

# Opioid use a painful topic to discuss for some

This is a difficult topic to address for it covers so many needs and circumstances. Many of you know I have fought several life threatening medical conditions, such as an ascending and descending aortic dissection, stroke, and multiple operations. These, however, have not affected my life so much as my eight-year struggle with fibromyalgia.

For many years I have been plagued by lower back and sciatica pain. My primary care doctor has observed me for 30 years, knows my conditions, and has carefully prescribed medications for me. During this time I have seen chiropractors and pain management doctors, researched current treatments, and tried to uncover the cause of the severe pain I have suffered nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you have not had such an experience you are most fortunate, because it is not something with which you want to live, though many do.

I have experienced firsthand the effects of going off various types of prescription



**HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**  
**JOE STECKLER**

medications. One I used was Lyrica, and after a period of time my doctor and I decided I did not need the drug. I followed the doctor's directions to the letter, but still experienced about six weeks of pure H\*\*l. At times I was not certain if I would live or die. I got through it and resolved that any further attempts to come off a medication would be after much research and discussion with my doctor. After going through what I did, I learned that thousands of others had a similar experience, most often caused by coming off the medication too quickly.

My concern now is Florida law HB 21 on controlled substance prescribing that went into effect July 1, 2018. Since I have

chronic nonmalignant pain, I will not be affected by the new limits on prescribing opioids. I can tell you that if I had to obtain a prescription for my medications on a 3- or 7-day basis, I would spend most of my time driving to my doctor's office and the pharmacy. The new legislation will affect those suffering from acute pain, though there are exemptions for cancer, terminal conditions, palliative care, and severe traumatic injuries.

We do have a problem with increased use of opioids, but have we directed our efforts to restrict their use in a well thought out manner? Many seniors take these drugs because, whether we like it or not, some medical conditions dictate their use for treatment. My concern when I first started using opioids was whether I would become addicted to them. Well, throughout my eight years of coping with fibromyalgia, I have used one medication that helps somewhat but tried others that did not.

We do not know what causes fibromy-

algia and have not developed any specific treatment for it. I can tell you that at times my pain is difficult to handle, often reaching a level of 9/10. Does that mean I do not try to exercise or try all the well-intended ideas? I do, but little seems to help. Most important, like many others who use the medical drugs prescribed by my doctor, I have NEVER abused them.

There are many like me who believe that what was a well-intended law may actually harm those who have a medical problem. Does a group of elected officials have the requisite background to direct the use of opioids? If you experience problems obtaining medications under the new law, we ask you to call 321-473-7770 so that we may document them.

Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a non profit organization designed to advocate, educate, and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens. Feel free to contact us at: info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or calling: (321) 473-7770.

## Calendar

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Magic Dove Magic Shop hosts free monthly magic workshops for kids at 9 a.m. every second Saturday of the month (July 14) at the magic shop, 604 Brevard Ave., Cocoa.

The free program for children ages 7-17, is designed to build positive character traits and increase confidence.

Dr. Dan and youth magicians will teach magic tricks that children can do with everyday objects. Supplies are included, and parents are encouraged to learn along with their children to increase likelihood of success. Space is limited and reservations

are required.

For more information or to make a reservation, call Dr. Dan Ezell or Terry Black at (321) 433-1130 or email [drdan@magicdove.com](mailto:drdan@magicdove.com).

**Learn to paint pastels:** Learn how to draw and paint wildlife, animals and pets, naturescapes, still life and portraits, and abstracts from 10 a.m. to noon Sundays and from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays at Art Gallery of Viera, 2201 Town Center Drive, Suite 111, Viera.

The fee is \$25 per class or \$85 for four See **CALENDAR**, page 13

### SUNDAY, JULY 15

## Hometown Highlights



**Dr. Steve Alukonis has opened a 2nd Chiropractic and Functional Medicine practice!! Many of his patients drive from Melbourne and Palm Bay to his Cocoa Beach office and he wanted to accommodate them by having an office closer. Dr. Alukonis has**

advanced training in 9 Chiropractic spinal adjusting techniques. Treating people involving automobile accidents is a large part of his practice. Being a Chiropractic Orthopedist, he has advanced training treating auto accident patients. He also treats neck pain, headaches, low back pain, stenosis, sciatic pain, shoulder problems, hips, fallen foot arches, dizziness (vertigo), TMJ, and peripheral neuropathy. He uses laser therapy to reduce pain and inflammation. In addition to Chiropractic services, Dr. Alukonis practices Functional Medicine helping auto immune conditions, thyroid problems, Hashimotos, digestive problems, fatigue, weight gain and food sensitivities. He does extensive blood tests including environmental toxins and vitamin levels. In Functional Medicine, he uses specialized tests to get to the root cause of a persons health conditions. some of the tests include an ALCAT food sensitivity test, mold test, heavy metals, Adrenal Stress Index, Cyrex Labs for leaky gut, gluten sensitivity, auto immune test, candida (yeast), bad bacteria and parasites. He uses nutrition, herbs and lifestyle changes to get you back to optimal health. He is accepting new patients at both locations. The Cocoa Beach phone number is 321-783-1960 and the Melbourne phone number is 321-425-2519. Please feel free to call either location to schedule an appointment.

**We invite you to attend their Grand Opening July 20th from 6-8 PM in their new Melbourne Office at 3972 W. Eau Gallie Blvd. Suite A. Refreshments will be served.**

# NOW OPEN!

## GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

### JULY 20TH FROM 6-8 PM

Please join us for this event and tour our new office.

**I CAN HELP YOU WITH ...**

- Auto Accidents
- Auto Immune Conditions
- Digestive problems
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Thyroid Conditions
- Weight Gain
- Fatigue
- Neck Pain
- Back Pain
- Functional Medicine
- And much more!!

**Call our office today to schedule your discounted consultation of \$67. That's a savings of over \$250!**

**Dr. Steve Alukonis DC, DABCO**

**Space Coast Advanced Health**

**Melbourne • 321-425-2519**  
3972 W. Eau Gallie Blvd., Ste A

**Cocoa Beach • 321-783-1960**  
299 North Orlando Ave.

[SpaceCoastAdvancedHealth.com](http://SpaceCoastAdvancedHealth.com)

THE PATIENT AND ANY OTHER PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT HAS A RIGHT TO REFUSE TO PAY, CANCEL A PAYMENT OR TO BE REIMBURSED FOR ANY OTHER SERVICE, EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT THAT IS PERFORMED AS A RESULT OF AND WITHIN 72 HOURS OF RESPONDING TO THE ADVERTISING FOR THE FREE, DISCOUNTED OR REDUCED FEE, SERVICE, EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT.