

health fitness & Wellness

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April is Limb Loss Awareness Month

The state Senate passed a resolution that recognizes the efforts of Pennsylvanians who have been affected by limb loss, according to the resolution's sponsor Sen. Chuck McIlhinney.

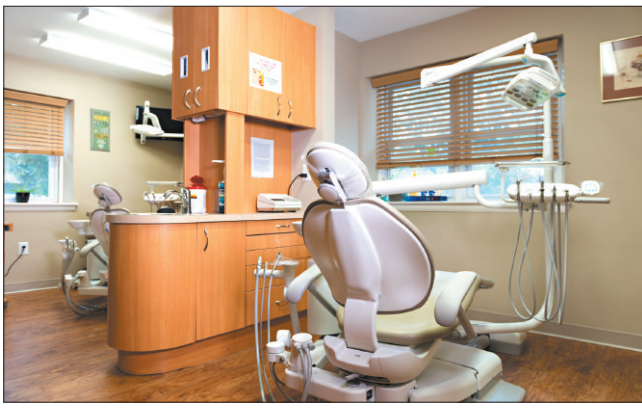
Senate Resolution 346 designates April as Limb Loss Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. The designation is part of a nationwide movement to raise awareness of the struggles faced by people affected by limb loss.

"Regardless of the cause of their limb loss, amputees are forced to contend with a life-long condition that can turn even the simplest job into a serious chore," McIlhinney said. "The general public is often unaware of the challenges faced by the amputee community. Raising awareness of these

issues is the best way to honor their struggle."

McIlhinney noted that two members of his staff have family members who have undergone amputations. Brett Waple, son of Senate Law and Justice Committee Executive Director Gail Reinard, had a partial amputation of his foot several years ago, and John Platak, husband of Chief of Staff Heather Cevasco, had his left leg amputated below the knee three years ago.

According to the Amputee Coalition of America, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting those who are affected by limb loss, more than 2 million Americans have experienced amputation or were born with limb difference. Each day, more than 500 U.S. residents lose a limb.



HealthLink Dental Clinic in Southampton, which provides free dental services to low-wage earning adults, features six recently renovated operatories.

Bridging the gap

HealthLink makes dental care accessible to low-wage earners in Bucks, Montgomery counties

Regina Young

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

At HealthLink, a free clinic for Bucks and Montgomery County residents, this statement has proven itself true.

Fifteen years ago, founder Eugene Jackson created the Southampton-based clinic for low-income, working adults caught between health care's version of a rock and a hard place.

"He wanted to create something to help people who were stuck in the middle — they couldn't afford insurance but they weren't on Medicaid or something like that," said Mae O'Brien, the clinic's executive director.

For 14 consecutive years, HealthLink provided medical care — including dental services — to men and women experiencing financial hardship. But when the Affordable Care Act was implemented — expanding access to health insurance, thereby reducing the volume of medical appointments made at the clinic — HealthLink decided it was time to pivot in a new direction.

However, it never deviated from its original mission.

Instead, it merely sharpened its focus on "bridging the gap" that still exists in dental care, and for the last year, HealthLink, located at 1775 Street Road, has offered nothing but dental services.

"Most people don't always have access to dental insurance," O'Brien said.

They don't qualify for insurance and they don't qualify for things like Medicaid, and that's kind of the gap of people we're seeing," she continued. "People who are working hard and don't have access to government programs or programs that they can afford to pay for themselves."

Renovated over the past year, HealthLink Dental Clinic features six operatories.

"It's a really beautiful space," O'Brien said. "One of the things Mr. Jackson felt very strongly about was that it was not to be a

big, crowded city clinic where you waited hours for services. Patients have appointments. It's clean. It's neat. We tend to not keep people waiting. Everyone who volunteers or works here is very committed to the mission. They get along very well with the patients.

"It's a very pleasant experience."

Volunteers perform exams, cleanings, fillings and extractions, and through a new partnership with the Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry, the clinic now also offers root canals.

"We are proud to be associated with HealthLink," Dr. Amid Ismail, dean of the Kornberg School of Dentistry, said in a press release. "This partnership furthers our school's commitment to provide care to underserved populations, while also giving our students the opportunity to perform more treatments. Patients will gain access to advanced endodontic treatments and restorative dentistry."

Through the partnership, announced in March, the clinic hopes to be able to offer crowns, bridges and dentures in the future. The clinic's goal, O'Brien said, is to become "a complete dental home."

"The whole point of dentistry is maintaining teeth, not pulling teeth," she added.

As HealthLink celebrates its 15th anniversary, 2016 is already proving to be an important year in the clinic's history.

Four-hundred and forty-two appointments took place in January and February this year — 197 more than the same two-month period in 2015. The number of patients in this timeframe also rose (93 more than in 2015), as did eligibility approval rates, which stood at 96 percent in February.

To be eligible for services, a patient must be at least 18 years of age, currently employed, have a household income within 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and be a resident of Bucks

or Montgomery County.

More than 77 percent of the clinic's patients are Bucks residents and over 22 percent live in Montgomery County, which provides door-to-door transportation services for veterans to get to their appointments, said O'Brien, who hopes to see a similar program develop in Bucks.

HealthLink's patients represent a variety of cultures. English is the primary language spoken by approximately 33 percent of patients and Latin/Spanish is the primary language of 54 percent of patients.

Almost 46 percent of HealthLink's patients are between ages 31 and 45, while almost 45 percent of patients fall into either the 18 to 30 or 46 to 55 age brackets. A sign of the times: Older patients who are working past retirement age are also beginning to utilize the clinic's services, O'Brien added.

Services are provided by approximately 18 volunteer dentists and three paid, part-time dentists who fill in the gap when volunteers aren't available, O'Brien said. The clinic also has a dental hygienist/clinic coordinator, a dental assistant and a receptionist who are all bilingual, she noted.

In addition to O'Brien, the clinic's executive director for more than six years, there is a director of institutional advancement and a part-time administrative assistant.

As a nonprofit organization, HealthLink's funding comes from donations and grants.

"Our entire budget is supported by philanthropic giving," O'Brien added.

The clinic's two main fundraising events are a trivia night in the fall and a bowling fundraiser in the winter. This year, a 15th anniversary celebration is being planned for September. Individual and corporate donations are also welcome.

For information, visit healthlinkdental.org or call 215-364-4247.

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Crossing Vineyards offers workouts at the winery

Crossing Vineyards and Winery in Washington Crossing is offering two ways to get outdoors for a workout and then spend relaxing afternoon in the vineyards.

Cycle and Sip, held on April 30, May 14 and 21, and June 11 and 25. Take a scenic 16-mile guided bicycle tour from Washington Crossing Historic Park to New Hope/Lambertville and back. Participants can reward their hard efforts with a wine tasting paired with cheeses, cured meats and chocolates, along with a tour of the winery.

Bring your own bike and helmet. The cost is \$45 per person, reservations required.

Wine Tasting and Yoga takes place April 24, May 1 and 22, and June 5 and 26.

All levels are welcome for yoga in the vineyards. After Savasana among the vines, participants can take advantage of a private wine tasting paired with cheeses, cured meats and chocolates.

BYO mat. The cost is \$45 per person; reservations required.

For information, call 215-493-6500 or visit the winery's website.



Wine Tasting and Yoga at Crossing Vineyards and Winery in Washington Crossing takes place on select dates in April, May and June.

Doylestown Health program explores loss

The Doylestown Health program, "Can You Let It Go?" will be offered on Tuesday, April 26, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Join bereavement coordinators Celia M.R. Blum, and Karyn Arnold, for a discussion focused

on residual emotions and loss. Registration for the free program is required. For information about this program and its location, call and register at 215-345-2079. This is a free program.

Zip. Zero.
Zilch. Nada.
Yup, you heard us right.

Join during the month of April and pay

\$0 ENROLLMENT
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Doylestown 215.794.3700 New Hope 215.862.2200 Warrington 215.918.5900

CORNERSTONE Clubs
www.cornerstoneclubs.com

Grand View renames workplace wellness program

In a move to relaunch and expand its health and wellness offerings to local employers, Grand View Health has renamed its Industrial Medicine program to Workplace Health and Wellness, effective April 1.

Consistent with its mission of "leading the community to a healthier future," the name change reflects Grand View's renewed

commitment to offer occupational health solutions that address the needs of the working community. The role of the Workplace Health and Wellness program within this aim is to provide employers and their employees with convenient access to health and wellness services where they spend the majority of their day, at work.

Grand View's Workplace Health

and Wellness program partners with local employers to provide comprehensive health care services and wellness programs designed to shape a safer, healthier workplace. The range of programs and solutions offered to employers includes services such as new-hire physical examinations, drug testing, immunizations, training and workplace injury care management. Education through health fairs, lunch-and-learn lectures and trainings, are also offered.

For information, visit gvoh.org/workplacehealth or call 215-453-4941.

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