United Medical Center’s magazine is here to keep you informed and to keep you well. The helping and caring hands of our doctors, health care specialists and administrative staff all work together to care for you and your family.

CEO Matthew Hamilton, United Medical Center

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Message from the CEO

We at United Medical Center are here to serve the southeast Washington, D.C. community, and that includes all who are in need of quality, caring medical treatment. Caring for people is at the heart of everything we do; all are welcome here, no matter where they are from.

Our mission is to serve you, your family, neighbors and friends. Providing medical services is essential to the well-being of the community, and a healthy community ensures a better life for us all. The United Medical Center family of doctors, nurses and staff believes that educating patients is just as important as treating patients. As a result, we have educational and treatment programs that work hand-in-hand, will lead to better and longer lives, and allow patients to enjoy family, friends and our community.

All of us at United Medical Center work every day to earn the trust of you and the people in our community. We are here to provide you with the quality care and caring that will keep you and your family healthy. We are proud to be the hospital to serve this community.

This issue of our newsmagazine has important information that will help improve your health, and the health of your family and friends. We hope you will find it useful and that you will make United Medical Center your medical home.

We look forward to serving you.

Thank you,

Matthew Hamilton
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. It is reported that 30 percent of Washington, D.C. residents have high blood pressure. Monitoring one's blood pressure is important to helping manage it, and so we have included a Blood Pressure Log on the back cover that allows you to record your blood pressure for more than one month.
Breast cancer has gained widespread attention through media, companies promoting and merchandising breast cancer awareness, fundraisers for research, and celebrity testimonials. “Good Morning America” news anchor Robin Roberts and model Naomi Sims put a spotlight on breast cancer by discussing their personal battles.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in the District of Columbia, 520 new breast cancer cases, resulting in 110 deaths, will occur in 2018. An average of 466 District women are diagnosed each year and 97 die annually from breast cancer. In Southeast D.C., 118 cases were reported in 2013 according to the D.C. Cancer Registry, Bureau of Cancer and Chronic Diseases.

Dispelling Myths and Understanding Risk Factors

Contrary to some beliefs, women can get breast cancer even if they don’t have a family history of it. In fact, over 85 percent of women who get breast cancer do not have a family history of it.
Another thing to remember is that breast cancer often has no symptoms, like a lump.

Risk factors include age, race and family history. African American women are more likely than Caucasians to die of breast cancer. For women who have a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer, the risk doubles. About 5-10 percent of breast cancers may be attributed to inherited changes (mutations) in certain genes. The most common gene changes are those of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Women with these gene changes have up to an 80 percent chance of getting breast cancer.

A mix of medical and social factors may also increase risks. Women who had their first menstrual period before age 12 have a slightly increased risk due to estrogen levels. Women who had their first pregnancy after age 30 or those who never had a full-term pregnancy are also at risk, as are women who went through menopause after age 55. Dense breast tissue can also increase risk because more gland tissue and less fatty tissue make it harder to spot cancer on a mammogram. The use of alcohol and tobacco increases risk. Those who have 2 to 5 drinks daily have about 1.5 times the risk of women who do not drink.

Racial Disparities and Breast Cancer

Breast cancers diagnosed in African American women are more likely to have factors associated with poor outcomes and recoveries. Premenopausal African American women appear to be at risk for an aggressive type of breast cancer associated with shorter survival.

Higher death rates among black women likely reflect factors such as when the breast cancer is found, obesity, as well as access and response to cancer treatment. The overall 5-year relative survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed in 2005-2011 was 80 percent for black women compared to 91 percent for white women.

Cutting Your Risk

Women should eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, take care of themselves and practice breastfeeding if they are pregnant or plan to be.

Exercise also helps reduce breast cancer risk. One study found that as little as 1 hour and 15 minutes to 2 hours of brisk walking per week reduced the risk by 18 percent. The American Cancer Society suggests exercising for 45 - 60 minutes, 5 or more days a week. Risk factors may also be reduced by avoiding weight gain and obesity, engaging in regular physical activity, and minimizing alcohol intake. Women should also consult with their medical caregiver when considering menopausal hormone therapy.

Prevention at Home

The earlier breast cancer is detected, the longer the survival rate.

The National Cancer Institute has an online, interactive Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Tool that estimates a woman’s risk of developing invasive breast cancer. To access the tool, go to www.cancer.gov/bcrisktool.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation offers directions for performing three different self-exams at www.nationalbreastcancer.org/aboutbreast-cancer/breast-self-exam.aspx. Through their Early Detection Plan, a person may select the options, including email alerts, calendar reminders, text messages or downloading a personal plan.

What to Do if You Find a Lump

Do not jump to conclusions. Many women have “lumpy breasts” (swollen lymph nodes or calcium deposits). If a lump is detected while you shower or perform a home breast exam, visit your health-care provider and request having a mammogram done at UMC.

United Medical Center is the only facility in the District with a new digital mammogram machine that’s faster, safer, more comfortable and more accurate. The Philips Micro-Dose mammogram machine at UMC features a heated and rounded design plate for comfort. It also uses up to 50 percent less radiation and produces clearer and more accurate images with its photon counting technology.
In today’s busy world, we do our best to keep up with life’s daily demands, but it’s getting harder. We have endless “to-do” lists filled with tasks that range from cleaning, food shopping and cooking to checking homework and paying bills. Beyond the burdens of home responsibilities, many are stressed at work. It’s no wonder that many Americans aren’t getting enough sleep.

Getting adequate rest boosts our health and well-being. A good night’s sleep is linked with mood, the ability to focus, and better memory. According to a 2016 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) more than one-third of American adults do not get enough sleep. What’s more, African Americans are more likely than Caucasians to sleep for fewer than six hours a night and have poor sleep quality and daytime sleepiness. Additionally, and perhaps understandably, those who are unemployed sleep less than those who are employed.

Waking up energized and refreshed is the mark of a good night’s sleep, which also helps the heart and mind and impacts weight. Adequate sleep is restorative for the brain and aids in learning. African Americans spend only about 15 percent of their night in “slow-wave sleep” stage — considered the most restorative phase. Caucasians spend 20 percent of their night in this phase, resulting in a higher quality of sleep.

Insufficient sleep is linked to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, arthritis, obesity, depression, and premature aging. Lack of sleep is also associated with more behavioral problems such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To promote a good night’s sleep, get moving. Exercise helps people fall asleep faster and more soundly. However, timing is everything. Workouts are best done several hours before bedtime.

Diet also impacts sleep. Make an effort to finish dinner a few hours before the lights go out. Eat dairy foods since they contain tryptophan, a sleep-promoting substance also found in seeds, nuts, bananas, honey, and eggs. Carbohydrate-rich foods also elevate the level of sleep-inducing tryptophan. Cereal and milk, yogurt and crackers, and bread and cheese are all ideal late night snacks. Avoid foods that are high in fat, like cakes and cookies.
Drink enough water to stay hydrated. Any more than that and you’ll be waking up in the middle of the night for a bathroom break. Health experts advise that within six hours of bedtime, people should refrain from caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.

Create a bedtime routine. Doing the same activities every night alerts the body that it’s time to snooze. Relax! Take a bath, read a book or magazine, practice relaxation techniques, or watch TV, but make sure you’re in a different room. Restricting computers, TVs, and work from your sleep space will strengthen your mental association between the bedroom and sleep.

Opt for paperback books. Many e-readers and tablets are backlit with blue frequencies of light, which trick the brain into thinking that it’s still daytime. Reading on these devices for a few hours before bedtime seems to suppress the sleep hormone melatonin, making it more difficult to nod off.

Finally, make sure your sleep space is dark and quiet. If necessary, use earplugs or a white noise appliance and an eye mask. Keep the temperature comfortably cool.

Limit long daytime naps. If you nap, limit yourself to a 10- to 30-minute cat-nap.

Remember that as we age, sleep needs change. It’s important to know how much snoozing is recommended since individual needs vary. Nearly everyone has an occasional sleepless night, but those who repeatedly have trouble nodding off should see a doctor. After all, everyone deserves the benefits that go along with a good night’s sleep.
Making smarter choices about food is about keeping it simple. It’s about choosing foods with the shortest ingredients lists on the labels; cutting back on trans fats and processed foods; and opting for raw fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains more often. If you feel adventurous, you may want to try organic, farmer’s markets, gluten-free and vegan.

Understanding what unhealthy foods contain or lack is the first step. It will become easier to start crossing items off your grocery list and adding new ones. Begin by reading labels. Avoid trans-fat (hydrogenated vegetable oils) and processed foods as much as possible in order to prevent risk for heart disease and other health issues. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that the trans-fat content be listed on product “Nutrition Facts” labels. The ingredients list in processed foods is long, and filled with words most people can’t pronounce. As a rule, these are preservatives, which are chemicals made for the foods we stock in a pantry or cabinet.

Processed foods include almost everything that comes in a box, can, or bag. Beyond preservatives, these foods often contain additives, artificial flavorings, and other chemical ingredients. They’re often short on nutrition and big on cheap “empty calories” that leave you feeling hungry later. The bulk of what they contain is lots of sodium, preservatives, trans-fat, and sugar in the form of high fructose corn syrup. Examples include cookies, soups, chips, cakes, frozen dinners, cereals, white bread, soda, and canned fruit.
Avoiding specific areas in a grocery store or supermarket helps you become a healthier food buyer. Processed foods are usually found in the center aisles. The outside areas of the store are the spots where you want to shop. These areas contain all the bold colors like green, red, yellow, orange, and purple fruits and veggies that are loaded with nutrition. Meats, fish, seafood, eggs and other dairy products are also in these areas.

Once you get home with better food picks, you can start to eat healthier and “cleaner.” Cooking instead of microwaving a frozen pizza is one of the best ways. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables should be a daily habit. Try bell peppers, mushrooms, carrots, celery, eggplant, and spinach. Chop them up into salads or toss a combo into plastic baggies. Munch on them for lunch and snacks.

Choose whole-grain products over refined ones. Opt for whole wheat breads, brown rice, quinoa, or oats. Store-bought salad dressings and pasta sauce can be easily and inexpensively made at home instead. Tasty recipes need only a few items. Try whisking together oil, vinegar, garlic powder, and parsley or oregano. It’s quick and easy as a marinade for meat or dressing for salads.

A delicious marinara sauce takes 15 minutes to prep and 30 minutes to cook. The ingredients list is simple: crushed tomatoes (fresh or low-sodium canned), parsley, chopped onion and garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper.

Avoid canned soup. Homemade soup can be made in 30 minutes or less. All you need are fresh carrots, celery, onion and water for a great vegetable stock.

Cereal bars are overrated and loaded with sugar. A 4-oz. cereal bar can contain up to 30 grams of sugar. Check the labels and only buy bars in which you easily see individual pieces of fruit, nuts, or seeds.

Flavored yogurts are also high in sugars, artificial sweeteners, colors, and flavors. Opt for plain yogurts. Add your own fresh fruit.

Processed meats and cured meats should be limited. A 2016 report by the American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund found that eating processed meats boosts the risk of stomach cancer.

In an effort to enhance taste or extend shelf life, processed meats are salted, fermented, smoked, or cured. Usually composed of pork or beef, some examples include bacon, ham, hot dogs, sausages, salami, corned beef, beef jerky, canned meat, and meat-based sauces.

Curing is done to preserve or flavor meat or fish by adding a combination of salt, sugar, and either nitrate or nitrite. Many curing processes also involve smoking – and cured, smoked foods are also linked to heart disease.

Rather than changing your whole diet all at once, start small. You don’t need to eliminate all the “bad” foods, but try to eat them as infrequently as possible.
Starting your day with a short walk daily can melt those extra pounds before they begin holding you down and stealing your mobility. Being overweight or obese can sap your energy and affect your health. A Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25-30 is considered overweight; 30 or higher is obese. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer are directly related to obesity.

Southeast D.C. community members face challenges in battling the bulge. The obesity rate is 36 percent in Ward 7 and 35 percent in Ward 8, according to a 2014 report by the D.C. Department of Health. Additionally, 14 percent of residents in each ward have diabetes, 40 percent have hypertension, and 4 percent have heart disease.

Being overweight and obese takes a toll on Americans’ health and productivity. The estimated annual cost of obesity in 2008 was $147 million. Medical costs for people who are obese were $1,429 more than those of people who were of a “normal weight.”

Poor nutrition and inactivity are the two top reasons people are overweight and obese. The best way to burn fat is to eat better and start moving. Walking is the easiest and most inexpensive exercise. It can also be one of the most effective and enjoyable. An added bonus is that walking is good for most people – regardless of age.

Here are some of the ways walking will benefit you:

- Helps control weight.
- Reduces risk of Type 2 diabetes, asthma and some cancers by 20 to 60 percent.
- Strengthens the heart and cardiovascular system.
- Helps prevent and control high blood pressure.
- Increases levels of good cholesterol, lowers bad cholesterol.
- Tones legs, abdomen, buttocks and arms – when people walk with shoulders back, head high, tummy sucked in and arms pumping.
- Energizes the body and mind by increasing circulation and oxygen.
- Elevates mood by stimulating and releasing endorphins that cut stress and anxiety.
- Helps keep knee, hip and ankle joints in good working order.
- Increases vitamin D levels, which is essential for bone health and immunity.
- Lets you de-clutter your mind and think clearly. Walk without headphones and take in the sights and sounds. If you’re walking solo, preview or review your day. Give some thought to anything that’s bothering you.

So get moving today! Drop that extra weight and enjoy better health, one step at a time. Just 30 minutes of walking briskly five times a week can make a dramatic difference. You can walk three 10-minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions.
Born and raised in the District of Columbia, Dr. Raymond Tu works to improve the healthcare of our community through research, advocacy, and ensuring standards of excellence for United Medical Center.

Dr. Tu joined UMC as a student in 1977, working in the copy room. Since then, he has written scientific papers, served on prestigious medical boards, lectured around the world, received distinguished honors, and appeared on radio and television shows, including his own TV show, “Wellness,” which ran for three years.

Dr. Tu has research interests in genomics, spine radiology, Medicaid practices, and other important subjects. But as United Medical Center’s Chair of Radiology, his focus is on ensuring area residents receive the finest care possible.

“We’re providing the best patient care for all citizens of Ward 7, Ward 8, and Prince George’s County with the best CT, the lowest-radiation-dose mammograms, and the highest-resolution computer radiography systems in the area,” Dr. Tu said.

As one example of that dedication to the community, the UMC Radiology Department was recently awarded American College of Radiology (ACR) CT accreditation for its new 64 Channel General Electric Revolution EVO CT Scanner. Under the direction of Dr. Tu, Director Jean Mabout and CT Technologist Chris Stewart, UMC earned full accreditation for adult and pediatric head/neck, chest and abdomen procedures on its first application to ACR.

The EVO CT Scanner helps UMC medical professionals serve patients more efficiently, quickly, and compassionately. It delivers faster and more accurate results, with up to 82 percent less radiation. The scanner’s metal suppression software provides clear images in patients with hip implants, dental fillings, and spinal screws. Since the scanner reconstructs up to 55 images per second, a cardiac patient’s life-saving chest scan can take less than one minute.

To help save women’s lives through breast cancer screenings, Dr. Tu helped UMC obtain the new Philips MicroDose digital mammogram machine. The MicroDose is faster, more comfortable, uses up to 50 percent less radiation, and produces clearer, more accurate images.

Dr. Tu is the President-Elect of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia. He has served on the D.C. Board of Medicine and several District Mayoral committees. In addition, he is Chair of the Medicaid Committee for the American College of Radiology; Medicare Advisor for Novitas (Medicare Contractor for Washington, D.C.); Advisor for Current Procedural Terminology for the American Medical Association (AMA); Alternate Delegate for the Medical Society of the District of Columbia at the AMA House of Delegates; and representative for the American Society of Neuroradiology for Health Policy.

Dr. Tu advocates for equal access to health care. In his article, “Social Determinants of Health (SDH)” published in The American Society of Neuroradiology (ASNR) newsletter, he noted that how and where an individual is born, grows, lives, works and ages affects health. “Health plans, independent of how funded, must measure and adjust for SDH-factors, such as paid maternity leave, childhood development, access and cost to education, income and its distribution, social exclusion, ethnic heterogeneity, immigration, firearm and drug-related deaths. Inevitably social determinants of healthcare create risk and influence all areas of medicine,” Dr. Tu wrote.

In a “Diversity Matters” column for the Journal of the American College of Radiology, he wrote, “As the debate over racial equality and the future of health care in our country continues, the struggles and individuals allowing the creation of Medicaid and Medicare should be remembered as we continue to be mindful of our responsibilities as a nation.”

UMC is proud of Dr. Tu, his many accomplishments, and most especially his commitment to the people of our community.
Health-care Classes Now Forming at United Medical Center

United Medical Center offers direct healthcare programs at NO COST for DC residents that include personalized hands-on training with specialists in health care for practical experience. Classrooms and laboratories are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and supplies identical to those found in clinical labs in health-care settings.

The following University of the District of Columbia Community College Workforce Development Direct Health-care programs are now forming for the Spring 2019 Semester at United Medical Center (UMC) at NO COST! These include:

- Nursing Assistant
- Dialysis Technician
- EKG Technician
- Medical Assistant
- Patient Care Technician
- Pharmacy Technician
- Phlebotomy Technician

Classes begin January 2019!

Eligibility/How To Register:
- All students must be DC Residents.
- Interested persons must attend a mandatory “Information Session” followed by the CASAS exam (Reading/Math) at United Medical Center.

No appointment is necessary; please plan to stay up to one and a half-hours. Please call 202-574-6854 for dates.

What You Should Bring:
- Proof of DC residency (DC Driver’s License/Non-Driver’s ID)
- High School Diploma/GED/College Transcripts
- Attendees will receive a medical and background clearance packet with forms required to be completed prior to admission.

United Medical Center
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Phone: 202-574-6854
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Mission: “To reduce unemployment and underemployment in the District of Columbia by enhancing the skills of its residents.”
Dr. Melat Debela understands that neighborhood pharmacies do more than fill prescriptions. They also provide knowledge and resources to educate and empower the community and improve its overall health. Dr. Debela’s new outpatient pharmacy at United Medical Center fills the needs of Wards 7 and 8 by providing a vital link to services.

"An outpatient pharmacy at UMC is essential in addressing healthcare disparities. One factor would be convenience, one-stop doctor visits and medication, and bedside delivery for discharge patients so they don’t have to take their scripts and struggle with transportation to be able to fill them. We will also be providing free home delivery," Dr. Debela said.

Born and raised in Ethiopia, Dr. Debela moved to the United States when she was 19. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Temple University in Philadelphia in 2010. "I’ve always been passionate about health care. Being a pharmacist allows me to interact with patients daily in addressing their health care needs and health disparities in underserved communities," she said.

After managing retail pharmacies in the City of Brotherly Love, Dr. Debela moved to the District of Columbia five years ago. She worked as a pharmacist in a retail setting in Ward 8 for three years. "It inspired me to open an independent neighborhood pharmacy in the same ward," she reflected.

Dr. Debela asserts that the biggest challenge facing the pharmacy profession is very low or below cost reimbursements from Pharmacy Benefit management companies.

"As a result, several small neighborhood pharmacies that have been serving their community for decades are being forced to close their doors. This limits patients’ access to health care, especially in underserved areas," Dr. Debela said. "Pharmacy associations at state and national levels are working diligently and advocating for independent pharmacies, so I try to contribute to these efforts individually as a pharmacist and also as a Director in the Washington, D.C. Pharmacists Association."

The new outpatient pharmacy at UMC is where Dr. Debela consults with patients about their medication therapy and provides written information about each prescription. "I also do periodic medication therapy management and comprehensive medication reviews. This encourages patients to be more knowledgeable and proactive in managing their treatment," Dr. Debela explained.

Diabetes management is especially important in Wards 7 and 8, which lead the District in the number of diabetes cases. Of the 64,000 diabetics in D.C., 17,000 individuals are unaware they have the medical condition.

In 2006, the United Nations designated November 14 as World Diabetes Day in order to raise awareness of diabetes, its prevention, treatment, and complications.

"I believe pharmacists are the most accessible health care providers and, as such, play a key role in the screening and management of diabetes. For every four people diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, one is undiagnosed. A simple routine test performed at a pharmacy can provide an efficient method of identifying a patient with a diagnosis," Dr. Debela noted.

In addition to guiding patients through managing medications and adverse effects, pharmacists can counsel on appropriate diet and exercise routine in treating diabetes.

United Medical Center welcomes Dr. Debela and her new pharmacy, and encourages the community to meet her and utilize her services and care.
United Medical Center is doing everything we can to make sure the people of our community have complete access to the health care they need and deserve, especially when it comes to preventative care. Too often, things like lack of transportation and time can keep people from obtaining quality care.

Our Mobile Health Clinic brings our medical professionals – doctors, nurse practitioners and medical technicians – directly into the community to diagnose and treat high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and respiratory problems, kidney disease, and other conditions before they become serious or life-threatening.

The Mobile Health Clinic is 38-feet long and 12-feet wide. It has exam rooms and equipment for drawing blood and running tests. We provide many of the same health-care services that you can receive here at United Medical Center in the UMC Mobile Health Clinic. This includes testing for cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and HIV/STD. We also provide immunizations, sick and well visits, and referrals.

Our medical professionals on the UMC Mobile Health Clinic can help you learn about your health and they will connect you to primary care physicians and specialists and to resources in the community for any social and mental health issues you may have.

Furthermore, our Mobile Health Clinic staff can save you a trip to the emergency room by treating unexpected health matters that may occur such as allergies, rashes, earaches, stomach aches, sore throats, burns, muscle strains and more.

Our Mobile Health Clinic staff will help you make your health a priority. They will treat you with caring and compassion and assist you in managing your health conditions easily and conveniently.

We want to be sure that you have no reason to put off getting quality care and finding caring ways to improve your health. The UMC Mobile Health Clinic will visit neighborhoods, senior communities, public housing, and other locations in the District’s Wards 7 and 8 as well as in neighboring Prince George’s County, Maryland. For more information, please call 202-329-2434.
United Medical Center is the only facility in the District with a new digital mammogram machine that’s faster, safer, more comfortable and more accurate.

Did You Know?

Walking is the easiest and most inexpensive exercise, and reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes, asthma and some cancers by 20 percent.

According to a 2016 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of American adults do not get enough sleep.

Health experts advise that within six hours of bedtime, people should refrain from caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in the District of Columbia, 520 new breast cancer cases, resulting in 110 deaths will occur in 2018.
My Blood Pressure Log

Name

My Blood Pressure Goal

Instructions

• Take at least two blood pressure readings one minute apart - once in the morning before taking medications and in the evening before dinner.

• For best results, remain still for at least 5 minutes. Sit with your back straight and supported and your feet flat on the floor.

• When you measure your blood pressure, rest your arm on a flat surface (such as a table) so your upper arm is at heart level.

• Record your blood pressure on this sheet and show it to your doctor at every visit.

• You can also use AHA’s Check. Change. Control.® Tracker (ccctracker.com/aha), a free online tool to help you track and monitor your blood pressure.

• You will need a campaign code to sign up for the CCC Tracker. Find the campaign code on the map of your state and sign up.

Date A.M. P.M.

1310 Southern Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20032