

**Maxine Mesinger
Multiple Sclerosis
Clinic**

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**Asst. Director:
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MD**

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RN, MSCN**

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MSCS**

**Receptionist:
Crystal Rivera**

**Clinical Tech:
Viola Barb**

**Dr. Rivera's As-
sistant: Rose
Saiz**

**Dr. Hutton's As-
sistant: Ivonne
Montemar**

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The MS Messenger

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Summer Issue: Vacation anyone?

The kids are home, it is hot outside and reruns are on the television. You know what that means? It is time for a vacation. Summer is the traditional time of year when families escape the boredom and heat of Houston for parts known and unknown.

Having multiple sclerosis does not mean you should avoid travel. In fact, if you enjoy vacations and travel, it is even more important for you to continue this activity which is a valuable tool for coping with day to day stressors. However, it does mean that you should carefully plan your trip to minimize travel-related stressors and ensure that you have an enjoyable and rejuvenating experience.

Let's take a look at some of the

most common barriers to travel for persons with multiple sclerosis. Due to the unpredictable nature of the disease, many persons worry that their symptoms may prevent them from fully participating *or* limit others accompanying them on the trip. Some persons have concerns about traveling with their injectable drugs. Others may have some anxiety about being far away from their usual health care providers while away. Finally, there are those that find the whole process of planning and executing a trip exhausting.

Here are some strategies for ensuring a successful trip:

Injectables

Will you need to bring your injectables? Did you know you can carry on injectables and a small cooler with gel packs for medica-

tions? Although documentation for the check-in and security process is not required, it can be helpful to bring a letter from your doctor.

Fatigue

Have you considered bringing your cooling device to use on the plane (often there is no cool air circulating in the cabin while the plane is still at the gate) or your destination if traveling to a warm climate? Some foreign cities do not have air conditioning in all buildings so it is important for you to research your chosen locales. What kind of transportation options exist at your destination? Perhaps budgeting more money for convenient and readily accessible transportation might be easier than negotiating a foreign public transportation system or walking long distances. Are accessible cabs/vans available? (Continued on page 2)

Meet The Staff: Administrative Assistants



Pictured on left: Rose & Ivonne

Rose Saiz

Rose has worked for Baylor College of Medicine since 2000 when she assisted another neurologist in the department who eventually deployed to Iraq in 2003. Since 2003, she has worked at the clinic assisting Dr. Rivera and Wini Breitbart, RN with patient care.

Rose has responsibility for scheduling, medication requests and making sure that any other patient needs are communicated to Dr. Rivera or Wini. Rose is famous for her efficiency and her love of Chihuahuas. She recently adopted a Chihuahua and is on a quest to find a

name for her new little girl.

Emma Ivonne Montemar

Ivonne has worked with MS doctors and patients for 20 years and has seen many changes in MS care in that time. Previously, she worked for Dr. Rivera until she was hired as Dr. Hutton's assistant 6 years ago. Ivonne also lives with MS every day as her partner has MS and she considers herself privileged to work with others who have the disease.

Ivonne is originally from Mexico City but has lived most of her life in the United States and recently became a citizen. She is an avid reader and volunteers at the Houston Holocaust Museum. Ivonne is also known for her creativity when it comes to entertaining and crafts.

Preventing Medicare Fraud

- *Keep your personal information from falling into the wrong hands. Never give out your Medicare or Social Security numbers to solicitors.*
 - *Shred all important documents before throwing them away.*
 - *Compare your bills with the Medicare summary notices to make certain that the charges are correct.*
 - *Keep your statements in one place.*
 - *Report any incorrect billing by phoning your service provider.*
- If your concerns are not answered or your bills are too complicated to handle, call the Better Business Bureau Education Foundation @ 713/341-6184 or 1-877-468-9222.*

Vacation? (continued from page 1)

Are you willing to include some time for resting during your trip? It can be helpful to plan for assigned times each day so travel partners know what to expect. Perhaps there is something your fellow traveler/s really want to do or see that is not so important to you. They can press on allowing you to conserve energy.

Accessibility

It is crucial to research this aspect of travel. We are fortunate to have the American Disabilities Act in the US which governs accessibility to

public spaces and businesses. However, in many of the older cities around the globe, you might find sidewalks or venues that are non-accessible so you will want to check with the hotel, public transportation and attractions you plan to visit. Also, most airports/airlines have assistance desks. Although some of these options may result in extra charges, they can really cut down on some of the stress and fatigue of traveling.

Overall health

Have you discussed your travel plans with your physician/s to

determine if there are any concerns or medical needs to accommodate? Scheduling an appointment to discuss your worries with your doctor and/or medical team and be an important part of planning your trip and might put your mind at ease. In almost all cases, traveling is not restricted and can be accomplished with just a little bit of extra planning.

Good websites to check out:

www.disabledtravelers.com

www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/index.shtm

Meet The Staff : Receptionist

Crystal Rivera



We are pleased to welcome Crystal Rivera, our new Senior Office Support Specialist who is also bilingual.

Crystal greets and directs visitors to the clinic. She also assists by answering the phones and verifying insurance so that patients of the clinic can obtain needed services.

Prior to joining Baylor College of Medicine, Crystal worked ten years at the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Association managing Housing and Urban Development grants addressing homelessness.

She was born and raised in Houston where she learned to fish and ride motorcycles. She is the proud owner of a 1977 Harley which she loves almost as much as her two daughters!

Self-help group for patients who speak Spanish Grupo de apoyo para pacientes con Esclerosis Multiple de habla-espanol

We are in the process of developing a self help group meeting for persons with MS and their caregivers who primarily speak Spanish. If you or someone you know has an interest in such a group, please call Mary Gonzalez @ 713-864-6568 or email

megigf@aol.com.

grupo por favor llame a Mary Gonzalez al 713-864-6568 or email

Estamos iniciando un grupo de apoyo para los pacientes con EM y sus proveedores de atencion. Si usted or alguna persona que usted conoce esta interesado en este

megigf@aol.com.

Did you know that Texas law protects you from electric service disconnection if it would cause you or someone in your household to become seriously ill or more seriously ill. Contact Tracey @ 713/798-4470 or the NMSS @ 713/526-8967 for more information.

\$\$\$\$ Summer Utility Assistance \$\$\$\$

On June 22nd, the Public Utility Commission authorized a 12% electricity discount during summer for low income residential customers in areas with competing energy retailers.

Medicaid or low-income Medicare should be automatically enrolled.

four), you may contact LIDA (Low Income Discount Administrator) at 1-800-241-7011 or apply online at

Households receiving food stamps, TANF, SSI,

If you are on one of these programs and are not automatically enrolled - OR- your family income is at or below 125% of federal poverty guidelines (\$25,813 for a family of

www.puc.state.tx.us.

Community Events

Don't forget to check with MS Activesource 1-800-456-2255, MS Pathways 1-800-788-1467, MS Lifelines 1-877-447-3243 and Shared Solutions 1-800-887-8100 for community presentations and teleconferences. These are a great way to get information about a variety of topics. Some upcoming programs focus on relationships, sexuality, family, fatigue, cognition, head-

aches, and treatment management. Brochures for the various programs can be found in our lobby and exam rooms.

BCM

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Comments or suggestions? Contact
Tracey L. Reeves @ 713/798-4470.

"Making life livable for persons with MS."

National MS Society Corner

PEARLAND ADAPTIVE YOGA CLASSES

There are two classes now offered by a registered yoga therapist at the West Side Events Center @ 2150 Country Place Parkway every Saturday and sponsored by the NMSS:

- **Hatha Yoga which is a standing class from 10am-11:15am.**
- **Chair Yoga which is a sitting class from 11:30am-noon.**

If you have any questions or need more information, please call Lissa @ 713/526-8967, option 2.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Did you know that the NMSS can potentially help those who meet chapter established guidelines with the following services:

- **prescribed durable medical equipment**
- **home modifications**
- **disposable items used for personal care**
- **public transportation vouchers**
- **respite care**
- **professional counseling?**

If you are in need of services and equipment, please call Vickie Stevens @ 713/526-8967, option 2.

FALL INTO STEP FOR UPCOMING MS WALKS

Now's the perfect time to lace up, step up and get your family, friends and neighbors ready to join the movement

against multiple sclerosis!

Why? Because the Fall 2007 MS Walks are less than two months away!

Here's the lowdown on when and where:

Saturday, Sept. 8: Katy, Kemah and The Woodlands
Sunday, Sept. 9: Downtown Houston

The Blue Fish Worx MS Fun Run will also be held in The Woodlands.

Day-of registration for each MS Walk will begin at 7 a.m. with the event stepping off at 8 a.m.

Free – yes, FREE! – online registration is open at mswalklonestar.org, so don't wait 'til it's too late! Fall into step and sign up now!

If you have any questions, contact Naomi Dingle @ ndingle@nmsslonestar.org or 713-526-8967 option 2.