

# Executive Health Notes

Mayo Clinic Scottsdale Executive Health Program

## Former White House Physician Joins Executive Health Program Staff



**D**r. Connie Mariano, former director of the White House Medical Unit and physician to three presidents, is a welcome addition to the staff of the Executive Health Program at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale. She recently retired from the U.S. Navy having attained the rank of Rear Admiral, and she chose to join Mayo because of many positive experiences both as a patient and as a referring physician.

"As an Executive Health physician at the White House for over eight years, I sought to provide first class, comprehensive medical care to top executives and world leaders," says Dr. Mariano. "I learned, however, to treat VIP's the same as any other patient."

Dr. Mariano finds that corporate executives share many of the same characteristics as top government and world leaders. She describes them as positive, driven, adventurous, and they like to take risks and to travel.

They tend to be extremely motivated about taking care of themselves, she says, because they see staying healthy as an investment in their work. They know their cholesterol levels, are dedicated to exercising and pay close attention to what foods they eat. In many ways Dr. Mariano finds they are similar to athletes who remain focused on a regimen.

What about stress levels? While many would expect top leaders to be highly stressed, Dr. Mariano finds they tend to have lower stress levels than employees who have less control over their work and lives. They also reduce their stress by delegating to advisors they've chosen carefully and trust completely.

Energetic, personable and experienced in all facets of medicine, Dr. Mariano enjoys being at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale. She adds that her husband and teenage sons have quickly adapted to the more casual and outdoor-oriented lifestyle in Scottsdale. "It's been a great move in every way," she says.

Executive Health Program Registration Forms Available On-line!

See page 4 for more details.

### Screening Tests for Coronary Artery Disease and Thyroid Added to Recommended Blood Work

Three new screening tests are now included as part of the recommended blood work for Mayo Executive Health Program patients. These tests measure TSH for thyroid function, and homocysteine and Lp(a) which are associated with risk of coronary artery disease. Early detection of risk factors can play a big part in preventing disease. See page 2 for more details.

# On the Forefront – New Information for Your Health

## Should You Get a Flu Shot?

### Myths:

- ▶ A flu shot can give you the flu.
- ▶ I'm healthy and I'll take my chances.
- ▶ I had a flu shot last year so I don't need one.

### Reality:

Flu shots don't cause the flu. Sometimes, people who receive one may get a flu-like illness and think the shot caused the flu or failed to protect them. In reality, almost all people who get influenza vaccine experience no serious problems from it.

Many people underestimate the seriousness of the flu. As many as 20,000 people die from its consequences annually. It can also quickly spread throughout an organization, resulting in significant productivity declines.

Flu shots must be received every year because influenza viruses are continually changing. Antibody levels become low one year after vaccination, and each year the vaccine is updated to include the most current influenza virus strains. Beginning in 2000, all people aged 50-64 were added to the high-risk groups recommended for annual vaccination.

So, contact your physician about receiving a flu shot this year, and encourage your employees to do so. Further information is available on line from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## New Weight Loss Drugs Available

Obesity is a significant health problem in the United States. It is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. When overweight people lose weight, blood pressure, sugar metabolism, and medical conditions such as gastro-esophageal reflux and sleep apnea improve. While long term dietary change and increased exercise are the best ways to reduce your weight, two prescription drugs, orlistat (Xenical™) and sibutramine (Meridia™), can help you start your weight loss program.

Orlistat, taken three times daily before meals that contain fat, blocks the absorption of fat by 30% in the small intestine and acts as an "antabuse" for fat, causing adverse consequences for eating too much fatty food. It also lowers the level of LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Sibutramine, taken once daily as either a 10 or 15 mg capsule, suppresses the appetite.

Talk with your physician about possible side effects.

## Screening Tests for Thyroid and Coronary Artery Disease Added to Recommended Blood Work

The thyroid gland regulates metabolism. An underactive thyroid can cause weight gain, fatigue and hair loss, while an overactive thyroid can cause weight loss, rapid heartbeat and tremor. The TSH test for thyroid function is an important tool because thyroid levels can be regulated by medication if the patient is aware there is an imbalance.

Measurement of homocysteine and Lp(a) are important factors in determining a patient's risk of coronary artery disease. Homocysteine is an amino acid that can lead to atherosclerosis, the precursor of heart attacks and strokes.

Lp(a) levels are often increased in people who have had a heart attack or stroke, even if their cholesterol levels are low. The level of Lp(a) in the blood is determined by genetics, not diet, and most cholesterol lowering drugs do not affect this level.

Although studies to determine if lowering homocysteine and Lp(a) will prevent atherosclerosis are not complete yet, treatment to reduce their levels appears reasonable based on their known association with heart disease and stroke.

## GETTING THE MOST FROM A VISIT TO YOUR DOCTOR

### Arrive on time

Promptness helps ensure an unhurried visit.

### Know your medical history and your family's

Your previous medical conditions and those of blood-related family members are important. Be prepared to discuss them in detail with your physician.

### Bring a list of concerns

Once you're in the doctor's office, it's easy to forget health issues you want to discuss. A list will jog your memory, but keep it brief. Include only issues of primary concern.

### Bring a list of your medications and their doses

Or show your doctor all your medications in their

original bottles. Your doctor needs to see the dosage and type of drug you're using.

### Answer questions accurately and completely

Your physician needs facts on which to base an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan. Don't speculate on your diagnosis.

### Speak up

If you have questions or doubts about your diagnosis or treatment, express them. For example, your doctor should explain the benefits of a medication, its possible side effects and how long it will take to work. Don't leave until your questions are addressed and resolved.

Source: 50 Head-to-Toe Health Tips From Mayo Clinic

## Financial Coordinator Dedicated to Answering Executive Health Program Billing and Insurance Questions

Expedited service is the cornerstone of the Executive Health Program at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale. To that end, patients will now find enhanced communications regarding billing and insurance with a dedicated financial services coordinator.

"We find that by proactively talking about billing and insurance questions during the scheduling process, and by quickly addressing billing concerns that come up after a patient is seen, we can enhance the outcome of each patient's experience here," says Dr. Robert R. Orford, Executive Health Program director.

Laura Stodolak, financial services coordinator, is a welcome addition to the staff. Changes in the Mayo Clinic Scottsdale billing system and ongoing changes in insurance coverages have contributed to some challenges in claims processing. "I enjoy working with our patients to explain and solve billing questions for them," says Stodolak. "Our patients are already pleased with their medical care in our program, and I feel privileged to provide excellent customer service in creating a seamless financial process for them, too."

To proactively address what services are covered and which other services may be billed as out of pocket expenses, Suzanne Forth, Executive



*Laura Stodolak, financial services coordinator, can be reached at 480-301-8165, and Suzanne Forth, Executive Health Program coordinator, is available at 480-301-6412.*

Health Program coordinator, works with executives and their staffs during the initial scheduling process. "The majority of our patients schedule a comprehensive Executive Exam package we've developed based on gender and age. I go over the details of what is included in the package, so each patient is clear that additional tests or services will result in additional costs," says Forth.

Forth also works with patients who request an individualized program and provides them with a realistic estimate of costs and what services will be covered by insurance.

"Helping patients with their billing and insurance issues adds to our goal of making the Executive Health Program a smooth and comprehensive experience," says Orford. "It's about meeting *all* the needs of *all* our patients."



### WORKPLACE STRESS: CAN YOU CONTROL IT?

Here are some self-care tips for on-the-job stress from [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com).

- **Take care of yourself** – Get good exercise, adequate sleep and regular, balanced meals.
- **Develop friendships** – Having someone to confide in is important while on the job and off.
- **Take time off** – Take a vacation or a long weekend, or even short breaks during the work day.
- **Manage your time** – Set realistic goals and deadlines.
- **Set limits** – When necessary, learn to say "no" in a friendly, but firm, manner.
- **Choose battles wisely** – Don't rush to argue every time someone disagrees with you.
- **Use calming skills** – Don't act on your first impulse. Give your anger time to subside.
- **Avoid self-medication** – Substances such as medication or alcohol only mask the problem.
- **If appropriate, look for less stressful job options** – But first, ask yourself if you've given your job a fair chance.
- **Seek help** – If none of these relieve your feelings of stress, ask a healthcare professional for advice.



## DON'T BE A "WEAKENED" WARRIOR

After a week in the office, you're ready for a weekend of activity. Watch out for the "terrible toos:" doing too much, too fast, too hard, too long, with too little preparation – the weekend warrior complex. Follow these steps:

- Be realistic. Get in shape to play sports – don't use sports as a way to get in shape.
- Check with your doctor to determine your personal exercise limits.
- Start slowly. Don't compete with others. Do exercise that's challenging to you, but don't exceed the limits set by your physician.
- Increase your frequency. Work gradually toward a 20- to 30 minute exercise regimen at least three times a week. Don't exercise only on weekends.

Weekend warriors often end up doing battle with an injury. A few weeks of preparation can avoid such conflict.

Source: Mayo HealthQuest Newsletter

## Who to Call

### Questions/Concerns/Appointments

Suzanne Forth	Coordinator	480-301-6412
Rhonda Davis	Assistant Coordinator	480-301-4034
Marianne Pearce	Assistant Coordinator	480-301-4465
Amanda Gore	Executive Health Scheduler	480-301-9017
Angela Coughlin	Executive Health Scheduler	480-301-9017
Fax Number		480-301-9644

### Billing Questions

Laura Stodolak	Financial Services Coordinator	480-301-8165
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### Physicians and Administrative Assistants

Dr. Quinton Callies	Mary Cummings, Assistant	480-301-4481
Dr. Robert Orford	Kim St. John, Assistant	480-301-7379
Dr. Michael Covalciuc	Laura Taylor, Assistant	480-301-8285
Dr. Connie Mariano	Laura Taylor, Assistant	480-301-8285
Fax Number		480-301-7569

## *Did you know...*

### Executive Health Registration Forms are Now On-line!

For your convenience, the registration forms for both Corporate Executives and Individual Executives are now on-line via the Mayo Clinic internet site. After an appointment has been scheduled for your Executive Health Examination, you will be provided with information on how to access these forms, print them and return them via fax to 480-301-9644.