Think Carrier.

Carrier Clinic takes the lead in alternative treatments and Compassionate Care.
FROM OUR CEO

"Marginalized. Hopeless. Stigmatized."

Those words, written by our Chairman of the Board, Thomas Amato, resonate with those who suffer from a mental or addictive illness. They represent the thoughts, feelings, and realities of the 6000+ patients we serve annually here at Carrier Clinic. Treating symptoms is no longer enough. We need to ensure that these words, and others like them, do not become a defining legacy for those persons debilitated by behavioral health illnesses.

That is why we are beginning the "next wave" at Carrier Clinic—where innovative and progressive treatments are applied to behavioral healthcare. We are changing the way we deliver care by concentrating on the Science of Behavioral Health.

Imagine a world where no one feels ashamed for getting help for depression or bipolar disorder. That’s the world we envision, where it is no different than getting treated for a disease like cancer or diabetes. Treating mental illness like a disease of the brain has been one of the missing pieces to this complicated treatment puzzle.

This issue of Connections is very special to me. Please read about how we are the first to use a Compassionate Care Index—many facilities describe their hospital as compassionate, but we are going to prove it! In addition we are delivering a new clinical treatment, called Nexalin, which offers patients a promising treatment option with no side effects. These, along with other clinical and holistic therapies being added to our milieu in the year ahead, signify the beginning of a new future in behavioral healthcare.

We invite you to join us for the exciting journey ahead.

DONALD J. PARKER
Carrier Clinic CEO

Carrier has a new website!

We invite our readers to share their Carrier Clinic experience, which may be used in an upcoming Connections newsletter. Our Community Relations Department can be reached at (908)281-1513 and at hotx@carrierclinic.com. Written letters may also be mailed to: Carrier Clinic c/o Community Relations P.O. Box 147, Belle Mead, NJ 08502

Contact us 24/7:
Call 1(800)933-3579 or visit CarrierClinic.org

The Next Wave

A's one of the longest-established behavioral healthcare facilities in the eastern United States. Carrier Clinic has earned its reputation of embracing a century-long policy of excellence in patient care...and applying it toward an innovative, visionary approach to the traditional program of treatment.

In fact, most members of the general public would probably be surprised at the current state-of-the-art in the treatment of depression and anxiety-related disorders. As successfully put into practice at Carrier Clinic, a program of therapy is as likely to revolve around "healing arts" and other methodologies once branded "alternative" as it is to employ prescription medications and medical procedures. Now, with the introduction of a new treatment called Nexalin, Carrier Clinic has taken an early lead in offering another treatment solution that is drug-free, non-invasive, and FDA cleared.

Developed by the California-based medical technology company of the same name, Nexalin involves a device that, according to the manufacturer, "emits a patented, frequency-based waveform that interacts with structures of the mid-brain that help to regulate and stabilize neurochemicals." More simply, as Carrier Clinic CEO Donald Parker explains it, Nexalin treatment involves "a low-voltage, alternating-current therapy...designed to stimulate the hypothalamus back into activity."

As the section of the brain that governs much of the body's essential hormone production, the hypothalamus plays a far greater role in our lives than its modest size would suggest. Everything from basic physical responses like hunger, thirst, and fatigue, to the regulation of emotional responses and the "circadian rhythms" of biological processes relates back to the hypothalamus—and when the hypothalamus malfunctions during certain mental health episodes, the effects upon our overall physical and emotional well-being can be significant.

The experience has been reported as entirely painless and quite relaxing—and, since the treatment involves no sedation, patients can resume all normal activities immediately after undergoing a Nexalin session. Results have been encouraging, with a marked reduction in reported symptoms—and a sense that this gently effective treatment “is able to aid your body to do the job it was intended to...so that the brain, in effect, heals itself.”

We invite you to join us for the exciting journey ahead.

DONALD J. PARKER
Carrier Clinic CEO

The articles in this publication are not intended to provide specific medical advice or treatment recommendations to any individual or group. The publication is for information purposes only. Comments or suggestions for Connections can be sent to Heather Steel at HSteel@carrierinc.com. Please call our Access Center at 1(800)933-3579 if you wish to speak with someone about a possible admission.
Think Carrier, to the Carrier Clinic team, the words serve as a rallying theme for a progressive approach to behavioral healthcare; backed by science, a century-long legacy of recognized excellence, and a dedication to treating each patient with the utmost respect and sensitivity.

In the words of Carrier Clinic’s CEO Donald Parker, the Carrier brand has always been “about innovation, new ideas, and growth.” But rather than rest upon a set of well-earned accolades and accomplishments, “we want to take it up a notch.” This attitude is immediately visible in the recent massive improvements to the Carrier Clinic campus: a multi-million dollar expansion highlighted by new facilities, an upsized Blake Recovery Center, and enhancements to infrastructure. A closer look reveals a way of thinking that extends to the most subtle aspects of the Carrier Clinic experience; from a ray of light illuminating a painting, to a simple gesture of encouragement from a member of the staff.

Carrie Clinic has long been in the vanguard of the healthcare field in recognizing the value of what were once regarded as “alternative” methodologies (art, music, yoga, pet therapy) in the treatment of psychiatric and addictive illnesses. With a full slate of regularly scheduled sessions in music, movement, and other “healing arts,” the success of such programs, as an adjunct to traditional therapy and medication-based treatments, is evident in the fact that Carrier Clinic now employs six full-time art therapists on staff.

The Carrier Clinic directors have also explored partnerships through which “we can collaborate on finding the best ways to improve patient care.” The newest such collaboration, and one of the first of its kind in the nation, is the Compassionate Care Index (CCI), designed to collect real data on aspects of the patient-caregiver relationship, such as degrees of compassion or levels of comfort—and to analyze and apply that data toward improving the overall experience for all concerned.

While all of us recognize acts of compassion when we observe or experience them ourselves, few have attempted to frame such personalized interactions in terms of numbers. Carrier’s Compassionate Care Index elevates the role of the “humanity factor” in the course of treatment, and enables consideration of such factors in future policies and programs.

The CCI begins at the end of a patient’s stay, when each person is asked to complete a questionnaire rating various aspects of their experience at Carrier Clinic. The collected data is processed and correlated with an eye toward algorithmically identified “key drivers”—important indicators that range from a healthcare professional’s tone of voice and congeniality, to the temperature and lighting of the clinical environment.

“We want to learn the characteristics of people who are compassionate,” explains Parker, “and use what we learn to restructure our educational process...to actually teach compassion.” In addition, Parker foresees applying CCI data toward a policy of “optimized hiring...we’re able to embed these findings in our hiring practice; to identify people who possess the characteristics of compassion.”

CCI also acknowledges that even the most dedicated professionals can have “off” days. In order to protect staff from “compassion fatigue,” Carrier Clinic works with entities such as the NYC-based Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare, a nonprofit dedicated to “strengthening the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers.”

Throughout Carrier Clinic, compassionate caring extends to good works being done with the help of animals that find their home on the campus, from therapy dogs that have been a part of Carrier Clinic for over a decade, to the newly completed barn that will stabilize the horses in support of Carrier Clinic’s ten-year-old Equine Therapy Program.

As Mr. Parker explains, “We’ve given major thought to the environment on both sides of the windows...about 500 new paintings have been put up over the last couple of years, and we’ve switched to LED lighting, which is particularly good for Seasonal Affective Disorder...good for the staff, as well as for the patients.”

“The most unique things we do here have their origins in the input of our insightful staff,” says the CEO in summing up an ever-evolving way of thinking that’s ahead of the pack in embracing alternative treatments, and trailblazing exciting new initiatives like the Compassionate Care Index. “It’s about creating a total experience that hits all of your senses...not a formulaic approach.”
Taking place on the walking paths of Carrier’s beautiful Belle Mead, NJ campus, the sixth annual Walk of Hope was a tremendous success, attracting more than 550 participants who raised over $60,700 to help end the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction.

This fun-filled event not only helps fund important programs and services at Carrier Clinic, but also gives the community a chance to come together for kids’ activities, food and fun for the whole family—including our Doggie Oasis. Thanks to all the volunteers and participants who made this our most successful year yet!

It appeared on the scene without the ribbon-cutting fanfare that introduced many of the attention-compelling new constructions and renovations on the Carrier Clinic campus. But when the all-new Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system went live on June 15, 2016, it represented an innovation and improvement that, according to Director of Information Services Peter Schwartz, places Carrier Clinic "at the forefront of behavioral healthcare."

The EMR team included: Elisa Adams (Staff Nurse), Deborah Charette (Director of Nursing, East Mountain Hospital), Deborah Kochbarski (Clinical Informatics Specialist), Isabel Quilang (Staff Nurse), Gene Rader (Director of Pharmacy), Mark Weisman (Meditech Analyst/RN), and Keri Whooley (Staff Educator); for a project that involved the support of everyone from CEO Donald Parker to more than two dozen trained "super-users"—staffers who helped roll out an operation that replaces printed files with digitized records that can be accessed by secure laptops and tablets.

"This was truly a team effort," says Schwartz of an initiative that is being enthusiastically implemented and funded by Carrier Clinic without any assistance from the state or federal government. In just a few short months, its many immediately apparent benefits have included greater speed of services, greatly diminished risk of error, increased legibility, and the ability to share information in real time among various departments, enhancing patient care.
New Year’s Resolutions
Worth Keeping!

Here are 5 tips to keep your body and brain healthy:

1. **Exercise Your Brain**: do the math instead of using a calculator, learn a musical instrument, work on a crossword, or do anything that makes you think.

2. **Wear a Helmet**: whether bicycling, skiing, or playing high-impact sports, helmets protect from concussions—a major risk factor for cognitive impairment.

3. **Keep a Healthy Diet**: low cholesterol and B vitamins found in cereals, leafy vegetables, and grains reduce the risk of age-related mental decline.

4. **Treat Alcohol Abuse**: heavy drinking has a high correlation with dementia, so get help if you need it.

5. **Treat Depression and Anxiety**: major depression and anxiety have been shown to damage brain tissue and affect memory, but both are treatable!

For more helpful information, visit our Information Center at CarrierClinic.org/resources