PFCA Wellness Update

PRINCETON FAMILY CARE ASSOCIATES, LLC FALL 2025

Message from Dr. Fernandez

Dear Patients

As we enter the Fall of 2025, I want to share an update about how my schedule and role at PFCA will be changing over the next two years. My goal is to ensure that you continue to receive the same level of attentive, high-quality care you have always experienced here.

Fall 2025 – I will continue to see patients for follow-up visits 1–1½ days per week. On other weekdays (except Fridays), I will be in the office supervising our nurse practitioners (APNs) and reviewing charts to ensure consistency of care.

January 2026 – I will reduce face-to-face patient visits to two half-days per week and will no longer be in the office on Mondays or Fridays. I will, however, continue to supervise and mentor our APNs, reviewing charts regularly and providing guidance so that care remains at the same high standard.

Fall 2026 and Beyond – At that time, I will further reduce direct patient visits. *Because of my more limited schedule, we will begin in January to compile a list of up to 100 patients who wish to see me exclusively for their ongoing care.* If you are interested in seeing me exclussively for your clincal care, please contact Barbara so that you will be one of the 100 patients. I will also continue to see any patients referred to me by the APNs when additional clinical input is needed. For patients continuing primarily with the APNs, you will still have access to my expertise through the APN referral process.

Throughout this transition, I will remain actively involved in supervising all care at PFCA through frequent chart reviews and direct collaboration with our APNs.

At this point, I expect to continue practicing for another 2–3 years. It is truly a privilege to continue serving you, and I look forward to this next chapter together.

With Regards,

Dr. Fernandez

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBTi)?

By Marisa Fernandez, RN

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBTi) is a structured, evidence-based treatment that helps people overcome chronic sleep problems. It focuses on changing negative thoughts and behaviors that interfere with sleep. CBTi targets the root cause of insomnia rather than just the symptoms.

How does it work?

Inaccurate or unhelpful thoughts about sleep may lead to behaviors that make sleep more difficult, which in turn reinforces the dysfunctional thinking. **Cognitive Restructuring** attempts to break this cycle by identifying, challenging,

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Lifestyle Medicine: Social Connection

By: Marisa Fernandez, RN

In the previous Summer Newsletter, we introduced the concept of Lifestyle Medicine, an evidence-based approach that focuses on preventing, treating, and even reversing chronic disease by addressing root causes through healthy habits. This article continues the discussion of how our daily choices can shape our long-term health.

Of the six key pillars of Lifestyle medicine, social connection stands out as one of the most powerful determinants of health. Strong, supportive relationships foster resilience, improve mental well-being, and are linked to lower risks of chronic illness and premature mortality. Indeed, even brief positive interactions with others can improve one's blood pressure and heart rate.

Conversely, loneliness and social isolation can activate stress pathways, weaken immune defenses, and worsen health outcomes. By cultivating meaningful relationships, people not only improve their emotional well-being but also reinforce other healthy lifestyle practices, such as regular exercise and balanced nutrition.

Being socially active, making new connections, or even just maintaining existing ones may feel like a challenge. The key to building any healthy habit is to take things one

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Lifestyle Medicine: Social Connection

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step at a time. Start by setting a SMART goal, a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time bound. For example, "I will increase my feeling of social connectedness by joining a group fitness class that meets for one hour, once a week." Small, consistent actions create momentum and make the process less overwhelming. You can then build on these initial steps.

Here are some suggestions to help you build and maintain meaningful connections in your life:

- Volunteer: Helping others improves health, increases happiness & provides an opportunity to meet new people
- Connect with a community resource center for local options.
- Find online or community groups of those who share the same interests (meetup.com or Facebook groups are a great place to look).
- Join a religious or spiritual group
- Help at a local animal shelter or adopt a pet to connect with other animal lovers
- Go to a local sports event, music performance, lecture, or art display.
- If you are a senior, contact your local senior center for activities and social functions.

Remember that building social connection is a journey taken one step at a time. You don't need to do it perfectly—you just need to begin.

Consider checking out Sam Kissajukian's hilarious and fascinating performance ***"300 Paintings"*** which explores ties between art, mental health, and creativity; October 29th, to November 2nd, 2025, at McCarter Theatre. See how a man with a serious mental illness has overcome his deficit with humor and resiliency.

CBT for Insomnia

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and altering thoughts that contribute to insomnia.

Stimulus control attempts to break the association between the bedroom and wakefulness/frustration, thereby reclaiming the bedroom as a place for restful sleep. Tips: no eating, watching TV, or using the phone in bed, get out of bed when it's difficult to fall asleep or when lying awake for more than 10 minutes, only going to bed when tired again, set an alarm for the same time every morning, avoid taking daytime naps.

Sleep restriction limits time spent in bed in order to increase the drive to sleep and temporarily increase daytime fatigue. This is accomplished using a sleep diary.

Relaxation techniques can help reduce the racing thoughts and tension that accompany lying in bed awake. Examples: Breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, meditation.

Psychoeducation about the importance of good sleep hygiene. Topics include the effects of diet, exercise, and sleeping environment on falling and staying asleep.

Resources

FreeCBTi.com offers a complete, no-cost CBTi program with printable guides, sleep diaries, and support. Click link.

This Way Up is a free, self-paced 4-lession CBTi course designed for indepdenent use with clinician support. Click link.

Mayo Clinic Interactive CBTi Module covers 5 key CBTi strategies, suitable for self-guided learning. Click link.

CBTi Coach Mobile App is a free app developed by the US Depart. of Veterans Affairs, and provides guided sleep diaries, relaxation tools, and CBTi techniques. Click link.

Changes to ADHD Patient Appointment Requirements

Due to a change in New Jersey's requirements for pharmacies to fill amphetamine class medications, which includes Concerta, Ritalin, Vyvanse, Focalin, Methylphenidate, dexmethylphenidate and the like, patients are required to be seen in-person once every three (3) months. The upside to this change is that these appointments are now scheduled in 3 month intervals, versus 2 months, if patients are stable on their current dose. The front desk staff is working with patients in an effort to accommodate patients' availability.

Medication Take Back Day

The Next Take Back Day Is In:

October 25, 2025

This is a great resource to safely dispose of any unused or old medications. Click this link to find a location in your area.

Notice of Fee Changes:

Due to the current core inflation rate over the past 12 months, we increased our fees by approximately 3.1% effective September 1, 2025. The new medication management fees for the APN staff are $245, and the doctor's fee is $360. We strive to continue to deliver exceptional care while keeping our fees competitive.

The 2026 Annual Election Period (AEP) for Medicare Part D

begins October 15, 2025 & ends December 7, 2025

This is an opportunity for you to learn about important changes and shop for the best pharmacy plan which will cover your current medications.