drug abusers snort rather than inject it. This makes it accessible to more people. “There is no stereotype for heroin users. It could be the librarian who lives down the street. Everyone is at risk for addiction,” said Ms. Jackson.

Research has established that the brains of drug users are structurally different from those of nonusers. But the lack of a genetic test or other methods to identify those at risk means recognizing drug abusers can be difficult.

“Because we don’t know how the brain will react to drugs, it’s so important to be vigilant,” said Ms. Jackson. “If you see a red flag, don’t ignore it.”

Physicians should be on alert if patients routinely ask for pain medication or present with frequent complaints or trauma. Family members are often the first to recognize a problem, so if a patient’s loved one reaches out for help, it is wise to investigate further.

Comprehensive Addiction Treatment

South Oaks and Zucker Hillside offer comprehensive inpatient and outpatient programs to help drug abusers overcome addiction and live a better life. “Shame, embarrassment and guilt deter people from recovery. But we are here to help,” said Ms. Jackson.

Mr. Goldman echoed that sentiment. “Anyone who uses prescription pain medication is at risk for addiction. Patients should

know it is not a failure to need help,” he said.

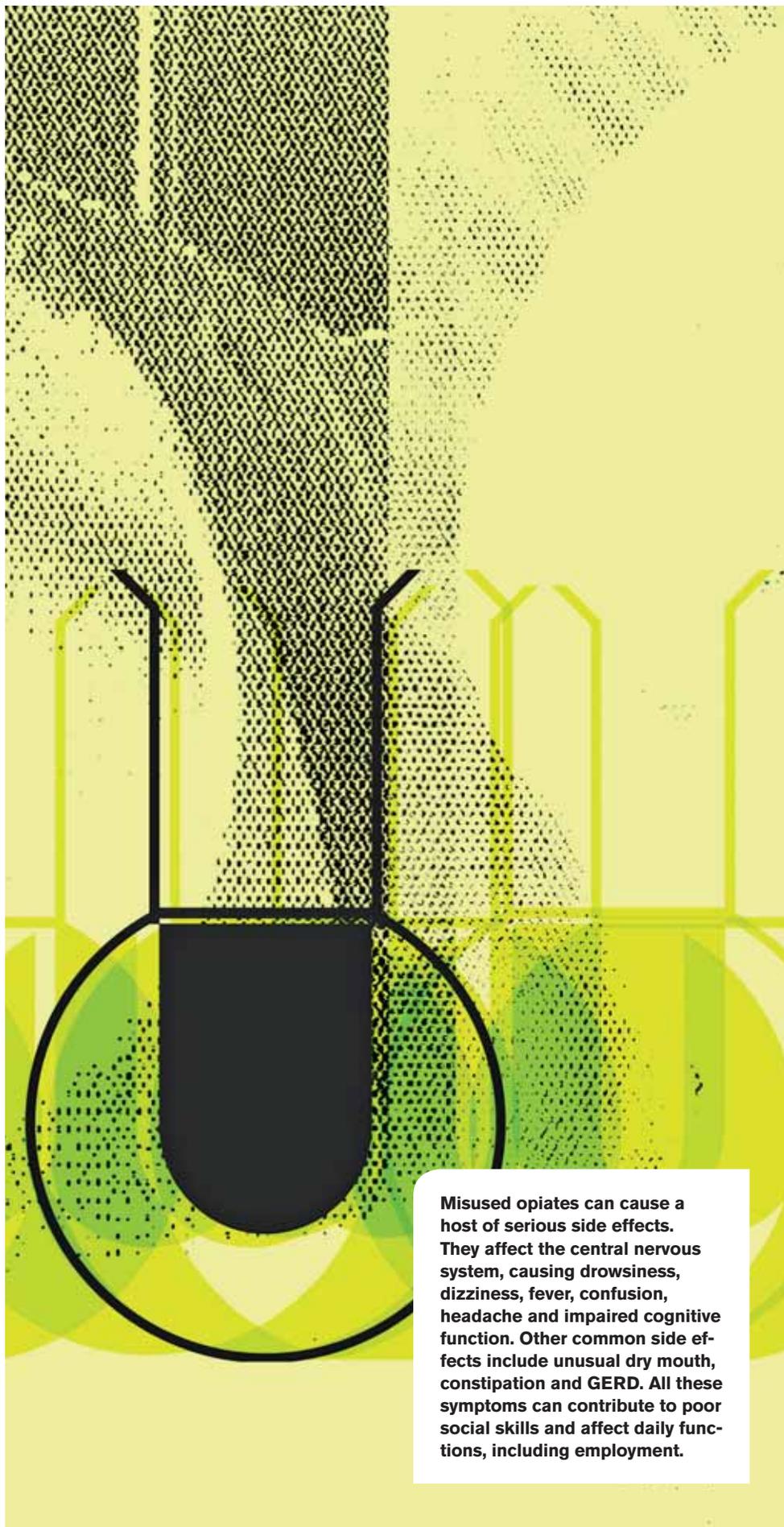
Doctors, counselors, therapists, nurses and other Zucker Hillside and South Oaks specialists work together to develop individualized treatment plans based on each patient’s needs. They also collaborate with a patient’s prescribing physician when appropriate.

“Part of our program is to help patients detox slowly. Also, we find patients safer medications or other therapies that will effectively control their pain without posing a new addiction risk,” said Ms. Jackson. She added that opiates are often not the most effective pain-relief option.

Individual and group therapy teach patients coping and relaxation skills, promote drug-free ways to create positive feelings, and build awareness and self-confidence. The program incorporates meditation, biofeedback, exercise, writing, music therapy and other practices. Medications to treat addiction — including buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone — offer another recovery tool.

If patients or their loved ones are unsure whether a problem exists or are hesitant to undergo treatment, Mr. Goldman encourages them to seek a behavioral health assessment. “No one wakes up and wants to be addicted to drugs. We understand that,” he said. “But when addiction takes hold, all else suffers and falls behind. We help patients understand the value of getting their lives back.”

Ms. Jackson added, “Our goal is not to just wean patients off drugs, but to give them the strength, tools and support to feel better without them.” <<



Misused opiates can cause a host of serious side effects. They affect the central nervous system, causing drowsiness, dizziness, fever, confusion, headache and impaired cognitive function. Other common side effects include unusual dry mouth, constipation and GERD. All these symptoms can contribute to poor social skills and affect daily functions, including employment.

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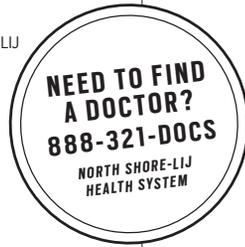
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Speak Up, Reach Out: National Recovery Month

The Zucker Hillside Hospital and South Oaks Hospital recently joined the voices of recovery to highlight National Recovery Month.

Zucker Hillside welcomed community members to its Glen Oaks campus for awareness-raising activities such as screenings, seminars and forums. Off-campus services like the Nassau Day Training Center, Mineola Community Treatment Center and Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treatment/Sign-On Village hosted open-house events.

Educational programs helped raise awareness among health care professionals, too. Patrick Vitale, director of the Substance Abuse Program for Zucker Hillside's Project Outreach, presented information on clinical approaches for treating co-occurring disorders. Michael Dellman, MD, senior vice president at South Oaks, jointly presented a program on recognizing opiate overdose and administering intranasal naloxone (Narcan) with Suffolk County's Prevention Resource Center.

South Oaks employees joined the voices for recovery by donating \$5 each to wear jeans to work one Friday; funds went to the hospital's recovery programs. Furthermore, staff members spent one Saturday reaching out to visitors and community members about recovery at special resource stations on the Amityville campus.

Zucker Hillside concluded its month of recovery programs with a celebratory reception for community members, patients and staff in the Behavioral Health Pavilion Rotunda.

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