

July  
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# SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

*Safely treating you better...for life.*

## Saint Peter's Family Health Center: A Focus on Behavioral Health and Mental Wellbeing



Stock Photo. Posed by models.

The importance of behavioral health and mental wellbeing for children has come into sharp focus following the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 60 percent of girls experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year. Additionally, Hispanic and multiracial students were more likely than students from other racial and ethnic groups to report persistent depressive symptoms. The CDC also reports that 12.5 percent of adults have regular feelings of worry, nervousness, or anxiety while 5 percent have regular feelings of depression.

### Middlesex County Hosts Behavioral Health Roundtable to Identify Issues, Create Solutions

"There is a lot of pressure being put on emergency departments across the state. For behavioral health issues, Saint Peter's Adult Emergency Department sees about 200 patients a month, and the Pediatric Emergency Department sees about 30 children a month. We are committed to helping every one of our patients find the treatment and resources they need to improve their mental wellbeing," said Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE, president and CEO of Saint Peter's Healthcare System.

Hirsch was among the key participants at a Behavioral Health Roundtable event held by the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners in May. Attendees discussed best practices on how to face behavioral health challenges impacting hospitals, schools, the workplace, and everyday life. New Jersey Governor Philip D. Murphy spoke at the event, emphasizing the state's focus on mental health.

"Mental health is an issue I care deeply about, especially now when so many people throughout our nation are struggling with mental health challenges. That's why I have made youth mental health the main focus of my work as the chair of the National Governors Association and why my Administration continuously strives to meet the mental health needs of New Jersey residents," said Governor Murphy. "I commend every individual and organization working to address the mental health crisis in our state for their efforts to help heal our children, our families, and our communities as a whole. I remain committed to supporting and working alongside our dedicated partners in these ongoing efforts."



**To help address mental health and wellbeing, Saint Peter's Family Health Center, located in New Brunswick, offers specialized services and resources.**

### For KEEPS Program: Supporting Children's Behavioral Health

The For KEEPS program (Kids Embraced and Empowered through Psychological Services) is a short-term acute partial-hospitalization, state-of-the-art unit designed to help children, ages 5-17, with behavioral health issues. The healthcare professionals at For KEEPS, which is a service of The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, offer high-quality mental health diagnoses and intensive treatment to children who suffer from emotional and behavioral difficulties that impede their ability to function successfully in a social environment. Anyone can refer a child to this program, including schools, physicians, agencies, and parents.

Children primarily participate in group therapy throughout the day. The groups generally span a two-year age range to allow the children to speak about developmentally appropriate topics and do their academic work with other children on a similar grade level.

During the school year, they complete two hours of academic work each day. The program has teachers on staff to work with the children. The child's therapist and the teacher remain in contact with the child's school to make sure they are completing the appropriate schoolwork and provide academic updates.

An assigned therapist conducts a weekly individual session with the child. Parents or guardians will also participate in a weekly family meeting with both the therapist and psychiatrist. Children are not required to take medication to attend the program; in fact, many children benefit solely from the therapeutic and behavioral interventions in the program.

"The For KEEPS program focuses on promoting healthy development by addressing various mental health challenges in children and adolescents. Saint Peter's experienced team of psychiatrists, therapists and counselors provides personalized care plans that include evaluations, assessments, and evidence-based treatments. Parental involvement is a key component to the success of our program, so we ask parents to be very involved in the treatment process," said Alicia Adams, LCSW, program manager, For KEEPS.

Through therapeutic approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), play therapy, and family therapy, the For KEEPS program helps children and adolescents struggling with anxiety disorders, depression, ADHD, and trauma-related issues.

For KEEPS serves children who do not require 24-hour inpatient care and who cannot be managed by outpatient care alone.

#### Services include:

- Individual and group therapy
- Family therapy
- Academic instruction in collaboration with the child's school district
- Medication management
- Discharge planning and referral services
- Daily lunch
- Transportation for eligible children

Established in 2002 and licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the For KEEPS program has been lauded as a model for children's partial hospitalization programs statewide.

*Continued on back*

# Saint Peter's Family Health Center (Continued)

## The Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center

Data from the CDC shows that at least one in seven children in the United States has experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year. This is likely an underestimate because many cases are unreported.

At the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center, a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, including certified child abuse pediatricians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers, help children and their families in the evaluation and treatment of physical and emotional injuries caused by child abuse and neglect.

As one of four state-designated child protection centers in the state, the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center serves eight counties in central New Jersey. According to the New Jersey Child Welfare Data Hub, in 2022 there were 5,186 cases of physical abuse and 1,747 cases of sexual abuse in the eight central counties serviced by the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center.

"Our staff is committed to the evaluation of these cases in a timely manner as we recognize that not everything referred to the hotline as abuse is abusive in nature, but those truly impacted by maltreatment deserve immediate access to medical and mental health services for optimal recovery outcomes. We are advocates for children and families at times of great vulnerability and distress," said Gladibel Medina, MD, CAP, medical director of the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center.

### Services include:

- Medical examinations
- Medical record reviews
- Inpatient/outpatient consultations
- Psychological assessments
- Comprehensive Health Evaluations of Children (CHEC)
- Child abuse assessments
- Outreach to families
- Crisis intervention
- Referrals to community resources
- Consultations to professionals
- Community education programs

With 24-hour coverage, the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center provides crisis intervention, child abuse assessments and referrals to community resources. The Child Protection Center also has a satellite program in Neptune.

**Anyone with concerns regarding child abuse or neglect can call the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency at 877.NJ.ABUSE (877.652.2873).**

## Helping Adults with Mental Health Concerns

Patients 18 and older who are experiencing stress-related disorders, depressive disorders, trauma-related disorders, mood disorders, eating disorder anxiety and family systems disorder, as well as other serious mental health disorders, can access behavioral health services under QIP-NJ (Quality Improvement Program-New Jersey) at Saint Peter's Family Health Center. Saint Peter's partners with behavioral health agencies in the community to provide services to adult patients.

"It can be hard to find help on your own. By partnering with local agencies and connecting our patients to resources in the area, we hope to set them up for success on their journey to mental wellbeing," said Lorraine Nelson, PhD, LPC, NCC, CCTP, project manager, QIP-NJ, Saint Peter's Family Health Center.

*"Recognizing the importance of mental and behavioral health and the role it plays in overall wellbeing is essential. By prioritizing mental health and providing accessible and compassionate care, Saint Peter's Family Health Center is paving a way for health and happiness," said Dr. Medina.*



Gladibel Medina, MD, CAP, medical director of the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center, performs a medical exam.

To learn more about the services at Saint Peter's Family Health Center, please visit [saintpetershcs.com/FamilyHealthCenter](http://saintpetershcs.com/FamilyHealthCenter)

# Community Calendar

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit [saintpetershcs.com/Events](http://saintpetershcs.com/Events). Most programs are FREE unless noted; please call for information.

## Cancer Support

### Bone Marrow Transplant

For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant  
Call for information: 732.235.8522

### Breast Cancer

Call for information: 732.235.7011

### Gynecologic Cancer

In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central New Jersey  
Call for information: 732.235.6792

### Living with Cancer

Call for information: 732.235.7557

## Diabetes Education\*

For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.

### Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

### Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

### Prevent T2 Program

Call for information and registration: 732.339.7772

**SAINT PETER'S Health and Wellness Center**  
A SERVICE OF SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

**offers pelvic floor physical therapy for women and men.**

Call 732.565.5455 to make an appointment.  
*A physician's referral is required.*

## Parent Education

Parenting classes are currently being held online. Register at [saintpetershcs.com/Services/Parent-Education](http://saintpetershcs.com/Services/Parent-Education). Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579.

### Baby Care

#### Birth Center Class

(for moms under midwifery care)

#### Breastfeeding Class

#### Breastfeeding Support Group

#### Grandparents Class

#### Hypnobirthing

#### Marvelous Multiples

### New Daddy Class

#### New Mom Support Group

#### Prenatal Yoga & Exercise Class

#### Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes

#### Sibling Class

#### Spinning Babies

**SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

## PRESIDENT'S GOLF CLASSIC

September 11, 2023 | The Ridge At Back Brook

Benefiting Saint Peter's Healthcare System

For registration and sponsorship information, contact Saint Peter's Foundation at **732.745.7932** or [spfoundation@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:spfoundation@saintpetersuh.com)

## Support Groups

### Bariatric Nutrition Support Group

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: July 13 • 6 – 7 pm  
Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

### Bereavement

Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565

### Craniofacial Teen Girls

Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113

### MyGoal Autism Family

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month  
Next meeting: July 9 • 3 pm  
Call 877.886.9462 or email [info@mygoalautism.org](mailto:info@mygoalautism.org) for virtual meeting details

### SHARE

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: July 20 • 7 – 9 pm  
Call 732.745.8522 or email [imariano@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:imariano@saintpetersuh.com) for Zoom link

### Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support Group

Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8653

**COVID-19**

## Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccines

For age eligibility and clinic locations and dates, visit [saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine](http://saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine)

**Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit [saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician](http://saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician). Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at [BookMySPDoc.com](http://BookMySPDoc.com)**

This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.

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