



# HEALTHY BITS

Healthy Bits – A Newsletter Published by Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

## CHI WORKS TO COMBAT MONKEYPOX OUTBREAK



**Dina Orellana, Medical Assistant at CHI, receives her Monkeypox vaccine.**

The 2022 outbreak of Monkeypox has reached South Florida. Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) is dedicated to combating the disease by providing quality medical care and is now offering the Monkeypox vaccine to high-risk individuals.

Monkeypox, a viral disease, commonly shows up as a rash on the skin, flu-like symptoms, and headache, is now classified as a public health emergency by the World Health Organization. Although the virus is not an epidemic currently, CHI doctors are warning the community to take precautions.

“The numbers are significant, and they present

concern,” said Dr. Saint Anthony Amofah, Senior Vice President, and Chief Medical Officer.

As cases continue to rise in South Florida, CHI providers encourage patients to turn to them with their questions and concerns. Dr. Amofah answers some frequently asked questions:

### **How is Monkeypox transmitted?**

Monkeypox is transmitted most through prolonged and direct skin to skin contact. This may be through hugging or kissing, sex, as well as touching bedding or clothing that has been contaminated with the virus. The virus can also be transmitted by respiratory droplets through face-to-face interactions.

### **When should you be concerned that you’ve contracted Monkeypox?**

If you have been exposed to the virus or traveled to an area with a high transmission rate, you should be concerned. Additionally, if you are experiencing rashes or flu-like symptoms, you should self-isolate and contact your primary care physician.

### **Who qualifies for the Monkeypox vaccine?**

The vaccine is available to patients at CHI who are at a high-risk for developing severe disease. That includes patients with immunocompromised conditions such as cancer, HIV, or Lupus. The vaccine is also available to CHI staff.

### **How can you protect yourself against Monkeypox?**

Avoid situations where you are exposed to prolonged direct contact with others. If you are going to be in those situations, try to be fully clothed and wear a mask. It is better to make the presumption that the person next to you is infected.

**For more information about the Monkeypox vaccine and testing, visit [chisouthfl.org/monkeypoxvaccine](https://chisouthfl.org/monkeypoxvaccine) or call 305-252-4820**



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



As we head into the holiday season, I reflect on gratitude for good health. I am thankful to be healthy and thankful to our team for their dedication to maintain the health of our patients and our community. Recently, we received high recognition for the quality of care provided at CHI. In fact, we were ranked as one of the highest performing health centers nationwide due to significant quality improvements over previous years.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded CHI with bronze status as a "Health Center Quality Leader." That means we are ranked in the top 21-30 percent overall in clinical performance among patient-centered medical homes in the United States! CHI received an Access Enhancer award for increasing the number of patients served by 5%, and an Advancing Health Information Technology (HIT) for Quality distinction for best usage of services such as technology and increased patient

positive outcomes. HRSA awarded CHI based on a comparison of CHI's clinical quality measures to more than 1,400 other health centers across the nation.

This is a testament to the team here at CHI, their expertise and compassion to give the best care to everyone. I am so proud of their work and accomplishments.

As you count your blessings this season, I encourage you to take ownership in the mental healthcare of children in our community. Buy a Brick of Hope for yourself, loved ones or friends as a present. It's the gift that lives on forever as it supports the building of a Children's Crisis Center to provide overnight intensive mental healthcare for kids. Your bricks will line the entrance to the new center and remind kids in crisis that you and many others care for them. You can do so on our website at [chisouthfl.org/bricksofhope/](http://chisouthfl.org/bricksofhope/).

Finally, I want to mention two big events we are planning for December. On December 3rd, we will host our World AIDS Day walk to raise awareness for lives lost and highlight prevention and testing. It will take place at JL and Enid W. Demps Park in Goulds from 7:30 am to 1 p.m. Also, make sure you don't miss our big Holiday Festival outside of the Doris Ison Health Center on December 17th. We will be watching the movie *The Grinch*, there will be entertainment and best of all, we will be giving away toys! 'Tis the season for family fun.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Hall".

Blake Hall

# CHI OFFERS EDUCATIONAL DIABETIC GROUP VISITS FOR PATIENTS

Shirl Jones suffered from fainting spells and low blood sugar for months as a diabetic. She was not aware that going through long periods of fasting would be the cause.

"I work very long hours and occasionally will miss meals," said Jones.

She was one of several diabetic patients who participated in a group visit at Community Health of South Florida's Naranja Health Center. CHI is dedicated to offering support and quality care to the South Florida community. As part of that continued care, an interactive visit was offered to diabetic patients like Jones as part of their regular check-up appointment. The visit included an educational cooking demonstration by a nutritionist and one-on-one discussions with CHI physicians and pharmacists.

Rochelle Anderson, nutritionist at CHI, explained to Jones the importance of eating enough as a diabetic.

"Even if you don't think you're hungry, you should still eat to fuel your body during your shift," said Anderson.

Jones shook her head in excited agreement with Anderson, grateful for the suggestion. She now had a renewed approach on managing her diabetes.

"Seeing a nutritionist, a professional, will help them make necessary changes," said Margarita Sarmiento, Licensed Nurse Practitioner.

She has witnessed firsthand among her patients a reluctance in making changes in one's lifestyle due to a lack of education about diabetes.

"Sometimes they just do not want to change," she said.

However, CHI providers are hopeful that more visits like this will bring positive results in the lives of their patients.

During the visit, patients were treated to a healthy, delicious plate of ceviche and black bean salad prepared by Anderson. She also talked about the value of key ingredients in a meal.



**CHI staff and patients pose for a photo after diabetic group visit.**

"I would like for your meals to have a complex carb, for instance, a sweet potato, or black beans. These carbs have fiber in them and provide your body with nutrients," said Anderson.

Diabetes affects 37.3 million people in the United States. According to Dr. Paulin Gotrace, patient education is a key factor in controlling this disease. Dr. Gotrace's focus when treating his patients is encouraging compliance, education, and a healthy lifestyle. He emphasized that the most effective method in his treatment plan is detailing the beneficial results they will see from taking their medication.

"We serve this community and know their needs. Constant education is very important," said Dr. Gotrace.

The patients left the group visit feeling hopeful that they can better manage their diabetes with the information they learned.

"Classes like this will help me because I get educated," said another patient, Charmaine Drammond.



**(Left) Rochelle Anderson, nutritionist at CHI, discusses healthy food options with Shirl Jones, patient (Right).**

# AWARD-WINNING CHIP PROGRAM INSPIRES CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF PATIENTS



**Dr. Rivera Santana (left) poses for a photo with her patient, Janet Reyes (right).**

It's not typical to see your doctor dancing with you on a Zoom workout to a funky hip-hop beat. Patients enjoyed this experience thanks to the CHIP program, an interactive fitness program created by Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) residents Dr. Arshely Fleuristal and Dr. Rivera Santana.

Community Health Initiative Project (CHIP), is a program that targets obesity and nutrition. Dr. Fleuristal and Dr. Santana noticed that these issues heavily affected individuals of Black and Hispanic backgrounds.

Dr. Santana grew up in Puerto Rico and witnessed how obesity and poor eating habits affected her family members. She believed that she would have the same health issues if she did not make necessary changes to her lifestyle.

"I could continue this cycle, or I could try to change," said Dr. Santana.

Dr. Fleuristal added how a reluctance to change lifestyle habits is a key factor in poor health among some of her patients.

"Food and community are huge aspects of their lives, so it is difficult for them to shift from that pattern," said Dr. Fleuristal.

In May 2021, Dr. Santana and Dr. Fleuristal were awarded the Resident Service Cares Award and a grant by The American Academy of Family Physicians. The program began in September 2021 and had a focus group of African American and Hispanic women. Drs. Santana and Fleuristal selected this group as data showed that women in Miami-Dade County were 67% more obese than men.

They concluded that a new approach to tackling these concerns would be

best. They used motivational techniques to help change the mindsets of the 40 women who were selected for this program.

“Simply telling our patients what to do, does not work,” said Dr. Fleuristal. “Giving them the autonomy on how they want to move forward in their health journey is beneficial.” said Dr. Fleuristal.

The 10-month program included free full access to a nutritionist, an online gym membership, a WhatsApp group chat with other patients, and workout equipment. They also attended an in-person visit with their doctor once a month where they addressed concerns they may have had.

“Accessibility to a healthy lifestyle should not be based on how much money you have,” said Dr. Santana.

By the end of the program in June 2022, there was an 82% increase in physical activity among patients and a 93% increase in healthier eating habits. Patients reported significant changes in their appearance and overall wellbeing.

Janet Reyes joined the program to lose weight because she did not know where to begin in her journey. She began eating smaller portions and Dr. Santana checked in with her consistently to keep her on track.

“I started to eat more vegetables and more importantly, I realized that this is a lifestyle change not just a fad diet,” said Dr. Reyes.

Drs. Fleuristal and Dr. Santana are hopeful that the CHIP program will evolve at CHI. They envision having a behavioral health component added to the program

where patients will be able to seek emotional support from CHI therapists during the process.

“We have the power to change lives by encouraging wellness and preventative care,” said Dr. Fleuristal.



**CHI resident Dr. Arshely Fleuristal helped create the CHIP program.**

# OUR COMPASSIONATE TEAM SERVING YOU



**Cecily Hill poses for a photo at the Doris Ison Health Center.**

Cecily Hill, MA, is a Medical Assistant at Community Health of South Florida's Doris Ison Health Center. She has been employed at CHI since 2021. As a medical assistant, she assesses the medical needs of the patient before they see a doctor or nurse. Hill takes pride in offering quality care to her patients. Originally from Miami, Hill spends her free time going to the beach and reading. Hill plans to continue her career in children's behavioral health.

Juan Lopez is a Lead Driver at Community Health of South Florida, Inc. He is responsible for transporting patients from their homes to CHI Health centers. He began working at CHI in 2014 as a driver and was promoted to Lead Driver three years later in 2017. Lopez loves giving back to his community and believes he is making a difference transporting patients to their health appointments. He is originally from Mexico City, Mexico and enjoys spending time with his daughter.



**Juan Lopez, stands proudly in front of his CHI transportation van.**



# WORK WITH US!

Join the CHI team and build a career based on a mission to deliver the highest-quality, compassionate care to South Florida patients.

**We have open positions across multiple locations in a variety of categories**



**See our open job opportunities by scanning the QR code below:**

