

Fall 2023

# Healthy

COMMUNITY

*Pro Football  
Hall-of-Famer*

*Joe  
Namath*

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MEN'S HEALTH &  
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# Going Long

**Want to live a long and healthy life? NFL Hall-of-Famer Joe Namath weighs in with sage advice.**



Photo: UPI/Aaron M. Sprecher / Alamy Photo

**J**OE NAMATH WAS A winner throughout his football career. In high school, he won a Class AA state championship in Pennsylvania, followed by a college national championship in 1964 at the University of Alabama. Then, in 1969, “Broadway Joe” led the New York Jets to a monumental upset victory over the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III and was named the game’s MVP. Today, Namath is still winning—at the game of life. This past May, Namath celebrated his 80th birthday, but he is not about to let his age slow him down. He is physically active and deeply involved in the Joe Namath Foundation, which benefits children’s charities and neurological research. How does he do it? What is the secret to a long and healthy life?

*Healthy Community* recently spoke to Namath, who shared the advice he has gathered from many people over the years about how to live a long and healthy life.

**Joe, let’s start with the basics. What do you do for exercise?**

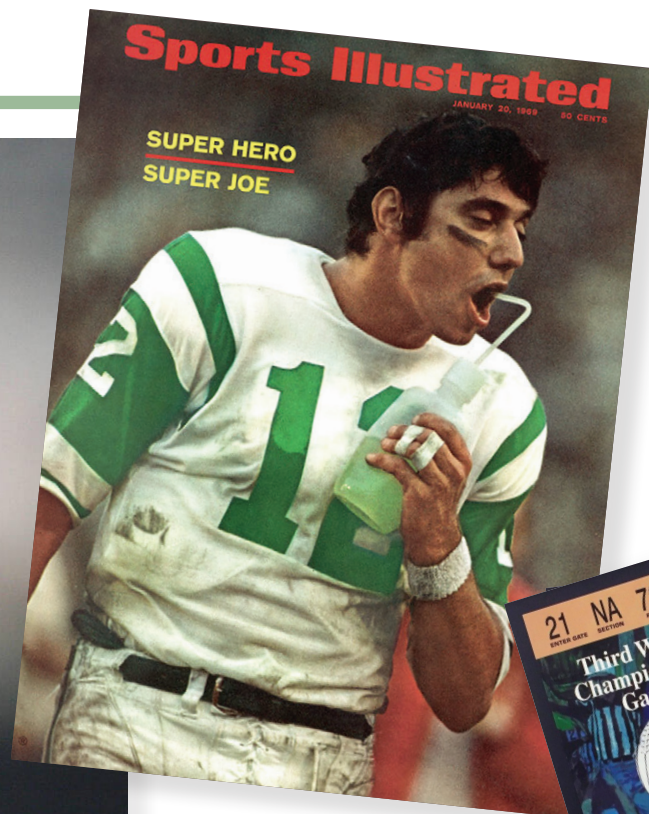
I try to get at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise four or five days a week – usually swimming or working out on my NordicTrack Ski Glide – anything that raises the heart rate above normal. I do not do any jogging or running to avoid stress on my knees. I’ve had knee problems since I tore the ligaments in my right knee in college. I have been lucky to have great doctors take care of me. Dr. Jim Nicklaus performed four knee operations on me during my career with the Jets. He was a pioneer in treating athletic injuries and was the team physician for three New York City sports teams – the Jets, Knicks and Rangers. Eventually, I had both knees replaced in 1992 during a single operation. More than 30 years later, they are still working for me. Both hips have been replaced as well as my right shoulder just recently.

**What about your diet?**

I stay away from wheat and steak. Every now and then I enjoy a hamburger, but for me, a good healthy meal is a serving of fish, like salmon, and lots of vegetables.

**You also practice meditation. Is that correct?**

Yes. I was introduced to transcendental meditation (TM) in the early 1970s by Bob Oates Jr. He also helped me write the book *A Matter of Style*. He introduced himself to me during a practice at Shea Stadium and said that he thought TM would help my game, and it did. I also got help from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who worked with The Beatles and helped bring transcendental meditation to America. Every day, I set aside time to simply sit quietly and repeat a mantra, not a word but a sound. For me, it brings deep rest to my body and clarity of thought to my mind.



From Left: Joe Namath in 2009 at Jets vs. Texans game in Houston; 1969 Sports Illustrated magazine cover and Super Bowl tickets.



“Your body is an instrument that has been given to you, so it is your responsibility to take care of it.”

**You also take power naps. Tell us about that.**

Well, I learned about that from Bob Hope. We were working together on a television special, and Mr. Hope was supposed to be on stage but wasn't there. I asked where he was, and someone said, "Oh, he's taking his power nap." Whenever I feel tired, which is most days, I take a power nap for no more than 20 minutes.

**What other healthy habits have you picked up over the years?**

Well, I am a big believer in drinking lots of water and keeping the body hydrated. Also, I end each shower with

cold water. I learned that from Dave Herman. He was our starting right guard on the Super Bowl team. He was a big guy from Ohio who played for Michigan State. One time, in the showers, Dave just started growling so loudly that I had to ask him what he was doing. He said he was ending his shower with cold water. I tried it and have been doing it ever since. It is not only invigorating it also increases circulation and reduces inflammation.

**Any final thoughts?**

When I was taking acting lessons, I learned something important from my teacher. He said an actor needs to see his or her body as an instrument, a tool that is used to communicate a message to the audience. That thought stuck with me. Your body is an instrument that has been given to you, so it is your responsibility to take care of it. I try to do that every day.

## Avoiding THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A recent survey by the Cleveland Clinic reveals just how much men avoid going to the doctor's office. After interviewing more than 1,000 men, 72 percent said they would rather do household chores, like cleaning the bathroom or mowing the lawn, than see a doctor. Having your blood pressure or blood sugar level checked or scheduling a preventive exam such as a colonoscopy can save your life. Having an annual wellness exam makes it more likely that a disease will be detected in its early stages, when treatment is much more effective. So please, take the first important step toward a long and healthy life. Call or visit Community Healthcare System today and let us help you find a primary care provider and schedule an appointment.

**Men's Health Services**



To find a Community Healthcare System specialist or a primary care provider, visit [COMHS.org/find-a-doctor-HC](http://COMHS.org/find-a-doctor-HC).





## Q: Are you a candidate for joint replacement surgery?

### A: Listen to your body.

Are you suffering from joint pain in your hip, knee or shoulder? Do you experience pain walking or squatting? Is your shoulder motion being restricted by pain? Have you tried non-surgical approaches, such as exercising, stretching, losing weight, taking anti-inflammatory medications or even a steroid injection, to relieve the pain, but they aren't working?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you should talk to your primary care provider or an orthopedic surgeon about joint replacement surgery. This surgery replaces a joint with an artificial part made of metal, polyethylene, ceramics or a mix of materials.

Joint replacement is a common procedure. In fact, about 1 million hip and knee replacements are performed each year in the United States.

In addition to the debilitating pain, there are other reasons to consider joint replacement surgery:

- Your doctor says that less complicated surgeries are unlikely to help.
- You have a long history of osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.
- You are suffering severe side effects from the medications you are taking to relieve the pain.
- You have significant joint damage.

### What to Expect

On average, a joint replacement surgery takes about two hours and is performed under general anesthesia. Once the surgery is complete, physical therapy starts almost immediately. On the day of the surgery, you will be standing and walking in the hospital. Once you return home, most patients have outpatient therapy for several weeks. Slowly, as your muscles strengthen and your range of motion improves, you will start to see improvement. The time it takes to fully recover depends on the type of joint replacement procedure, but every person is different.

- Hip: 2-4 weeks
- Knee: 2-3 months
- Shoulder: 3 months



Jonathan Edgington, MD



Michael Knesek, MD



James St. Clair, MD



Daniel Woods, MD

**Above:** Choose one of Community Healthcare System's expert orthopedic surgeons to help you get on the move again. For more information about Orthopedics Care, visit [COMHS.org/orthopedics](http://COMHS.org/orthopedics).

### Joint Replacement

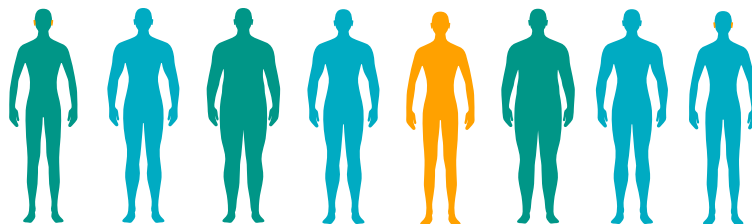


For information about the Joint Academy at Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org/services/orthopedics/joint-surgery](http://COMHS.org/services/orthopedics/joint-surgery).

Sources: Harvard Health Publishing

# Attention, All Men

## Prostate Health: The Five Key Questions



One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, which is the second most common type of cancer in men. That is why every man should be concerned about his prostate health. Here is a quick overview of what you need to know.

### ► What is the prostate?

The prostate is a reproductive organ located directly below the bladder. The job of the prostate is to produce the fluid that protects and carries sperm. In young men, the prostate is about the size of a walnut, but it can grow larger as men age.

### ► What are the most common prostate problems?

There are three.

**1) Prostatitis:** Inflammation of the prostate often caused by a bacterial infection.

**2) Enlarged prostate:** This condition is common in men age 50 and older. It can cause difficulty urinating, but it is not usually a serious health threat.

**3) Prostate cancer:** The most common type of cancer in American men, except for skin cancer.

### ► When should men have a prostate cancer screening?

Two tests are commonly used to detect prostate cancer.

**1) Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Blood Test**

**2) Digital rectal exam**

The decision to have a prostate screening should be made following a discussion with your healthcare provider about risk factors. Here are recommendations from the American Cancer Society about when to have that discussion.

- **Age 50** for men who are at average risk of cancer and are expected to live at least 10 years
- **Age 45** for men at high risk: African-Americans and men with a father or brother diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age (younger than 65)
- **Age 40** for men who are at very high risk: More than one first-degree relative (father or brother) diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age

### ► How can I keep my prostate healthy?

Diet is important. Add green, leafy vegetables, such as lettuce, spinach, kale and broccoli, to your meals to help your prostate stay healthy.

### ► When should I be concerned about my prostate health?

See your doctor as soon as possible if you experience:

- Frequent urge to urinate
- Blood in urine or semen
- Pain or a burning sensation during urination
- Pain or stiffness in the lower back, hip or pelvis

#### Prostate Screening



To find a urologist with Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org/find-a-doctor-HC](https://comhs.org/find-a-doctor-HC).

Sources: American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, Mayo Clinic



# A Man's Guide: Choosing a Primary Care Provider *(And Why You Need One)*

**ACCORDING TO THE MAYO CLINIC**, men older than 50 should have a yearly physical exam, and men younger than 50 should have a physical exam every three to five years. Having a regular physical, also known as a wellness exam, increases the chances of both preventing a disease and detecting it early when treatment is much more effective.

Yet, despite these benefits, men are notorious for not wanting to go to the doctor's office. Just consider these findings from a recent survey by the Cleveland Clinic.

- **77 percent** of men who are married or in a domestic partnership would rather go shopping with their wife or partner than go to the doctor.
- **82 percent** of men say they want to stay healthy and live longer for their friends and family, yet only 50 percent participate in preventive care.
- **50 percent** of men say they do not think an annual medical checkup is an important part of taking care of themselves.

## Less Excuses, More Action

Why are men so stubborn about seeing a doctor? One reason is that 41 percent of men were told as children that men do not complain about health issues. As a result, many men view health complaints as a sign of weakness. Other men say that they do not have enough time. Others are worried they might be diagnosed with a serious disease.

► **At Community Healthcare System, we encourage you to see your primary care provider on a regular basis. If you do not have a primary care provider, we are here to help. Visit our provider directory at [COMHS.org](http://COMHS.org).**

## 8 Recommendations to Remember

**1 Find a Provider Who Meets Your Needs:** There are three types of primary care physicians. Family Practice physicians treat patients of all ages. This might be a good choice if you have children and want your entire family to receive care from the same doctor. Internal Medicine physicians typically treat only adults. This is a good choice if you have multiple or chronic medical conditions. General Practice physicians are like Family Practice physicians. They can treat patients of any age or gender.

**2 Find a Provider You Are Comfortable With:** Having a good relationship with your primary care provider is important. After all, you want someone who is trustworthy and a good communicator. It is good to meet with the provider and his or her care team before making a decision.

**3 Build a Relationship:** Establishing an ongoing relationship with a primary care provider offers many benefits. Knowing your family and medical history helps your primary care provider better understand your symptoms and health concerns and perhaps make a more precise diagnosis. By monitoring your health over time, your provider is better equipped to notice small changes that may be signs of a larger problem.



## 4 Do Not Forget Preventive Exams and Screenings:

Be sure to talk to your provider about scheduling regular health screenings, such as a colonoscopy starting at age 45, and a prostate exam. After the test results are received, your provider can follow up and determine the best course of action for your health. If you do need additional medical attention, your provider can coordinate your care and refer you to the right medical specialist or therapist and then actively monitor your health status.

**5 Be Flexible:** 61 percent of men said they would be more likely to have an annual physical if seeing the doctor was more convenient. If that is the case for you, consider scheduling a telehealth visit, making an appointment outside of work hours or attending a local health screening event.

**6 Be Honest:** The more your primary care provider knows about your health, the better he or she can take care of you. Yet 20 percent of men say they have not been completely honest with their doctor.

**7 Do Not Wait Until Something Goes Wrong:** Many men wait until the last minute or until something is definitely wrong with their health before seeking help. That is not the right move. A good rule of thumb is to seek help if your symptoms last more than two weeks.

**8 Check Your Insurance:** If you have health insurance, make sure your primary care provider is an in-network provider with your plan.

Finally, remember this: A visit to your primary care provider almost always costs less than a visit to an urgent care clinic or the emergency room. Sometimes the cost savings can be hundreds, even thousands of dollars. A good way to think about having a wellness exam is comparing it to routine maintenance on your car. You do not wait to take your car in for service until it needs a total engine replacement. You change the oil and have routine engine checkups to keep the car running safely and to prevent a major, costly repair. It is the same with your body. Preventive screenings and regular wellness exams will keep your body healthy and help avoid more costly surgeries and treatments in the future.


**We're Here for You**



For a list of services and providers available through Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org](http://COMHS.org).

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic





# Medical Mimics

Community Healthcare System's  
Simulation Lab a real asset for NWI

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by Kerry Erickson

**W**ITH THE PRESS OF A button, the “patient” starts hemorrhaging. His blood pressure begins to plummet. The nurses in the room must decide what to do next to save his life.

Nurses may face this scenario in the Simulation Laboratory at Community Healthcare System. The person pushing the button – and deciding the patient’s next potentially life-threatening ailment – is longtime Registered Nurse and Clinical Educator Nicole Ribble. The patient is Apollo, an invaluable piece of machinery that can cry, sweat, bleed and even die on command. Apollo is one of several simulation Manikins that Community Healthcare System has invested in over the past decade to enhance the capabilities of its nurses.

The goal of the Sim Lab is to prepare, educate and foster critical thinking, said Jean Gardner, Director of Education for Community Healthcare System and Chief Nursing Officer for Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point.

“The biggest win with simulation is it gives our nurses and the Education Department the ability to work on their critical thinking,” she said. “Nurses have to make important decisions at the bedside continually.”

Daniel Heredia, Registered Nurse and Manager of Educational Services at Community Hospital, plays a key role in helping nurses foster their skills. While Ribble pulls Apollo’s strings via a computer behind a two-way mirror in the Sim Lab, Heredia is in the room with the nurses to provide clinical support.

“We can teach nurses so many things in a real-world setting that is more impactful than trying to do in a didactic course,” Heredia said. “We can take all those concepts and we can put them into an interactive scenario with high stakes involved or we can simply provide the chance to practice everyday skills in a low-stakes environment where no harm can occur.”

Community Healthcare System has invested in its Simulation Lab for more than a decade, including the purchase of a varieties state-of-the-art Manikins.

Among them is Apollo, which has reactive pupils; tongue swelling; bleeding and fluid drainage; bilateral pulses; uni- and bilateral chest expansion; lung and heart sounds; and abdominal distension.

**“It is remarkable to have these impressive tools on hand for our staff.”**

The Juno Manikin is a simulator designed to offer comprehensive training for clinical nursing skills, including tracheostomy, ostomy and oral care. This wireless and tetherless Manikin is ideal for fluid administration (eyes and ears); intramuscular injections; intravenous insertions; and care and maintenance of nasogastric tubes, chest tubes, stomas and tracheotomies.

Lucina, the world’s first augmented reality childbirth simulator, delivers an all-in-one simulation experience. This wireless Manikin comes with a rubber fetus to teach proper prepartum, labor, delivery and postpartum care.





**Above left:** Daniel Heredia, Manager of Educational Services at Community Hospital, and Clinical Educator Nicole Ribble work with Apollo, an invaluable piece of machinery that can cry, sweat, bleed and even die on command. Apollo is one of several simulation Manikins that Community Healthcare System has invested in over the past decade to enhance the capabilities of its nurses.



**Left:** Mary Puntillo, Community Hospital Registered Nurse Clinician, shows what Anne, a premature, 1-pound infant Manikin, looks like once she is stabilized after “birth.” Anne helps healthcare professionals refine standard practices for various challenges presented in premature newborns.



**Above:** Clinical Educators Hayley Schermerhorn and Patrice Zagotta work with Lucina, the world’s first augmented reality childbirth simulator. This wireless Manikin comes with a rubber fetus to teach proper prepartum, labor, delivery and postpartum care.

“Lucina gives us the opportunity to use real-life scenarios during our training sessions,” Clinical Educator Patrice Zagotta said during a recent exercise with fellow Educator Hayley Schermerhorn and nurses at Community Hospital. “The hands-on, multidisciplinary benefits of having Lucina and her technology are priceless. We can initiate OB emergencies on Lucina that prepare us for all the what-ifs that can happen in the delivery room, operating room and emergency room.”

Michelle Wartman, a Community Hospital Labor and Delivery nurse who was part of the training, echoed Zagotta’s sentiments.

“The life-like experience we receive with Lucina and the feedback we get from our clinical educators are extremely important,” Wartman said. “It all makes us the best we can be.”

Mary Puntillo, Community Hospital Registered Nurse Clinician, uses Anne, a premature, 1-pound infant Manikin, during training sessions and drills with nurses at Community Healthcare System.

Anne helps healthcare professionals refine standard practices for various challenges presented in premature newborns, integrate the latest technologies into preterm infant training programs and master the skills needed to care for preterm infants, improving patient outcomes. “Anne is constantly in use,” said Puntillo, who has been a Community Hospital nurse for 41 years. “The realistic

scenarios for which we use Anne have been a game-changer for our nursing teams.”

Gardner said the support the simulation program has received from Community Healthcare System leadership has been heartening.

“It is remarkable to have these impressive tools on hand for our staff,” Gardner said. “It shows the strong support system we have in our CEOs and nursing officers. We hope to acquire more Manikins in the future to carry on the vital and ongoing professional development at Community Healthcare System. These tools allow us to provide the best care for our patients.” ■

**Work with the best!**



**Looking for healthcare career opportunities? Visit [COMHS.org/careers-HC](https://COMHS.org/careers-HC).**

# Standing 'Ovation'

New physical therapy equipment offers support, freedom

by Vanessa Negrete

**W**ITH ELECTRIC blue accents and a high-resolution screen that changes scenery with just a tap, the sophisticated new apparatus looks like it could belong in an arcade. Instead, it is located on the second floor of Munster's Community Diagnostic Center.

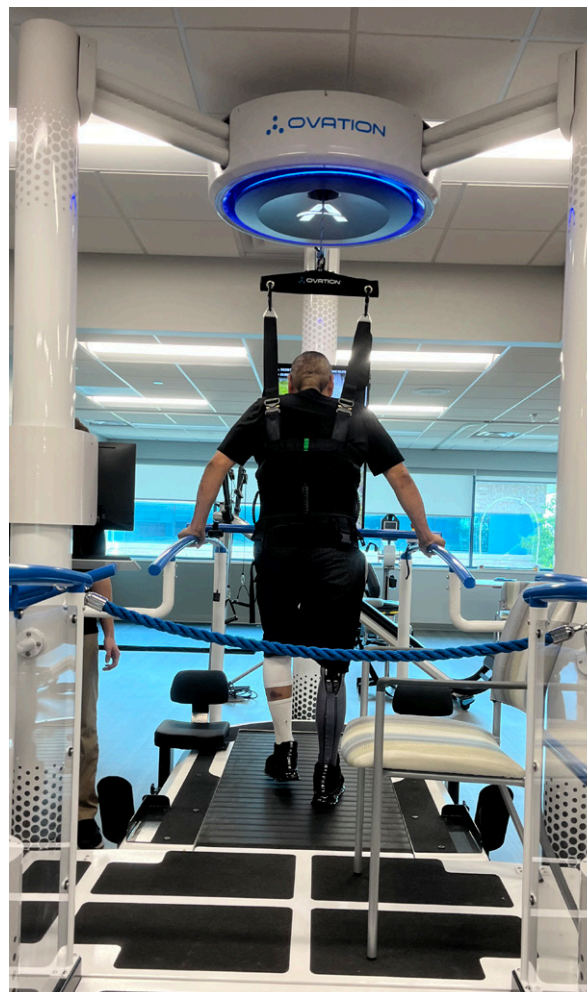
Called the Ovation Interactive Treadmill System, the treadmill is outfitted with a harness and railings to support physical therapy patients who weigh up to 700 pounds.

By investing in Ovation, Community Healthcare System brings technology and peace of mind to patients.

"I like knowing that if I'm walking and I stumble and start to fall, the harness will catch me," said Jose "Louie" Perea.

The 49-year-old Gary resident has not stumbled during therapy, but knowing Ovation is there for support is reassuring.

Perea, who is diabetic, had his right leg amputated above the knee in December 2022 after



**Above:** Ovation Interactive Treadmill System. The system incorporates a harness to help support patients up to 700 pounds.

developing an infection in his blood. His limb could not be saved.

Community Healthcare System Physical Therapist Brett Fulka performs lower extremity prosthetic training.

Along with prosthetic training, Munster's Community Diagnostic Center offers oncology rehabilitation, pelvic floor therapy, lymphedema treatment, bariatric weight-loss rehabilitation and general physical therapy for acute pain, chronic pain and orthopedic post-operative care.

Fulka works with Perea to help him regain strength and get accustomed to his prosthetic leg.

"With prosthetic training, our goals are to teach patients how to maximize their independence and safety when wearing the prosthetic leg," Fulka said.

In therapy, Perea uses the Ovation body weight support treadmill.

"This system allows us to safely practice balance and gait training with his prosthetic," Fulka said. "We are able to enter fall



**Below:** Jose “Louie” Perea (center) turns to his wife, Mechell Perea, and Community Healthcare System physical therapist Brett Fulka for support as he learns to navigate the world while using a prosthetic right leg.

settings in order for the system to detect when the patient is losing their balance or needs more support in order to avoid falls.”

Ovation is able to unload up to 300 pounds of body weight, which makes patients much lighter, Fulka explained.

Perea uses a high-tech microprocessor knee that he charges before use.

“In simple terms, his knee joint is computerized, and this helps to improve his safety and walking pattern. It will allow him to function at a high level,” Fulka said. “He will even be able to hike and ride bikes in the future with this advanced knee.”

Perea meets with Fulka for physical therapy for an hour, twice a week. Physical therapy has helped Perea balance, negotiate stairs and walk faster with his prosthetic leg.

During therapy sessions, Fulka examines Perea’s leg to make sure the skin is healthy, not swollen and that his leg and prosthetic are flush against each other.

“Brett checks my leg, checks my skin, puts my leg back on and makes me walk,” Perea said.

Fulka has taught Perea the proper technique for putting on his leg and taking it off. He has also learned to move from one surface to another, to walk and to negotiate stairs, curbs and ramps, when appropriate,” Fulka said.

## “This system allows us to safely practice balance and gait training with his prosthetic.”

“It is hard being as old as I am,” Perea said. “It’s hard getting used to it. Brett is a funny, smart guy. He encourages me. He pushes me, but I know he does it for a reason.”

Perea is focused on the future, which includes returning to his job as a maintenance supervisor.

“I want to go back to work,” he said. “I want to walk without using crutches. I’m hoping I’ll be able to travel. My goal is to drive.”

On his days off from physical therapy, Perea likes to practice walking at a local home improvement store.

“Jose pushes himself in therapy and has very strong support and encouragement from his wife,” Fulka said.



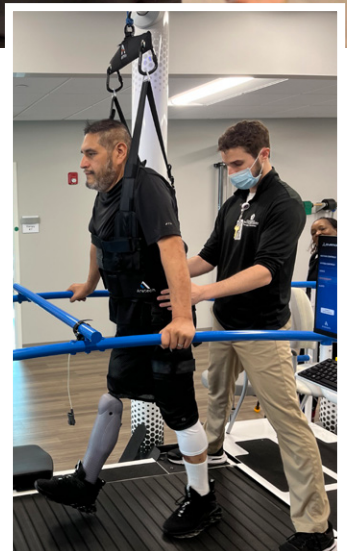
Mechell Perea credits her husband’s persistence.

“I’m his biggest pompon girl,” she said.

She quit her job to stay home and help take care of him, and she gives him things to do around the house to keep his mind occupied.

Jose Perea, who has five children and 16 grandchildren, leaned on family and faith in God to help him get out of a depression that came with losing a limb. He encourages others in a similar situation to do the same.

“If you do have an amputation, don’t give up,” Perea said. “Talk to your family.” ■



**Above:** Brett Fulka, a physical therapist with Community Healthcare System, steadies Jose “Louie” Perea as he uses the Ovation Interactive Treadmill System during a physical therapy session at Community Diagnostic Center in Munster.

### Therapy Services



For more information about therapy services at Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org](https://www.comhs.org).

# ‘I should’ve died.’



**Above:** D.J. Richmond reunites with the team who cared for him at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point after he suffered serious injuries in a crash.

## Support from rehab team helps man heal after head-on crash

by Vanessa Negrete

**T**HE CLOCK INCHED TOWARD midnight as D.J. Richmond navigated rainy backroads in Wheatfield. It was March 2022 and Richmond was heading home from a friend’s house, a route flanked by soon-to-be-planted fields. An oncoming driver swerved and hit him head on. “It threw me around pretty bad,” Richmond recalled. “I should’ve died.”

Richmond, a 2021 graduate of Covenant Christian High School in DeMotte, sat alone in his vehicle, which had landed in a field just off that rural road. A friend came upon the

scene a few minutes after the impact and called for help.

Richmond, a DeMotte resident at the time, was rushed to a Crown Point hospital and transferred to a Level 1 trauma center in Chicago. After a few weeks, he settled in at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point to focus on healing his hip, pelvis, tailbone, rib, back and more.

“They had to put a plate in my hip and screws and a long bolt to hold it in place,” he said. “I couldn’t use my left leg for three months. I was a hot mess.”

Richmond stayed about three and a half weeks at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center, a four-story



multispecialty facility in Crown Point that offers inpatient rehabilitation treatment along with physician practices and outpatient services.

He worked hard each session to do better than he did the day before, said occupational therapist, Brittany Phillips.

“He sought motivation through family, friends and his faith to keep pushing through his therapies,” she said.

Richmond took recovery one step at a time with help from Phillips and other therapists. Therapy included standing, seeing how far he could walk and getting himself in and out of bed.

“In the rehab unit, they had me doing basic occupational therapy – stand on my right foot and organize these cards really quick, or sit and throw bean bags to get my core and arm working,” Richmond said.

He grew to know and appreciate his medical team.

“I can’t thank the entire team enough,” Richmond said. “They treated me as if I was their own family member and made me feel welcome and cared for the entire time. There was never a moment that I ever felt I was being a bother.”

After the crash, Richmond was bruised from his chest to his feet. A nurse working the midnight shift early in his recovery went out of her way to give him a sense of normalcy. She brought avocado toast and a mango drink from a chain eatery for Richmond and his mom, who was at his side.

“I had some sips and a couple bites of avocado toast, and it made me feel a little better,” he recalled.

After he was discharged as an inpatient at the rehabilitation center, Richmond returned for outpatient therapy. He bonded with his rehab team and did not want to seek therapy elsewhere. His mom drove him from college to therapy at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center about once a week.

Richmond, who is now 20 years old, lost the second semester of his freshman year of college at Olivet Nazarene University as a result of the crash.

“The crash happened two days into spring break,” he said. “I went back to school in fall of 2022. I was on crutches, managing school and trying to heal.”

Over time, Richmond graduated from a walker to crutches to a cane.



**Above Left:** D.J. Richmond’s car was totaled, and Richmond suffered serious injuries following a crash in March 2022 in Wheatfield.

**Above Right:** Richmond uses a ball as part of his therapy at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center in Crown Point while recovering from his injuries.

In March 2023, Richmond was back at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center for some lab work. He thought about visiting the nursing and therapy staff.

“I was debating whether I should because I didn’t want to bother anybody,” he said.

A staff member recognized him and encouraged him to visit the team because he was doing so well. He did. Soon, he was surrounded by staff, who congratulated him on his progress.

Jennifer Kulak, nurse manager of the Acute Rehab Unit at Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center, said stories like Richmond’s are why healthcare workers do what they do.

“When he came to us, he was unable to walk,” she recalled. “Now, a year later, he was walking without any assistive devices, back to school, thriving. Our staff was so excited to see him and the progress that he has made.” ■

### Outpatient Therapy Services



To learn more about inpatient and outpatient therapy services at Community Healthcare System, visit [COMHS.org](https://www.comhs.org).



# The Future is Now

Robotic-assisted technology equals  
precision control

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by Karin Saltanovitz

**P**OSITIVE PATIENT EXPERIENCES and outcomes are the primary reasons the hospitals of Community Healthcare System use robot-assisted technology for minimally invasive surgeries and diagnostics.

Each year, Community Healthcare System's acute care hospitals – Community Hospital in Munster, St. Catherine Hospital in East Chicago, and St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart – perform thousands of robotic-assisted procedures.

“Robotic-assisted technology has completely revolutionized how we operate,” said Jason Frazier, MD, a cardiothoracic surgeon with Community Healthcare System who uses da Vinci at the three hospitals to perform complex lung and chest procedures. “Before this innovation was available, we had to do a thoracotomy and open the chest to reach the lungs and other organs. Now, we make a few small incisions.”

## da Vinci Xi® Surgical System

Our hospitals offer the most advanced da Vinci Xi® Surgical System. Using robotics benefits our surgeons in many ways, including:

- 3-D high-definition vision
- Additional arms
- Instant image referencing

During a da Vinci procedure, the surgeon sits at a console viewing 3-D, high-definition images. The surgeon uses the controls below the display to manipulate the robotic arms equipped with surgical instruments. The robotic system interprets and converts the surgeon's hand, wrist and finger movements into precise, real-time movements of the surgical instruments.

Originally approved for prostate cancer surgery in 2006, the use of robot technology has expanded to a wider range of procedures over the years, including general surgical, gynecologic, thoracic and urologic procedures.

Community Healthcare System surgeons are among the most experienced physicians in the nation with da Vinci robotics and were leaders in introducing da Vinci to Northwest Indiana and the state.

M. Nabil Shabeeb, MD, FACS, Medical Director of robotic surgery at Community Hospital, helped pioneer the robotic program in 2006 and performed the first single incision removal of the gallbladder using the da Vinci robot in Indiana in 2012.

“The 3-D visualization and the precision of the robotic instruments are a definite game-changer,” Shabeeb said. “They allow the surgeons to reach organs in tight or inaccessible areas where the human hand does not fit. Thus, large hiatal hernias behind the heart and rectal tumors deep in the pelvis can be treated without the need for large incisions or colostomy with faster recovery and return to normal life.” Since then, da Vinci has become the industry standard for minimally invasive surgery. The benefits include less pain, less scarring and quicker recovery.

“Years ago, people would put off hernia repair out of worry over the pain and recovery time,” said Carlos Gonzalez, MD, a Community Care Network, Inc. (CCNI) general surgeon at St. Catherine Hospital and Community Hospital. “With the advanced technology we have today, that is no longer an issue. Most of our hernia patients return home the same day as their surgery.”

Douglas Dedelow, DO, an OB/GYN specialist with CCNI, performs minimally invasive gynecologic surgeries at St. Mary Medical Center.



The Hobart hospital is a designated Center of Excellence for Minimally Invasive Gynecology (COEMIG) and Center of Excellence for Robotic Surgery (COERS) by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC). These designations for minimally invasive gynecology and robotic surgery attest that the gynecologists and clinical teams at St. Mary Medical Center bring the highest levels of knowledge, expertise and professionalism to the practice of women’s healthcare.

“A Center of Excellence represents a standardized method of approaching patient care,” Dedelow said. “The reviewers analyze our practices and guide us in every part of the patient experience – making it more efficient and safer for the patient, while continuously improving outcomes.”

Robot-assisted surgical procedures include:

- Colon surgery
- Gallbladder removal
- Gynecological laparoscopic procedures
- Hiatal hernia repair
- Prostate cancer surgery
- Thoracic surgeries
- Total or partial kidney removal
- Urologic applications
- Ventral/Incisional/Inguinal hernias repair

### Mako® Robotic Arm-Assisted Surgery System

Continuing Community Healthcare System’s role as a trailblazer, St. Mary Medical Center was the first hospital in Northwest Indiana to offer partial and total knee replacement surgery with the Mako Robotic Arm-Assisted Surgery System.

This technology enables surgeons to use CT-based 3-D modeling to provide patients with a personalized surgical experience based on their specific anatomy. Patients who have knee replacements with Mako experience less pain and shorter recovery times, getting them home sooner and back to more active lifestyles.

### Robotic-Assisted Diagnostic Testing

Community Healthcare System employs robotic bronchoscopy technology in addition to robotic surgery assists, to provide diagnostic testing of lung tissue and pulmonary nodules.

Both the Intuitive Ion and the Monarch™ systems address the challenging aspect of lung biopsy by allowing navigation deep into the lung in a way that is as minimally invasive as possible. These innovations allow for more precision, reach, stability and answers – sooner. ■



**Above:** The hospitals of Community Healthcare System offer the most advanced da Vinci Xi® Surgical System for minimally invasive surgeries.



Jason Frazier, MD



Douglas Dedelow, DO



M. Nabil Shabeeb, MD



Carlos Gonzalez, MD

#### Robotic-assisted surgery



For more information about robotic-assisted surgery, call 219-836-3477 or visit [COMHS.org-robotics-HC](http://COMHS.org-robotics-HC).

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Joe Namath



Joint Replacement Surgery



Prostate Health



Primary Care Provider

# Men's Health Quiz

Test your knowledge about men's health by answering these six true-or-false questions.

▶ **T or F?**  
Half of men who die suddenly from heart disease had no previous symptoms.

▶ **T or F?**  
30 percent of a man's health is determined by genetics.

▶ **T or F?**  
Drinking lots of beer can cause a beer belly.

▶ **T or F?**  
Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in men.

▶ **T or F?**  
Men should not worry about osteoporosis (low bone density).

▶ **T or F?**  
Men cannot get breast cancer.

### ANSWERS:

- 1) True. 70 percent of a man's health is determined by lifestyle.
- 2) True. Prostate cancer ranks second.
- 3) False. Men can get breast cancer, but it is rare.
- 4) False. Some men have an increased risk of osteoporosis.
- 5) True. Excess calories from beer can increase belly fat.
- 6) True. This is another reason men over 50 need to schedule an annual wellness exam.