Healthy COMMUNITY

Fall 2026

'Dancing with the Stars' TV Personality

Carrie Ann Inaba



This Issue: Focus on Fall Health & Prevention

Powers HEALTH®

FOCUS on Fall Health and PREVENTION

COVER *story*

Carrie Ann Inaba



Redefining Strength Through Healing and Self-Compassion

FOR CARRIE ANN INABA, strength no longer looks like pushing through pain or powering past limits. Since her 2013 diagnoses, her journey with chronic illness has become one of awareness, balance and a deeper understanding of what it truly means to care for her body.

Inaba describes her health journey as one that continues to shift and grow over time.

"Some things have stabilized because I've learned what my body needs while other challenges still ebb and flow," she explains.

The biggest change has been her awareness.

"I no longer push through symptoms the way I once did. I recognize patterns sooner, respect my limits more and understand that managing chronic illness is not about fixing the body but partnering with it."

That shift has allowed her to move from resistance to understanding, creating a more sustainable and supportive way of living.

COVER PHOTO: IRVIN MIVERA / GRAPHICS METROPOLIS

How has learning compassion for yourself shaped your life and career?

For Inaba, self-compassion has been transformative.

"Learning compassion for myself has allowed me to stop measuring my worth by productivity or endurance," she says.

In her career, that mindset has helped her make more intentional decisions.

"It's helped me choose sustainability over burnout," she says. Personally, it has changed how she treats herself on difficult days.

"Compassion has given me permission to rest without guilt, to say no without explanation and to trust that taking care of myself is not a weakness. It's a responsibility."

"Celebrate the small victories even if no one else does."

What has helped you manage flare-ups more effectively?

Over time, Inaba has embraced a more integrative and consistent approach to her health.

"I've learned that consistency matters more than intensity," she explains.

Her routine blends Western medicine with Eastern practices, including energy work and nervous system regulation. She also emphasizes the importance of addressing emotional stress alongside physical symptoms.

"I've started incorporating Myers' Cocktail IV infusions regularly to replenish my body," she says. "And peptides like BPC-157 and thymosin alpha have been a game changer."

Working closely with functional medicine providers, she remains open to new approaches.

"I believe strongly in combining Eastern and Western medicine, honoring what's time-tested while also embracing what's emerging."

How has connecting with others affected your healing journey?

Sharing her story has created meaningful connections with others navigating similar challenges.

That sense of community has been an important part of her healing, reinforcing that no one is alone in their experience. Through advocacy and openness, Inaba continues to help others feel seen, understood and supported.

What message would you share with others living with chronic illnesses?

Looking ahead, Inaba's message is one of hope and acceptance.

"Your life is not on hold because of your illness," she says. "It may look different than you imagined, but it can still be meaningful, joyful and deeply fulfilling."

For her, that has meant simplifying her life and aligning it with her health.

"I've made my life much smaller. I do less. I rest more. My life, my home and my activities are now in alignment with my health."

Living with lupus, fibromyalgia, Sjogren's disease and neurodivergence, she has learned to embrace her needs rather than push against them.

"I'm much happier and have far fewer flare-ups," she shares. "It took me a long time to get here, but now I have a life that truly works for me not against me."

Her advice is simple but powerful: "Be gentle with yourself. Celebrate the small victories even if no one else does. And remember that listening to your body is an act of courage and love."

Hospitals earn recognition for stroke, cardiac, diabetes care

The acute care hospitals of Powers Health again were recognized for efforts to improve outcomes in cardiac, stroke and type 2 diabetes patients, earning accolades from the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines initiative.

The hospitals earned the following:

Community Hospital

Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Award: Gold Plus, Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus

Advanced Therapy Recognition Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Coronary Artery Disease STEMI Receiving Center Award: Gold Plus, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Coronary Artery Disease NSTEMI Award: Gold, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Mission: Lifeline® Regional Award

St. Catherine Hospital

Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Award: Gold Plus, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Coronary Artery Disease NSTEMI Award: Gold, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Coronary Artery Disease STEMI Award: Bronze

Mission: Lifeline® Regional Award

St. Mary Medical Center

Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Award: Gold Plus, Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Heart Failure Award: Gold Plus, Target: Heart Failure Optimal, Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

FOCUS on Fall Health and PREVENTION

Fall Sports Safety:

Keeping High School Athletes Strong All Season Long



Fall is one of the busiest and most exciting times for high school athletics. From football under the Friday night lights to volleyball, cross country running, soccer and cheer, student-athletes are back in motion. With packed schedules and multiple sports in full swing, safety and injury prevention are essential to keeping athletes healthy all season long.

Common Risks Across Fall Sports

Each sport carries its own risks, but many injuries are shared across all fall athletics. Sprains, strains, overuse injuries and dehydration are common, especially as athletes transition from summer to more structured practices. Sudden increases in activity levels can put stress on muscles and joints, increasing the chance of injury.

Concussion Awareness: Know the Signs

Concussions are a serious concern in contact sports like football and soccer, but they can happen in any activity. Recognizing symptoms early is critical. Warning signs include headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea and sensitivity to light or noise.

If a concussion is suspected, the athlete should be removed from play immediately and evaluated by a healthcare professional. Returning too soon increases the risk of more serious injury and longer recovery times.

Preventing Injuries Through Preparation

Warm-ups and stretching are essential for all athletes. Dynamic stretching before activity and proper cool-down routines afterward help reduce muscle strain and improve flexibility. Strength training, especially for core stability and joint support, also can help prevent injuries.

Wearing the right equipment is equally important. Properly fitted shoes, sport-specific gear and protective equipment can significantly reduce the risk of injury.

Hydration and Recovery Matter

Even as temperatures begin to cool, hydration remains critical. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, decreased performance and increased injury risk. Athletes should drink water regularly before, during and after practices and games.

Rest is just as important as training. Busy schedules can lead to overuse injuries if athletes do not allow their bodies time to recover. Getting enough sleep and taking rest days when needed helps prevent burnout and keeps athletes performing at their best.

Supporting Safe Play

Student-athletes participate in multiple sports or activities, increasing the physical demands on their bodies. Open communication between athletes, coaches, parents and healthcare providers is key to identifying concerns early.

By focusing on preparation, proper technique and injury awareness, schools and families can help ensure a safe and successful fall sports season. Staying healthy means staying in the game. ■

Sources: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), American Heart Association (AHA), Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine*

PAUL BAKER / DYNAMIC GRAPHICS / GETTY IMAGES

Eating Healthy This Fall: Seasonal Vegetables for Better Health



Fall is the perfect time to refocus on healthy eating. Seasonal vegetables are at their peak, offering fresh flavor, strong nutrition and an easy way to support overall wellness.

Eating with the seasons helps you get the most out of your meals. Fall vegetables often are more affordable, nutrient-rich and versatile. Options like sweet potatoes and squash provide fiber and vitamin A, while broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower offer vitamin C and support digestion. Leafy greens, such as kale and spinach, remain great sources of essential nutrients.

Healthy eating can be simple. Try roasting vegetables with olive oil and herbs, adding them to soups or pairing them with lean protein and whole grains for balanced meals.

As colder months approach, nutrition plays an important role in supporting energy and immune health. Small, consistent choices can make a big difference.

Fall is a natural time to reset habits. By choosing fresh, seasonal foods, you can support your health and feel your best all season long.

HYDRATION IN THE FALL: MYTH VS. FACTS

When temperatures drop, many people assume hydration becomes less important. In reality, staying hydrated in the fall is just as critical as it is in the summer.

MYTH: You don't need as much water when it's cooler.

FACT: Your body still loses fluids through breathing, sweating and daily activity, even in cooler weather. You may not feel as thirsty, but your hydration needs remain the same.

MYTH: Only water counts toward hydration.

FACT: While water is best, other options like herbal teas, milk and water-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, also can help keep you hydrated.



MYTH: You'll feel thirsty when you need water.

FACT: Thirst is not always an early sign of dehydration. By the time you feel thirsty, your body already may need fluids.

Fall activities like outdoor sports, yard work and busy schedules can increase your risk of dehydration without you realizing it. Dry indoor air from heating systems also can contribute to fluid loss.

The best approach is to stay consistent. Drink water throughout the day, carry a reusable bottle and pay attention to signs like fatigue or dry skin.

Hydration supports energy, focus and overall health year-round. Even as the weather changes, your body still depends on it.

Sources: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine*

CENTRAL IT ALLIANCE / GETTY IMAGES

FOCUS on Fall Health and PREVENTION

Back *to* Routine, Back *to* Health: *a* Fresh Start *for* Fall



With summer over and schedules shifted, the return to routine offers more than just a change in pace. It creates an opportunity to reset healthy habits, prioritize preventive care and prepare families for a strong, healthy season ahead. From back-to-school checklists to immunizations and annual wellness visits, fall is one of the most important times of year to refocus on health.

Why Routine Matters for Health

Summer often brings flexible schedules, later nights and less structure. While that break can be refreshing, it also can disrupt sleep patterns, eating habits and regular medical care. Returning to a routine helps restore consistency, which is essential for both physical and mental health.

For children, routines support better sleep, improved focus in school and stronger immune systems. For adults, they create space to prioritize preventive care, manage chronic conditions and stay on track with overall wellness goals. Establishing a steady routine early in the fall can set the tone for the entire season.

Back-to-School Health Essentials

The start of the school year is a natural checkpoint for families. It is the perfect time to make sure children are physically and mentally ready for the demands of the classroom and extracurricular activities.

Annual and sports physicals are key. These visits help identify any underlying health concerns, ensure growth and development are on track and provide an opportunity to discuss nutrition, sleep and activity levels.

IRINA KOZMOVA / GETTY IMAGES

Vision and hearing screenings are equally important. Undetected issues in these areas can affect learning, concentration and overall academic performance. Addressing them early helps children succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Parents also should review medications, allergies and emergency plans with schools to ensure children are supported throughout the day.

Immunization Awareness: Protecting Your Family and Community

Now is an ideal time to review recommended vaccines for children, teens and adults. Vaccinations play a critical role in preventing the spread of illness and protecting those who are most vulnerable.

For school-aged children, staying up to date on required immunizations helps prevent outbreaks of diseases, such as measles, whooping cough and influenza. For adolescents, vaccines like HPV and meningitis offer long-term protection against serious health conditions.

Adults should not overlook their own immunization needs. Seasonal flu vaccines, updated COVID-19 vaccines and boosters like tetanus are important for maintaining protection. Staying current not only protects individuals, but it also helps safeguard the broader community.

The Role of Preventive Checkups

Preventive care is one of the most effective ways to maintain long-term health. Routine checkups allow healthcare providers to monitor key health indicators, identify concerns early and provide guidance tailored to each individual.

Annual wellness visits typically include blood pressure checks, lab work, screenings and discussions about lifestyle habits, such as diet, exercise and sleep. These visits are an opportunity to ask questions, address concerns and build a relationship with your healthcare provider.

For individuals managing chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma, fall is a critical time to ensure treatment plans are working effectively before the colder months begin.

Building Healthy Habits for the Season Ahead

Returning to routine is not just about appointments. It is also about daily habits that support overall well-being.

Sleep should be a top priority. Establishing consistent bedtimes and limiting screen time before bed can improve sleep quality for both children and adults. Adequate rest supports immune function, mood and cognitive performance.

Nutrition also plays a key role. Packing balanced lunches, incorporating fruits and vegetables into meals and limiting processed foods can help maintain energy levels throughout the day. Staying hydrated, even as temperatures cool, is equally important.

Physical activity should remain part of the routine. Whether it is sports, walking or active play, regular movement supports physical health and reduces stress.

Mental Health and Routine

The transition back to school and structured schedules can be both exciting and stressful. Students may face academic pressure, social changes or anxiety about new environments. Adults also may feel the shift as routines become more demanding.

Creating space for open communication is essential. Checking in regularly with children and teens about how they are feeling can help identify concerns early. Encouraging balance between school, activities and downtime supports mental well-being.

“Small steps taken now can prevent larger health concerns later.”

For those experiencing ongoing stress or anxiety, speaking with a healthcare provider may provide valuable support and resources.

A Strong Start to a Healthy Season

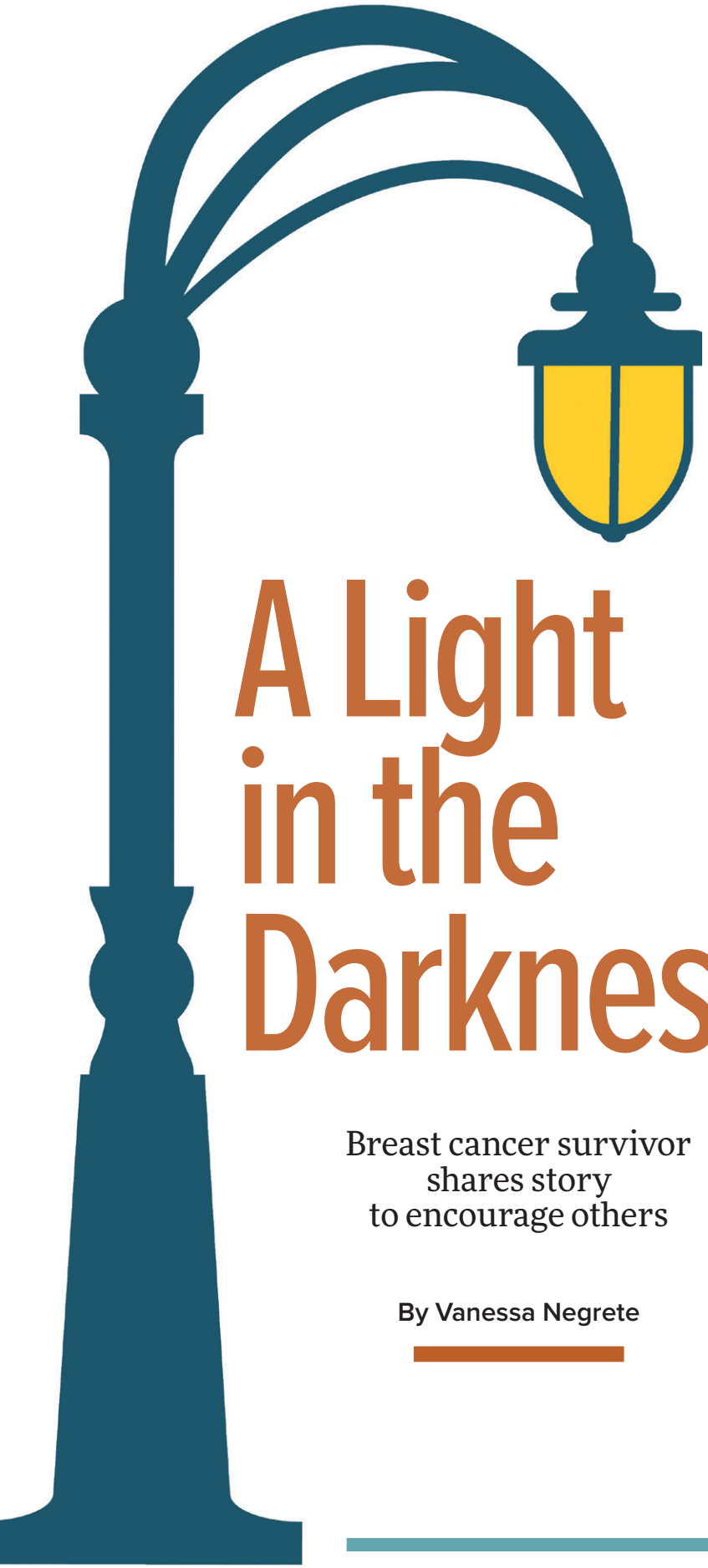
Fall is more than a return to routine. It is a chance to reset priorities and take proactive steps toward better health. By scheduling preventive visits, staying up to date on immunizations and building consistent daily habits, families can enjoy the season.

Small steps taken now can prevent larger health concerns later. Whether it is a checkup, a vaccine or a simple adjustment to daily habits, each action contributes to a healthier future.

As routines settle in, remember that health is not just something to manage when problems arise. It is something to invest in every day. ■

For more information about the services offered at Powers Health, visit PowersHealth.org/services-HC-fall26.

Sources: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine*



A Light in the Darkness

Breast cancer survivor shares story to encourage others

By Vanessa Negrete

Amid the darkness of a cancer diagnosis, a message of hope from someone who has sat in the same shadows can serve as a point of light to brighten the path.

Cancer survivor Debbie Wells is using her story to illuminate the way for others.

"Debbie has been a light throughout her journey," said Nicole Surratt, an oncology breast nurse navigator with Powers Health. "She is such a positive ray of light. She inspires others."

Debbie, a married mother of three, was diagnosed with Stage 2 HER2-positive breast cancer. Although it is an aggressive form of the disease, it tends to respond well to treatment. After undergoing chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, Debbie was declared cancer free.

Through it all, she was motivated by hope.

"Hope is one of those words that can feel very fragile," she said. "Like we are crossing our fingers, squeezing our eyes shut, blowing out a candle on a birthday cake, hoping for a good outcome. That is not the kind of hope that could have held onto me and my family last year as we went through four grueling months of chemo, then an extensive surgery, then 10 rounds of radiation. No crossing of my fingers was going to pull us through that."

She and her husband, Scott Wells, have served as executive pastors of The Gate Church in Hammond since 1999 and also serve as executive directors of the nonprofit InnerMission, which assists people in Northwest Indiana.

Through that work, she has witnessed the importance of ensuring people feel seen, heard and valued. By telling others about her cancer journey, she walks alongside those facing a similar diagnosis or treatment.

GETTY IMAGES



Above: Cancer survivor Debbie Wells shares a moment with her husband, Scott.

COURTESY OF DEBBIE WELLS

A gifted public speaker, Debbie shared her story in May at the Perennial Ball, an annual fundraiser that benefits Powers Health Cancer Research Foundation, and at the National Cancer Survivors Day celebration of life in June at the Cancer Care Center, 10191 Broadway, Crown Point.

"We don't take for granted that we live in an area that has such world-class medical care."

Wells explained how her breast cancer diagnosis came as a shock.

"I've always been really healthy," she said. "We exercise regularly and eat fairly healthy, so I just wasn't expecting this diagnosis after a routine mammogram."

When Debbie learned she had breast cancer, she was in the throes of work, a family wedding, managing her household and myriad other responsibilities that go along with life.

"A diagnosis doesn't bring every other area of your life to a halt for you or anyone around you," she said.

As she navigated this new part of life, she leaned on hope.

She found hope in four places: faith in Jesus Christ; a supportive husband and family; extended family and church family; and her medical team.

Powers Health offers nationally accredited comprehensive cancer care programs that are designed around the needs of patients and their loved ones from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond. These services are among the most advanced in cancer diagnostics and treatment.

A multidisciplinary team of physicians and healthcare professionals work together to provide each patient with a comprehensive evaluation that considers all available treatment options.

"We don't take for granted that we live in an area that has such world-class medical care," Debbie said. "From the Northwest Cancer Centers, to my wonderful Powers Health nurse navigator Nicole, who was with me from Day 1, to my amazing radiologist, Dr. Mary Nicholson, to my wonderful oncologist, Dr. Mohamad Kassar, to the nursing staff … everyone."

At the foundation is her faith in God.

"The Lord was just so good to us as we walked through all of the stress of last year," she said. "There is a verse in the Bible that says, 'The joy of the Lord is our strength.' We saw that firsthand last year that, even on the darkest days, there was his joy and strength." ■

For more information about Cancer Care Services at Powers Health, visit PowersHealth.org/cancer-care-HC-fall26.

Breast cancer AWARENESS



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an opportunity to raise awareness about one of the most common cancers affecting women. While significant advances in screenings and treatments have improved survival rates, early detection remains one of the most effective ways to improve outcomes. Taking time to understand your risk, stay current on recommended screenings and recognize potential warning signs can make a lifesaving difference.

Know Your Risk

Breast cancer can affect anyone, but certain factors may increase your risk. Age is one of the most significant, with most breast cancers diagnosed after age 50. Other risk factors include a family history of breast cancer, inherited gene mutations, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2, dense breast tissue, obesity, alcohol use and physical inactivity. However, many people diagnosed with breast cancer have no known family history, making routine screening important for everyone.

Your healthcare provider can help assess your personal risk and recommend the screening schedule that is right for you.

The Importance of Early Detection

Mammograms remain the gold standard for detecting breast cancer before symptoms develop. Early-stage cancers often are smaller, easier to treat and associated with better outcomes than cancers found after symptoms appear.

In addition to routine mammograms, it is important to become familiar with your own body. Contact your healthcare provider if you notice a new lump, changes in breast size or shape, skin dimpling, persistent pain in one area, nipple discharge or changes in the appearance of the nipple. While these changes are not always cancer, they should always be evaluated promptly.

Healthy Habits Can Lower Your Risk

Although breast cancer cannot always be prevented, healthy lifestyle choices may help reduce your risk. Regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables and avoiding tobacco all contribute to better overall health and may lower your risk of several chronic diseases, including some cancers.

Preventive care also plays an important role. Annual wellness visits provide an opportunity to discuss family history, review risk factors and ensure you are current on recommended screenings.

Take Charge of Your Health

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is about more than wearing pink. It is about taking action. Whether it is scheduling your first mammogram, making an overdue screening appointment or encouraging a loved one to do the same, every step matters.

Early detection saves lives. This October, make breast health a priority and talk with your healthcare provider about the screenings and preventive care that are right for you. ■

For more information about Breast Cancer Care Services at Powers Health, visit PowersHealth.org/services/cancer-care/breast-cancer.

Sources: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine*

PEOPLE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

Community Hospital offers advanced epilepsy evaluation in Northwest Indiana

By Karin Saltanovitz



Above: Shaila Gupta, DO, is a neurologist with Powers Health.

When seizures are difficult to diagnose or control, finding answers can be challenging. Community Hospital's Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU) in Munster is helping patients better understand their condition through advanced testing and specialized care.

The EMU is designed for people experiencing seizures or seizure-like events. Community Hospital's EMU is recognized as a National Association of Epilepsy Centers Level 3 Epilepsy Center, a designation that reflects its commitment to advanced epilepsy diagnosis and treatment.

"Many seizure disorders are complex, and symptoms alone don't always tell us what's happening," said Shaila Gupta, DO, a neurologist with Powers Health. "The Epilepsy Monitoring Unit allows us to gather detailed information that helps us make a more accurate diagnosis and develop a personalized treatment plan."

For patients and families living with epilepsy, obtaining a clear diagnosis can have a significant impact on daily life.

Patients may be referred to the EMU for a variety of reasons, including confirming or ruling out epilepsy, identifying seizure types, determining where seizures begin in the brain and evaluating whether surgery may be an option. Physicians also use the unit to assess medication effectiveness and investigate episodes that may resemble seizures but stem from another condition.

During a typical stay, which averages about three days, patients are monitored around the clock in private rooms equipped with technology to continuously monitor brain activity. This includes an electroencephalogram (EEG). The monitoring combines brain wave recordings with video, audio and cardiac data, giving specialists a comprehensive view of what occurs during an event.

"One of the biggest advantages of an EMU evaluation is that we can correlate what we see clinically with what is happening in the brain at the same time," Dr. Gupta said. "That information is incredibly valuable when determining the best course of treatment."

The unit is staffed by a multidisciplinary team that includes epileptologists, neurologists, EEG technologists, nurses, neuropsychologists, case managers and social support professionals. Together, they work to provide comprehensive evaluations and individualized care plans.

For patients and families living with epilepsy, obtaining a clear diagnosis can have a significant impact on daily life.

"Our goal is to provide answers and help patients achieve better seizure control and a better quality of life," Dr. Gupta said. "The earlier we can accurately identify what is causing these events, the sooner we can help patients move forward with confidence." ■

National Association NAEC of Epilepsy Centers

For more information about epilepsy care, visit PowersHealth.org/epilepsy-care-HC-fall26.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY POWERS HEALTH

‘No reason for women to suffer’



Patient of Powers Health’s Chronic Pelvic Pain Program shares ‘miraculous’ story

By Kerry Erickson

The sharp, gut-wrenching pain radiates in their abdomen, lower back and down their legs. Internal organs feel like they are being stretched, twisted and squeezed. Their stomachs bloat and blood loss is copious.

Even with these alarming and debilitating symptoms, sufferers are dismissed, going without a diagnosis and treatment for up to a decade.

“On average, it takes seven to 10 years for a woman to be diagnosed with endometriosis,” said Osama Zaghmout, MD, an OB/GYN on staff at Powers Health hospitals. “That is unacceptable.”

His goal is to whittle that timespan down to mere weeks, not years.

Dr. Zaghmout is leading the new Chronic Pelvic Pain Program at Powers Health, aimed at expediting the care women receive for causes of chronic pelvic pain, including endometriosis, adenomyosis and fibroids.

Path for a Chronic Pelvic Pain Program patient

Dr. Zaghmout will examine patients, and when appropriate, refer them to Powers Health Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy for an evaluation. Based on those findings, the patient may be scheduled for an MRI to look for signs of endometriosis. If there is bowel involvement, those patients will be directed to see a gastroenterologist and a colorectal surgeon.

“Our goal is to get our Chronic Pelvic Pain patients through Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy and lined up for an MRI quicker, if necessary. If there is bowel involvement, then we do collaborative surgery with colorectal and gynecological surgeons,” Dr. Zaghmout said.

The main objective of this program is early diagnosis and treatment, which means improving the quality of life for patients whose chronic pelvic pain and, in many cases infertility, have been dismissed for years.

One woman’s story

One of these patients is Jill Brotan. The Dyer woman suffered from extreme pain, especially in her lower back and abdomen, and inflammation for years during every menstrual cycle.

“I would bleed through tampons and pads within minutes for weeks,” she said. “I was 125 pounds. There was no reason for my periods to be that excessive. I didn’t have PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome). That was not the issue. Doctors could not find anything on imaging or an ultrasound.”

DARIA SMIRNOVA / GETTY IMAGES



Left: Osama Zaghmout, MD, an OB/GYN on staff at Powers Health hospitals, visits with Jill Brotan, a Chronic Pelvic Pain Program patient, at his office in Munster.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY POWERS HEALTH

When she and her husband decided to start a family, she was 22 years old and living in Virginia. Despite being young, she could not get pregnant. Coupled with the severe menstrual pain she experienced near constantly, she knew something was wrong, but doctor after doctor dismissed her pain, infertility and concerns.

The responses from physicians to her plight often were, "You're just having normal periods. You're still young. You'll get pregnant eventually," she recalled.

"Jill is the perfect example of how a woman can benefit from the Chronic Pelvic Pain Program."

After two years of proverbial pats on the head while she struggled with debilitating pain and infertility, she visited a fertility clinic.

There, she consulted with a doctor who finally listened to her. After the initial visit, she was scheduled for a laparoscopy to clean out any possible tissue that was preventing her from getting pregnant, she said.

"The doctor said, 'We are just going to go in and see what is going on. No more questions, no more tests, no more blood work.' After that first laparoscopy, I was told I had endometriosis. The doctor cleaned out the tissue as best he could."

Endometriosis is an often-painful condition in which tissue that is similar to the inner lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus, most often on the pelvic organs. Adenomyosis happens when endometrial tissue grows into the muscle layer of the uterus. Adenomyosis is different from but can exist with endometriosis, which is the growth of endometrial tissue outside the uterus, Dr. Zaghmout said.

Two months after the surgery Jill became pregnant with her first child.

Jill was going to have the surgery again but was able to get pregnant with her second child. Jill and her family moved back to Northwest Indiana. Unfortunately, the excruciating menstrual pain, bloating and fatigue also returned.

"It was like I could feel every organ tightening and being squeezed," she said. "I had constant pain everywhere below my waist. The inflammation and bloating were so bad that I looked four months pregnant."

At 32 years old, she had had enough. She made an appointment with Dr. Zaghmout. After talking with him, she decided to have a partial hysterectomy on April 6 – right after her 12th wedding anniversary.

"My family was complete, and I was tired of being in pain," she said. "After the surgery, the pain was gone instantly. I was in more pain going into surgery because of my period than I was after surgery. It was a miracle."

In addition to removing Brotan's uterus, Dr. Zaghmout removed endometrial tissue that was wrapped around her bladder, up her pelvic wall and on her upper abdomen. Her fallopian tube was stuck to her bowel with endometrial tissue, and her uterus was triple the size of a normal uterus.

"Jill is the perfect example of how a woman can benefit from the Chronic Pelvic Pain Program," Dr. Zaghmout said. "There is no reason for women to suffer. Our goal is to listen to these women, to get them diagnosed and treated as soon as possible so that they can enjoy their lives pain free." ■

For more information about Women's Services at Powers Health, visit PowersHealth.org/womens-care-HC-fall26.

Night and Day Difference

Better breathing leads to restful sleep, improved health

By Vanessa Negrete



David Hall, of Lansing, is breathing easier these days thanks to Powers Health and the Genio device.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY POWERS HEALTH

Trouble falling asleep, waking up repeatedly during the night or still feeling tired after a full night's sleep are more than annoyances – they could be signs of poor sleep.

Uninterrupted sleep is linked to good health. It helps the body stave off illness, fight infections and support mental health, among other benefits, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Sleeping fewer than seven hours per night increases the risk of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and stroke. Poor sleep also disrupts hormone balance and metabolism, according to the CDC.

One of the most common sleep disorders is sleep apnea, a condition in which a person's breathing starts and stops as they sleep.

Along with diagnostic tools, Powers Health offers treatment options for sleep disorders, including implantable devices designed to give patients the restful sleep they need.

"My staff and I visit with each patient and evaluate their airway with a physical exam and scope, enabling me to customize interventions, including Genio and Inspire," said Leonard Covello, MD, a Powers Health Medical Group otolaryngologist. "Our goal is to make sure every patient gets a healthy night's sleep."

The first course of treatment for sleep apnea patients often is a system that uses a mask to deliver continuous positive airway pressure, commonly known as a CPAP.

When CPAP therapy is not a good fit for a patient, implantable options such as Genio and Inspire may be the solution.

Over the years, hundreds of Covello's patients have experienced relief from sleep apnea through the Inspire implant. The Inspire system is made up of a stimulation lead and breathing sensor that is placed under the skin of the neck and chest through two small incisions. Before bed, the patient activates Inspire with a small, handheld remote. The system monitors each breath taken during sleep and delivers mild, rhythmic stimulation that restores tone to the upper airway, allowing normal breath to occur.

Powers Health now offers a second sleep apnea implant called Genio. In February 2026, Dave Hall became Dr. Covello's first patient to receive the Genio implant.



Shown is the Genio device.

Dave's first sign his sleep health needed attention came from his spouse.

"My wife was bugging me because I was snoring a lot," the 74-year-old Lansing man said.

A sleep study confirmed Dave was experiencing obstructive sleep apnea. He tried a CPAP, but it was not a good fit.

"The CPAP didn't work out," he said. "Dr. Covello told me about Inspire and Genio."

Around the same time Dave was diagnosed with sleep apnea, he and his cardiologist were discussing his possible need for a pacemaker. When comparing Inspire and Genio, Dave leaned toward Genio.

"With Inspire and a possible pacemaker, I thought it would be too many wires," Dave said. "I told him I wanted the other one – Genio. It seemed less invasive. It's just a little piece they put under your chin."

Recovery was minimal – some swelling under his chin for about two weeks and a scar 2 inches long. After Genio is implanted, patients heal in about two months. Then a sleep specialist activates the device and is available long term to monitor and manage the sleep apnea.

Learning how to use the device was simple, Dave said.

Genio works by gently stimulating nerves in the tongue during sleep, opening the airway and allowing users to breathe freely. The implant in the chin pairs with a small external device that the user attaches with an adhesive strip under the chin before going to sleep. The device activates and manages treatment wirelessly.

"It feels like a light touch under the chin," Dave said. "You link your smartphone to the Genio and use your phone to adjust the intensity to the level that's right for you."

Users charge the activation chip daily with a small portable charger.

Dave reports that he wakes up fewer times in the middle of the night. He wonders now if it was sleep apnea and not a full bladder that used to wake him up.

"I get more sleep now, and my wife doesn't complain about me snoring," he said. ■

For more information about Otolaryngology Services at Powers Health, visit PowersHealth.org/ear-nose-throat-HC-fall26.

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YOUR FALL HEALTH CHECKLIST

Small steps now can help you stay healthier all season. As routines change and cooler weather arrives, fall is a great time to check in on your health, catch up on preventive care and prepare for the months ahead. Use this simple checklist to help you and your family make wellness a priority this season.



- **Get your flu shot —** Prepare before flu activity typically peaks.
- **Check your vaccines —** Ask your provider whether you are due for COVID-19, RSV, shingles or other recommended vaccines based on your age and risk factors.
- **Schedule overdue screenings —** Mammograms, colorectal cancer screenings, blood pressure checks and other preventive care shouldn't get lost in a busy fall schedule.
- **Prepare for shorter days —** Pay attention to changes in your mood, sleep and energy as daylight decreases.
- **Keep moving —** Aim to maintain regular physical activity as temperatures cool.
- **Fall-proof your home —** Clear walkways, improve lighting and prepare for wet leaves, ice and other seasonal hazards.
- **Restock the medicine cabinet —** Check expiration dates on medications, thermometers and basic first-aid supplies.
- **Know where to go for care —** Understand when symptoms call for primary care, immediate care or the emergency department.