

# FOR YOUR Good Health



BON SECOURS BALTIMORE  
HEALTH SYSTEM

A PUBLICATION OF THE BON SECOURS BALTIMORE HEALTH SYSTEM

WINTER 2010

## Community Care You Can Count On

DEAR FRIENDS:

As you may recall, Bon Secours Baltimore Health System received significant media attention last spring. The coverage focused on the financial issues we faced, and raised questions about our ability to sustain our acute-care services. Today, we want to update you with good news. Bon Secours Baltimore Health System has made significant progress in meeting its financial challenges and will maintain all of its operations, including hospital acute-care services. In short, we remain fully committed to serving the people of West Baltimore.

Several factors have contributed to this improvement in our financial picture. First, we have expanded partnerships with the state of Maryland and a growing number of local jurisdictions, which has led to an increase in patient volumes.

Second, we expect to receive a \$5 million grant from the state of Maryland that will allow us to make needed investments in operations and equipment.

Finally, we want to stress that the Bon Secours Health System Inc. and the Sisters of Bon Secours remain committed to serving Baltimore. The Bon Secours national system recognizes the vital role Bon Secours plays here and will continue to support the work being done in Baltimore.

Our role in West Baltimore is not limited to the medical care delivered inside the hospital's walls. Our community development, housing and workforce development programs are critical to the community's overall health. And working with Operation ReachOut Southwest, we support a range of activities to improve the neighborhoods in the area. These community-based activities will continue, and we are taking steps that we believe will attract additional support to allow us to expand our work to meet the need.

The coming year will be an exciting one. We have begun a community engagement process to hear from people who live in the area we serve; through this process we can determine what we should be doing to improve health outcomes in the community. We will also be working with other healthcare providers, philanthropic supporters, patients, elected officials and other stakeholders to refocus the entire healthcare delivery system in West Baltimore to make it more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people.

Bon Secours has been providing care to the people of West Baltimore for more than 125 years. We are pleased to say that we remain committed to building on that legacy of service for many years to come.



*Samuel L. Ross, M.D., M.S.*



*Richard J. Statuto*

Samuel L. Ross, M.D., M.S.  
CEO  
Bon Secours Baltimore Health System

Richard J. Statuto  
CEO  
Bon Secours Health System Inc.

# Older and Wiser

Head-to-toe tips for staying healthy for years to come

IF 40 IS THE NEW 20, THEN 70 IS THE NEW 50, RIGHT? Perhaps—if you take a few savvy steps that can help slow the natural aging process.

## YOUR BRAIN

Losing memory and brain function is not a normal part of aging, says Jane F. Potter, M.D., a member and past president of the American Geriatrics Society. But just like any other part of your body, the brain needs exercise to stay strong and healthy.

Studies have shown that keeping both your brain and your body active can stave off mental decline, says Sandra Fryhofer, M.D., a member and past president of the American College of Physicians. “I’ve given patients a prescription to take a ballroom dancing class, because it exercises your body and your brain,” she explains. Any mental stimulation is beneficial, whether it’s doing crossword puzzles, working on the computer or having an engaging conversation.

## YOUR CORE

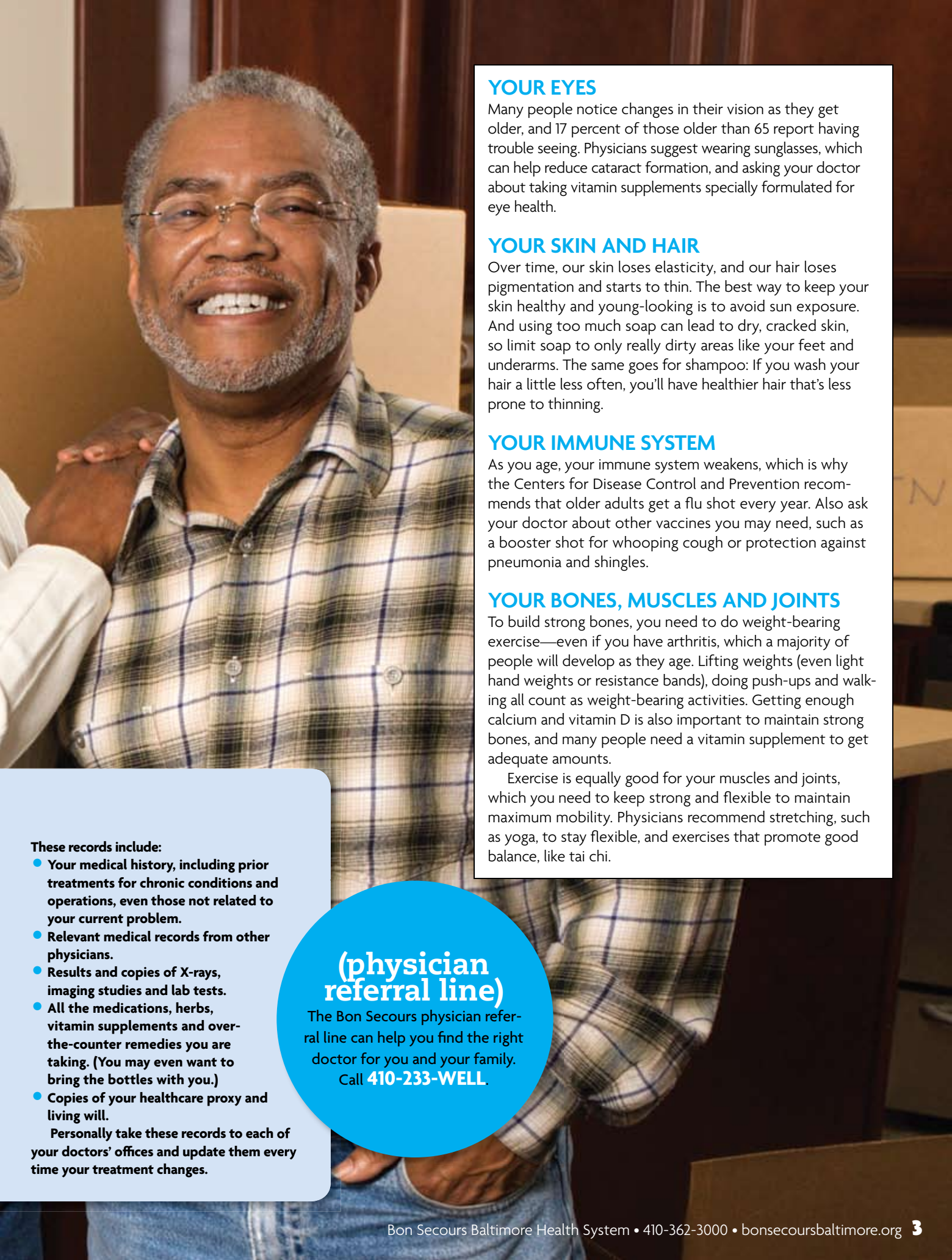
It’s not unusual to gain weight as you get older; in women, menopause can add about five pounds, including fat to your waist. Help keep the core of your body in shape by toning abdominal muscles through exercises like sit-ups or using a stability ball. Plus, a stronger core will protect your back, is good for your posture and can help your balance. And be sure to maintain a healthy weight, which is good advice at any age.

## Talk the Talk

**“What we have here is a failure to communicate.” This famous line, from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, should never apply to your healthcare team. As you get older (and wiser), it’s important to schedule regular screenings and checkups. As the focus of that care, you are in the perfect position to help keep the lines of communication open.**

**We can’t stress enough how important it is for each of your doctors to know about your other treatments, what medications you are taking, and what your treatment plans are. Then they can adjust their recommendations to help keep your health on track without causing any unnecessary complications.**

**How can you help? Get copies of your most up-to-date health records from all your physicians, such as behavioral health providers, OB/GYNs and other specialists.**



## YOUR EYES

Many people notice changes in their vision as they get older, and 17 percent of those older than 65 report having trouble seeing. Physicians suggest wearing sunglasses, which can help reduce cataract formation, and asking your doctor about taking vitamin supplements specially formulated for eye health.

## YOUR SKIN AND HAIR

Over time, our skin loses elasticity, and our hair loses pigmentation and starts to thin. The best way to keep your skin healthy and young-looking is to avoid sun exposure. And using too much soap can lead to dry, cracked skin, so limit soap to only really dirty areas like your feet and underarms. The same goes for shampoo: If you wash your hair a little less often, you'll have healthier hair that's less prone to thinning.

## YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

As you age, your immune system weakens, which is why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that older adults get a flu shot every year. Also ask your doctor about other vaccines you may need, such as a booster shot for whooping cough or protection against pneumonia and shingles.

## YOUR BONES, MUSCLES AND JOINTS

To build strong bones, you need to do weight-bearing exercise—even if you have arthritis, which a majority of people will develop as they age. Lifting weights (even light hand weights or resistance bands), doing push-ups and walking all count as weight-bearing activities. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D is also important to maintain strong bones, and many people need a vitamin supplement to get adequate amounts.

Exercise is equally good for your muscles and joints, which you need to keep strong and flexible to maintain maximum mobility. Physicians recommend stretching, such as yoga, to stay flexible, and exercises that promote good balance, like tai chi.

### These records include:

- Your medical history, including prior treatments for chronic conditions and operations, even those not related to your current problem.
- Relevant medical records from other physicians.
- Results and copies of X-rays, imaging studies and lab tests.
- All the medications, herbs, vitamin supplements and over-the-counter remedies you are taking. (You may even want to bring the bottles with you.)
- Copies of your healthcare proxy and living will.

Personally take these records to each of your doctors' offices and update them every time your treatment changes.

## (physician referral line)

The Bon Secours physician referral line can help you find the right doctor for you and your family.  
Call **410-233-WELL**.



BON SECOURS BALTIMORE  
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Bon Secours Hospital, Inc.  
2000 W. Baltimore St.  
Baltimore, MD 21223



# Faithfully Serving

## Young people make a difference in the community while individually growing and learning

IT'S A GIVEN—a child's face will light up when you give him or her a gift, no matter how big or small. And you can't help but feel excited when you sign the check to your favorite charity. The adage is true—it really is better to give than to receive. And those involved with Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry Program live those words every day.

"It's a great opportunity. I'm excited to have this chance to work with such great staff and patients," says volunteer Kathleen Pormento.

Pormento is one of five young people currently participating in the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry Program in Baltimore. She volunteers in the Renal Department.



*Volunteers from left: Laura Coonfield, Nadya Alboschy, Shannon Curran (program director), Sarah Kramer, Rose Keeley, Kathleen Pormento*

### Experience That Counts

The 20-something college graduates commit a year of their time and talent to learn from their service, live simply and to practice God's justice.

Volunteers are placed in various departments within the health system, often where they have expressed professional interest.

The young people in the program have a wide range of interests including: healthcare, education, social work, nutrition, law, the Bon Secours Sisters Academy and much more. Volunteers are continually learning and growing professionally and spiritually.

The Sisters of Bon Secours established the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry in 1999. After volunteering in an after-school program, one young lady went back to school and became a teacher. Another went on to law school and is now a practicing attorney. At least five former volunteers are currently in medical school. A former volunteer in the nutritional

services department later returned to school to obtain a master's degree.

Of the volunteers this year, two aspire to become doctors, two want to become nurses, and one wants to be a physician's assistant. They say they are getting much more from the experience than they could have ever imagined.

### New Surroundings

The volunteers are living and working in an urban environment. For many, this is their first exposure to the problems some people in the city face every day.

Nadya Alboschy, a volunteer in the cardiology departments, says, "We are exposed firsthand to the social injustices that we learned about in

school. This is a chance to make a difference and help others."

Volunteering for a Catholic organization is also important to the group. Laura Coonfield, who volunteers in the Emergency Department, says, "The community part of the program really adds so much to it. My ministry here has helped me with my ministry at home. I'm surprised at how much I've been learning and growing."

The program provides volunteers with a place to live and a small stipend. ■

**(reach out)** If you'd like to learn more about the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry Program, visit [bonsecours.org/bsvm](http://bonsecours.org/bsvm) or call Program Director Shannon Curran at **410-442-3161**.

