NEW: PHYSICIANS FEATURE
DR. PASQUALE DELL’API

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DEALING WITH ALLERGENS

Allergies can be caused by the environment, food or reactions to medications. And without a doubt, they can all cause misery. Itchy eyes and scratchy throats are just the beginning for many allergy sufferers.

More serious issues can occur if allergies are not kept in check. If you suspect that you may be suffering from an allergic reaction — even if it is mild — you should consider making an appointment with your physician to investigate.

WHAT ARE ALLERGIES?
According to the Mayo Clinic, allergies occur when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance by producing antibodies that identify a particular allergen as harmful, even though it isn’t.

The National Institutes of Health identifies the following as common allergy triggers:

- Airborne allergens, such as pollen, animal dander, dust mites and mold;
- Certain foods, particularly peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs and milk;
- Insect stings, such as bee or wasp stings;
- Medications, particularly penicillin or penicillin-based antibiotics; and
- Latex or other substances you touch, which can cause allergic skin reactions.

If your family has a history of allergy problems, it’s worth a checkup with your doctor to check your sensitivities.

BROAD SYMPTOMS
When an allergy sufferer comes into contact with an allergen, his immune
system reacts. Skin can become inflamed, as can sinuses, airways and digestive systems.

This results in a runny nose, sneezing, itching, rashes, swelling or asthma. Allergies can range from minor to severe, and a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis also can occur.

TREATMENTS & PREVENTION
Sadly, there are many allergies that have no cure. Treatment and management are the only ways to relieve the suffering in many cases.

Nasal saline and 24-hour allergy medications or antihistamines can alleviate symptoms for many sufferers, but it’s important to check with your doctor before starting any new medication. If dust or pet mites are causing your reactions, frequently washing your bedding in hot water can help tamp down the effect. Ventilation fans and dehumidifiers can reduce moisture in damp areas where mold grows.

DEALING WITH ALLERGENS
The prevalence of animal videos on the Internet illustrates the joy humans derive from a playful puppy or a cuddly kitten. Increasingly, research confirms the health benefits of pet ownership. Having an animal companion can lower blood pressure, regulate heart rate during stressful situations and encourage greater activity.

More than 60 percent of Americans have a pet and most of those people think of their pets as members of the family. Some studies have found that pet owners stay home sick less often, make fewer visits to the doctor, get more exercise and are less depressed.

The American Heart Association has linked the ownership of pets, especially dogs, with a reduced risk for heart disease, resulting in a longer life. Dog owners are less likely to suffer from depression and high blood pressure. Heart attack patients with dogs survive longer than those without.
A 2015 report from Harvard Medical School found that having a dog can reduce blood pressure and encourage weight loss and a healthy body mass index because dog owners are more likely to get the two and a half hours of exercise each week that experts recommend. An investigation funded by the National Institutes of Health concurred, finding that owners who regularly walked their dogs were more physically active and less likely to be obese. And another NIH-supported study discovered that those who regularly walked their dogs walked faster and for longer time periods. Older dog walkers also exhibited greater mobility inside their homes.

Animal interaction elevates levels of serotonin and dopamine, natural chemicals that cause us to become calm and relaxed. Research from the University of Missouri-Columbia also suggested a few minutes of fingers meeting fur prompt a release of "feel good" hormones in humans, including prolactin and oxytocin. An animal companion can alleviate loneliness, boost mood and reduce depression. Caring for a pet may shift focus away from personal problems while engendering feelings of being needed and wanted.

For children, pet ownership teaches responsibility, compassion and empathy. A loyal animal companion can improve self-confidence by making the child feel loved and important. Studies show that kids who are emotionally attached to their dog are better able to build relationships with people. Children with learning disorders often connect with pets in ways they fail to do with humans.

The American Pet Products Association estimates that 70-80 million dogs and 74-96 million cats are owned in the United States. Researchers at the University of Minnesota found that, over a 20-year period, people ages 30 to 75, who had never owned a cat had a 40-percent greater risk of death due to heart attack and a 30-percent greater chance of death due to any cardiovascular disease when compared to cat owners. Most research involves dogs and cats, however, similar conclusions can likely be drawn regarding rabbits, rodents, reptiles and even fish and livestock, with the critical element being the strength of the connection between man and animal.

People who do not have the time, money or facilities to own a pet can still experience the health benefits of being around animals. Offer to walk a neighbor’s dog or pet-sit their cat. Volunteer at an animal shelter where dogs, cats, rabbits and other animals need care, grooming, exercise and socialization. A variety of organizations also offer specially-trained therapy animals to visit children’s hospitals, nursing homes, shelters and schools.
Key deer roam outside his window and a picture reminiscent of his Italian heritage hangs behind Dr. Pasquale Dell’Api as he enters patient information into digitized record files at Florida Keys Family Medicine. A chance assignment led him to Big Pine Key three years ago and he could not be happier.

Born in Switzerland to Italian parents, he spent much of his childhood in Montreal before his family moved to South Florida where he finished high school, graduated Florida Atlantic University, became a naturalized American, and earned the D.O. behind his name from Nova Southeastern University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. The calm-natured, bespectacled physician was working at a seasonal clinic on the mainland, catering primarily to French Canadians, when an opportunity arose to temporarily assist in a small clinic 160 miles to the south. When the main physician left a few months later, the door opened for Dell’Api to stay.

“I had time that summer and had come here. I enjoyed the area. I found it beautiful and the patients were great,” Dr. Dell’Api recalled.

Now, instead of getting up early to fight traffic, Dell’Api relishes the luxury of dropping off Isabella at Sugarloaf School before continuing the leisurely drive to the simple, pink building at mile marker 29.

“I lived in Fort Lauderdale since 1976, and I’ve seen quite a bit of changes. It’s gotten overcrowded. Traffic is very busy and the people are not as friendly and nice as they could be. I found it a pleasant change – a big change – to come down here. It’s much less stressful,” he said.

The change in latitude rescued him from short-tempered patients whose hectic schedules often diminished their physical and mental well-being. In the Keys, he was heartened to be treating congenial people who readily took advantage of the agreeable weather and multitude of outdoor activities.

“Most of the patients we have here are aware of their health and try to live a healthy lifestyle. Most of the elderly patients I have here really look much younger than they are. Sometimes I have to look twice at their age,” he commented with a smile. “I would like to say it’s from good health care, but I think they’ve been doing it most of their lives and I’m just helping them along.”

As a doctor of osteopathic medicine, Dell’Api practices a patient-centered philosophy. D.O.s receive extra training in the musculoskeletal system and the ways that illness or injury in one part of the body can affect another. According to the American Osteopathic Association, D.O.s are one of the fastest-growing segments of the health care industry.
of health care professionals, now numbering 97,000 in the United States.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, Dell’Api was pursuing a biology degree, still unsure of which health profession to choose. A stint as a hospital pharmacy technician convinced him to pursue medical school.

“I was impressed that the chief of staff at Memorial Pembroke Hospital was previously a pharmacist who had become a doctor. Patients loved the way he took care of them. And, with his pharmacy background, that gave me the motivation to go to the osteopathic medical school,” he said.

“The philosophy of treating the patient as a whole patient, and not just treating a condition, appealed to me.”

In his Big Pine Key practice, affiliated with Lower Keys Medical Center, Dell’Api focuses on health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management, teaching patients that a healthy lifestyle improves their physical and mental health quicker than medication alone.

Dell’Api stepped into an established practice with long-standing employees Karen Lombardi, R.N., and Yvonne Marturano, who adeptly manages appointments, referrals, insurance and other office duties.

“It was turnkey. The staff is well experienced and aware of the needs of the patients. It’s been a very complementary relationship that is much more beneficial for the patients.” Dell’Api said. “We try and do our best to provide for the health of patients and make them feel comfortable - make them feel at home and show that we do care about our patients.”

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If you’re looking to enter a career with stability — not to mention great pay — the health care industry is for you. With a broad range of opportunities across many different disciplines, health care offers a diverse array of jobs and not just in traditional roles, such as physicians and nurses.

Health care organizations also need communications coordinators, marketing professionals, information technology specialists, food service providers — and the list goes on. Whatever your specialty, now is the right time to break into the health care industry.

**FAST GROWTH**
Health care is the fastest growing job sector in the workforce, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. This growth can be attributed to the Baby Boomer population’s entry into older age and federal health insurance reform that is increasing the number of Americans with access to health insurance.

Hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living centers are experiencing large influxes of patients and clients, and the trend doesn’t look to end anytime soon. The health care industry needs professionals committed to a long career of caring for others. Do you fit the bill?

**GREAT PAY**
According to the U.S. Department of Labor, with an associate degree, in some fields you can make as much as $100,000. Higher degrees lead to more money, so it’s obvious that pay is one of the biggest benefits to a career in health care.

Many physicians, who can average nearly $200,000 in annual salary, can even land contracts in which their medical bills are partially or completely paid off by their employer. This is an extra incentive many hospitals have put in place to attract and retain the best doctor talent. Other health care workers also can find employers or even government scholarships to cover their educational costs.

**AN EXCITING CAREER**
One thing is for sure when you work in the health care industry: Every day is different. You never know
what kinds of situations you will be thrust into when you work for a hospital or physician’s office. If you like work that keeps you on your toes and is diverse from day to day, health care may be a perfect fit. Meet interesting people from varied backgrounds and put your skills to the test in the health care field.

**TOP 20 SALARIES IN THE FIELD**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care occupations was projected to grow 19 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 2.3 million new jobs

This is welcome news to those considering a career in health care. Salaries and benefits are on the mind of our next generation of health care workers as they weigh their various options in working while they gain their education or taking on student debt.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median annual wage for health care practitioners and technical occupations (such as registered nurses, physicians, surgeons and dental hygienists) was $61,710 in May 2014, which was higher than the median annual wage for all occupations in the economy of $35,540.

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<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<td>Physicians and Surgeons</td>
<td>$187,200</td>
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<td>Dentists</td>
<td>$154,640</td>
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<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>$120,950</td>
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<td>Podiatrists</td>
<td>$120,700</td>
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<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
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<td>Optometrists</td>
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<td>Physician Assistants</td>
<td>$95,820</td>
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<td>Veterinarians</td>
<td>$87,590</td>
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<td>Physical Therapists</td>
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<td>Radiation Therapists</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapists</td>
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<td>Audiologists</td>
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<td>Nuclear Medicine Technologists</td>
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<td>Speech-Language Pathologists</td>
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<td>Dental Hygienists</td>
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<td>Occupational Safety Specialist</td>
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<td>Genetic Counselors</td>
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<td>Chiropractors</td>
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<td>Registered Nurses</td>
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<td>Prosthetists</td>
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I recently solicited input from diverse Florida Keys residents about their experiences with Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly known as Obamacare.

**BY BETSY LANGAN**

My request was met with a deluge of phone calls, texts, emails and Facebook messages from a broad range of individuals offering widely varying perspectives. From long rants articulating downright anger about the program, to passionate testimonials from those who feel that their life has significantly improved as a result of the legislation, the opinions expressed captured the spectrum of possibility. One thing became clear, however. Keys residents feel strongly about the ACA and are not afraid to share their thoughts!

Opinions shared are categorized into four buckets:

1. **I AM ANGRY ABOUT THE ACA, AND THINK IT IS A HORRIBLE PROGRAM.** Timothy Berthiaume, the Manager of the Anchors Aweigh Club, a place where 12 Step recovery groups meet, voiced a concern articulated by many. “I didn’t find it to be affordable at all.” He continued, “The prices may be lower than traditional plans for a tiny segment of the population, however the deductibles are obscene and finding doctors who will accept the plan is difficult. Secondly, when I applied online I entered my phone number and was suddenly receiving 20 plus calls a day from call center vultures. I think it’s a big scam. A welfare check for big insurance companies. Period.”

2. **I APPRECIATE THE INTENT, BUT THE ACA HAS SOME GLITCHES THAT NEED TO BE RESOLVED.** The bucket with the most responses, complaints among those in this category include lack of insurance plans offered on the health insurance exchange and a dearth of primary care physicians that accept the available plans in the Florida Keys.

   In Monroe County in 2016, only Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida and United Healthcare Compass HMO plans are offered through the exchange. Many medical providers have refused to get into the network with United Healthcare, including several urgent care centers and two of the three Monroe County hospitals.

3. **THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE ACA.** The fact that Florida did not expand Medicaid was cited as a major problem, and renders the ACA ineffective for those who fall below the poverty line and need the coverage most.

   Retiree and Key West resident Ed Gillis, 70, explained, “Sadly, the citizens resident in Florida who are eligible under federal guidelines cannot benefit from federally paid subsidies because Florida Governor (Rick) Scott, and the legislature, will not expand Florida’s Medicaid eligibility rules. Some GOP governed states have expanded their rules, but not Florida … Of course, it costs the
KEYS RESIDENTS SPEAK UP ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Edie Kehoe, 57, who runs Pelagic and Reeftopia together with her husband, Pete, offered an additional and unique perspective about the affordability of the program. “People in my age group and tax bracket feel they can’t get affordable health care because they didn’t add it to their expenses when they were younger, and now that chunk of money is going to something else.

“If Pete and I had not incorporated that expense in all those years ago, doing it now would leave us screaming too. We are at $1350 a month now and that would make a couple of real nice vacations. So when I hear people I know afford some really nice stuff, don’t have health care and feel it should be free, it makes me mad… Some just need to get different priorities.”

4. I AM FILLED WITH GRATITUDE FOR A PROGRAM THAT HAS SAVED MY LIFE. Karen Luknis, the 58 year-old self-employed owner of Venus Charters, credits Obamacare with literally saving her life. Before the ACA, Luknis had a serious preexisting condition, which disqualified her from individual insurance plans.

As a result of her ongoing condition, she had become severely anemic. “I didn’t have insurance and had to go to a specialist, who gave me a discounted office visit price.” But the specialist was hesitant to perform the full range of testing because of high costs, which caused Luknis’ condition to deteriorate.

Ultimately, “I had to have an emergency blood transfusion, which cost me $5,000. The reason all that happened was because I was uninsured and couldn’t afford the diagnostic tests I needed. It almost killed me not to have insurance.”

Today Luknis gladly pays $156 per month for her health insurance premium. Because her income is low after business expenses are paid, subsidies from the ACA chip in over $800 per month towards the cost of her plan. She continued, “Today I am not in fear for my life. I know I can get the proper care.”

“People in my age group and tax bracket feel they can’t get affordable health care because they didn’t add it to their expenses when they were younger.”

- Edie Kehoe

COMING IN THE NEXT EDITION OF HEALTH

THE FINAL PIECE IN THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT 2016 4-PART SERIES
Four local women have transformed their lives through health and fitness

BY BETSY LANGAN

“Wastin’ away in Margaritaville” is not just a line from that famous Buffett tune about Key West, but also a way of life adopted by some Keys locals. Libation-induced escape is equally enjoyed by tourists looking for a brief respite from reality. No doubt, Key West is stereotypically synonymous with a carefree party culture.
But while some stumble home at 4:00 a.m. after a hazy, crazy night on Duval, there exists a largely unknown, yet significant, number of Keys residents who start their days at 4:00 a.m. ... swimming, biking and running major miles before the rest of the island even wakes up.

Among these secret early risers are four Key West women who have dramatically transformed their lives, adopting health and fitness as a lifestyle and achieving impressive accomplishments as a result. Each experienced a pivotal moment that became a motivator for positive transformation. The Keys now serve as an inspirational training venue and the ultimate playground for these hardcore female endurance athletes.

**TAZ DAVIZ**

A retired rocker, Taz Davis was a professional musician who entertained the multitudes in several iconic Key West bars for more than two decades. But in 2007, she put down her guitar and together with her husband, Kevin, decided to embrace sobriety and pursue a more active and healthy lifestyle. For Davis, 52, this meant becoming a vegetarian, and delving into the sport of triathlon.

Fast forward nearly a decade, and Davis is now a fitness instructor at Stay Fit Studio and an IRONMAN® Certified Coach. Davis recently created and implemented “IronTaz 144”, a self-designed long course triathlon, including a 2.5 mile swim, a 115 mile bike and a 26.5 mile run, completed consecutively and all in one day. On April 3, 2016, she swam at Smather’s Beach; rode her bike up and down US 1 to complete multiple laps around Sugarloaf Boulevard; and ran a course through historic Old Town up to Big Coppitt and back to finish at Higgs Beach. Davis was the sole participant, surrounded by a pack of at least 50 Key West triathlon friends who supported her throughout different legs of her adventure.

“IronTaz 144 turned out to be a pinnacle in my life and an event beyond my wildest dreams. I had originally envisioned a solo, non-ceremonial, uneventful personal test of my endurance to be accomplished right here, at home, in the most beautiful place in the world. I only told a few people until a very short time before the actual day... I might have been the only one to do the entire 144 mile course, but I certainly wasn’t alone! It truly was epic. The island was just a little more amazing that day.”

Davis continued, “This island triathlon community, I believe, is unique in its camaraderie not only because we all train together, but because it is precisely HERE that we do it. We ARE Key West. We share it, live it and breathe it. We train in it together, sharing challenges, heartaches and triumphs that bind us together like a family and with our families in this unique location.”

“And it helps to keep me sober.”

**SUSAN DEKEYSER AND DEIRDRE ROBBINS**

In 2014, Susan Dekeyser's doctor called her on her cell phone and muttered the very foreign words, “Ductal Carcinoma in Situ”. At the age of 48, this Key West triathlete
learned she had breast cancer, which “literally stopped me dead in my tracks … After digesting the news, doing a mountain of research and eventually finding the right team of doctors, I realized I had to treat this like a race. A positive attitude had to be the center of it all.”

Dekesyer underwent a bilateral mastectomy, which resulted in complications that required several subsequent surgeries. “The most difficult part was not being able to exercise. I missed training and being active. My patience and will were tested.”

In her second year after her breast cancer diagnosis, Dekeyser is now teaming up with her close friend and training partner, Deirdre Robbins, 56, who is also a breast cancer survivor. The two are preparing for Challenge Roth, an iron-distance (140.6 mile) triathlon taking place in Roth, Germany this July. Said Dekeyser, “Deirdre and I have a special bond with a passion for fitness and triathlon but also with our breast cancer history. She was my mentor in so many ways through treatment decisions and recovery. We are accomplishing something great at our old ages of 50 and 56. We don’t feel our ages half the time and we have fitness and attitude to thank for that outlook.”

Robbins and Dekeyser are fundraising for The MaccaNow Foundation as they log the miles for Roth. The money raised supports breast cancer patients and their families during difficult times.

Robbins, a native of Ireland who now owns and operates Local Awards and Category 5 Signs, recently described the feeling experienced by an athlete preparing to race 140.6 miles as “bone-crushing fatigue”, reminiscent of the utter exhaustion she experienced when undergoing cancer treatment. “I remember crawling up the stairs because I was so exhausted” after rounds of chemotherapy. Today Robbins voluntarily subjects her body to extreme training volume in order to develop both physical and mental toughness and to accomplish more than she ever believed possible.

Dekeyser concurred, stating, “Fighting the cancer battle made me realize I have the ability to overcome hardship. Training for an IRONMAN makes me realize I have perseverance and determination. I was able to see breast cancer as a hurdle and something I just had to face and conquer, and ‘power on’. I am mentally tougher, which can only help me on race day.”

DEBBIE BERTOLINI
Ultra-marathoner Debbie Bertolini started running in 1996 as an antidote to a 2- pack a day cigarette smoking habit.

After working up to running 2 miles she entered a 5K race. Bertolini, now 54, was hooked. She completed the 7 Mile Bridge Run in 1997, and then set her sights on her first marathon, measuring 26.2 miles, and completed the Disney Marathon in 1998. She then ran at least 2 marathons per year, sometimes placing in her age group, over the next 2 decades. Bertolini has run 27 marathons to date.

But eventually, Bertolini, whose favorite race mantra is “Run with a contagious joy”, craved more than the 26.2 mile running experience. The Connecticut native, who now teaches for the Monroe County School District, explained, “After completing the first Keys 100 on a 6- woman relay team in 2008, and seeing the 50 and 100 mile individual runners, I wanted to attempt the 50 mile distance. This was my
first exposure to ultrarunning, and I was intrigued by these people who were pushing themselves through obvious physical pain and emotional discomfort.”

Bertolini ran the Keys 100 50 mile race in 2009 and was the 2nd overall female finisher. “I loved the sense of accomplishment and the feeling of personal power I derived from being able to overcome the physical pain and the mental obstacles.”

She continued, “A series of injuries kept me from what I saw as my next step- completing a 100 mile race, until 2012, when I began training for my first solo 100 mile race. I did not finish that race in May of 2013, dropping out after completing 90 miles. This heartbreaking failure only increased my desire to accomplish my goal. The following year I successfully completed the Keys 100, and I have since completed two other 100 mile races, as well as six 50 mile races.”

Bertolini concluded by concisely describing the mental toughness she has developed in order to repeatedly run the 100 mile distance. “Enduring the pain and successfully completing the race is an experience that is beyond powerful. Every race makes me stronger, and smarter, and better in every way.”

**PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE FLORIDA KEYS**

Rocker-turned-triathlete Davis similarly wrapped up by saying, “In Key West and the Lower Keys, through the right guidance, determination, work and desire, people have turned their lives around through training. I have seen the transformation first hand and it is amazing. It translates to immediate families and through to children. (The endurance community) has evolved into this healthy, supportive “tribe”, which has quickly become my family. One of the most positive aspects of triathlon is the friendship bonds that are forged through the journey of training, the shared experiences with others that cannot be duplicated anywhere else or in any other forum.”

Sending an open invitation to anyone who might want to join this secret Keys way of healthy living, Davis asserted, “We welcome those who may not think they can do this.”
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Monroe County

SUFFERS HIGH ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE, FEW TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Temptation lurks around almost every corner in the Florida Keys, and particularly in Key West. In a county of only 75,000 people, there are almost 700 alcoholic beverage licenses – three times the number in counties of similar size.

BY GENA PARSONS

Yet, the availability of alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery programs is severely limited, especially for children. And while drug investigations and arrests declined in the last few years, local youth continue to partake in illegal substances beyond statewide averages.

FACING FACTS
More than a quarter of adult residents of Monroe County (25.7 percent) report heavy or binge drinking. The alcohol use rate among teenagers and preteens also exceeds statewide averages with nearly 60 percent of high schoolers admitting to drinking alcohol in their lifetime. Among middle schoolers, the rate is 24 percent, according to surveys by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Monroe County children also are exposed to and use illegal drugs at rates higher the statewide average. The 2014 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey found that 40 percent of local high schoolers had used marijuana or hashish, compared to 33 percent statewide. More than ten percent had taken depressants and prescription pain relievers, and between five and nine percent had sampled inhalants, club drugs, LSD, PCP, mushrooms, or prescription amphetamines.

In 2014, there were more than three times as many alcohol-related vehicle crashes in Monroe County as there were across Florida. Last year, the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office reported 169 charges of driving under the influence (DUI), a slight increase over the two previous years.

FINDING HELP
Substance abuse health services in Monroe County are offered by a variety of psychiatrists and psychologists in private practice as well as the non-profit Guidance/Care-Center, which accepts Medicaid. DePoo Hospital in Key West and the Guidance/Care-Center’s Marathon facility offer residential detoxification units including psychiatric crisis stabilization. Both are licensed service providers under the Florida Substance Abuse Impairment Act, also known as the Marchman Act, allowing for emergency services and temporary detention for evaluation and treatment when required, either on a voluntary or involuntary basis. However, the local facilities only treat adults. Children must be transported to the mainland.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Al-Anon host support group meetings at locations countywide, including Unity Church and Metropolitan Community Church in Key West, First Baptist Church in Big Coppitt, United Methodist and St. Peter’s Catholic churches in Big Pine, the Marathon United Methodist Church, St. Columba Episcopal in Marathon, and Coral Isles Church and Pearl Church in Tavernier.
The Anchors Aweigh Club, 404 Virginia Street in Key West, has operated for more than three decades providing twelve-step meetings for residents and visitors.

**AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**
The Monroe County Coalition, in cooperation with community partners, works to reduce children's access to alcohol. When the Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco eliminated compliance agents in Monroe County, the coalition stepped in to offer free, responsible vendor training to effectively implement the drinking age law. It also works inside schools to teach children and parents about the dangers of alcohol use on the developing brain. And in 2015, in an attempt to change parents’ perceptions and children’s attitudes, the coalition aired public service announcements on local radio stations with the message that no one’s house is safe for teenage drinking. The organization also targets other illegal substances with prevention education.

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---

**ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN MONROE COUNTY**

**Adult Alcohol Consumption:**
*Heavy or Binge Drinking (2013)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monroe</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>25.7 %</td>
<td>17.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>29.3 %</td>
<td>23.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>22.1 %</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18-44</td>
<td>35.5 %</td>
<td>24.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-64</td>
<td>23.6 %</td>
<td>16.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 65+</td>
<td>15.7 %</td>
<td>7.2  %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Percentage of youth who reported having used various drugs in their lifetimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School (Monroe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana or Hashish</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Marijuana</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Drugs</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD, PCP or Mushrooms</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine or Crack Cocaine</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressants</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Pain Relievers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Amphetamines</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steroids (w/o doctor’s orders)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-the-Counter Drugs</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Florida Department of Children and Families*
Ban boring baked fish! It's time for **GRILLED TUNA PANzanella**

**WE ALL KNOW WE SHOULD EAT MORE FISH.** We all know it's good for us. What we don't always know is a great way to make eating fish feel new and exciting. Because how many times can you get excited about baked fish? Personally, I set a goal to eat fish three times a week. And that's good news for you, because that has forced me to come up with some inventive and delicious ways to eat this healthy, lean protein.
I like to toss a gorgeous hunk of tuna on the grill. The flavor even can rival the satisfaction of a juicy steak (and I am a self-professed meat lover). And once it comes off the grill, I like to turn it into my version of an Italian panzanella (bread) salad. I toss the tuna with some grilled summer veggies and bread off the grill, then serve it on a colorful heirloom tomato salad.

**EVEN FULL-FLAVORED**, and slightly fattier, fish like tuna is a great choice. One 4-ounce serving of fresh tuna has a whopping 28 grams of protein and about 1 gram of fat. Just 1 gram! But it sure doesn’t taste like that’s all it has. With its meaty texture and hearty taste, fresh tuna simply does not feel at all like diet food.

**GRILLED TUNA PANZANELLA**

**START TO FINISH: 30 MINUTES  
SERVINGS: 4**

- 4 Medium Heirloom Tomatoes  
  (preferably variety in colors)
- 1 Medium Yellow Summer Squash, Halved Lengthwise
- 1 Medium Zucchini, Halved Lengthwise
- 1 Bunch Scallions, Roots Trimmed
- 4 Thick Slices Sourdough Bread
- 1 Pound Tuna Steak, Preferably Sushi Grade
- Kosher Salt And Ground Black Pepper
- 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 Large Garlic Clove
- 3 Tablespoons Chopped Fresh Cilantro
- 3 Tablespoons Chopped Fresh Basil
- 1 Tablespoon Red Wine Vinegar
- Lime wedges, to serve

**DIRECTIONS:**

Heat the grill to medium-high.

Chop the tomatoes into about a 3/4-inch dice, then add to a large bowl. On a rimmed baking sheet, arrange the squash, zucchini, scallions, bread and tuna. Brush everything with the olive oil, then season with salt and pepper.

Grill the ingredients in batches, returning them to the baking sheet as they finish. Grill the squash and zucchini for 3 to 4 minutes per side, or until there are grill marks but the vegetables are not cooked through. Grill the scallions for 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until they are wilted and slightly charred. Grill the tuna for 2 to 2 1/2 minutes per side; the center should be raw. Grill the bread for 1 to 2 minutes per side, or until crispy and golden.
Allow all grilled ingredients to cool for 5 minutes. Rub the garlic clove vigorously on one side of each slice of toasted bread. Chop the scallions into 1/4-inch slices, then chop the squash and zucchini into 3/4-inch pieces. Break or cut the bread into roughly 1-inch pieces. Slice the tuna 1/4-inch thick, cutting across the grain.

Add the scallions, bread, squash and zucchini to the bowl with the tomatoes, then add the cilantro, basil and vinegar. Toss lightly, then season with salt and pepper. Divide the salad between 4 bowls, then top each with a quarter of the tuna. Serve with a lime wedge.

**NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING:**

690 calories; 180 calories from fat (26 percent of total calories); 20 g fat (3.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 45 mg cholesterol; 1,140 mg sodium; 86 g carbohydrate; 7 g fiber; 14 g sugar; 45 g protein.
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