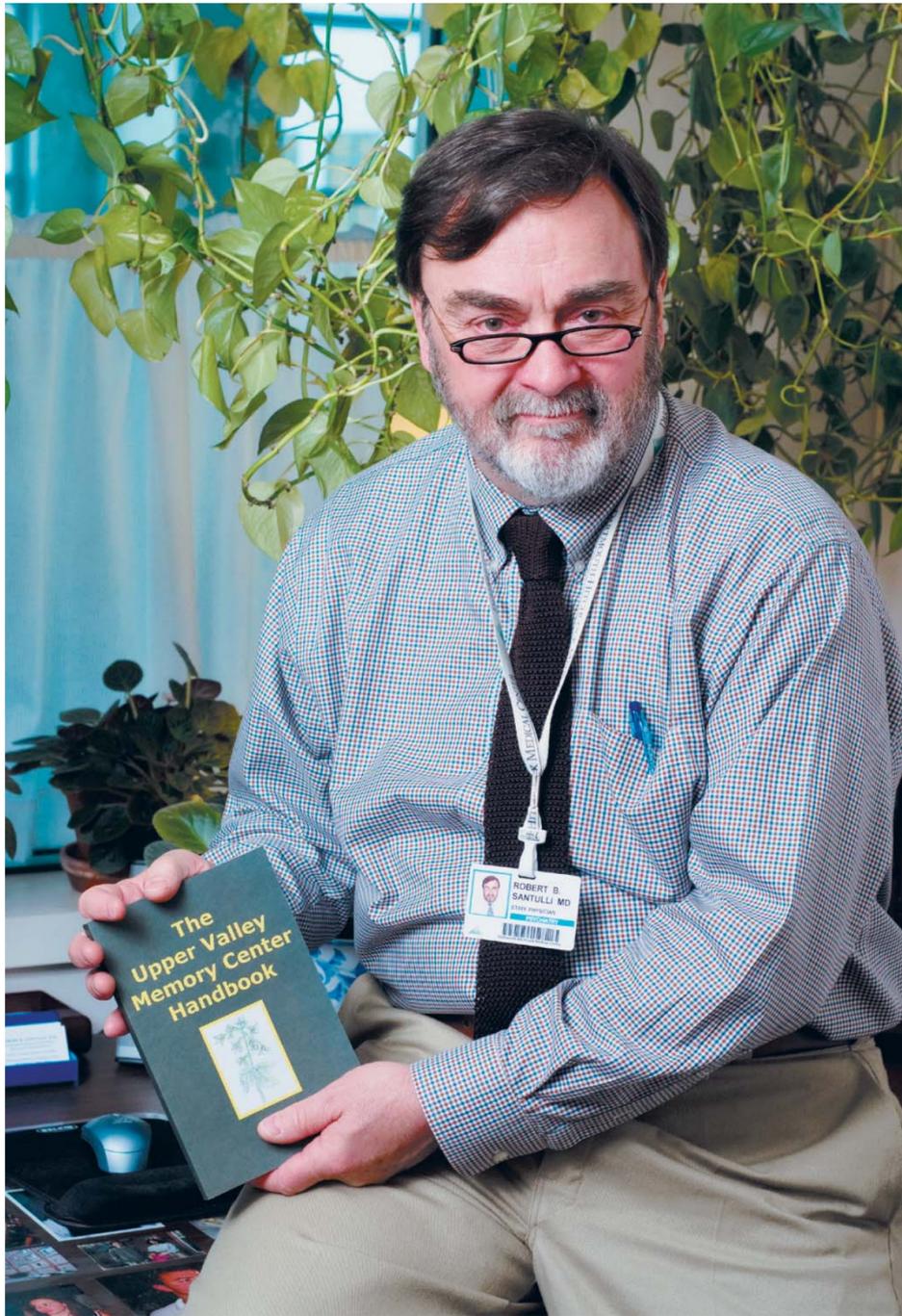


Empowerment for families and caregivers of Alzheimer's patients...

Memory Clinic, Centers for Health and Aging, Alzheimer's Association form new alliance



Robert Santulli, MD

For the growing number of Upper Valley families who live and cope with the challenges of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, 2009 promises to be a year of empowerment. The Dartmouth Memory Clinic, the Centers for Health and Aging, and the New Hampshire office of the Alzheimer's Association have joined in a special collaboration dedicated to building information, education and support services for caregivers of persons with dementia.

"Nationally, there are about 5.2 million people with Alzheimer's," says Robert B. Santulli, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Dartmouth Memory Clinic, and the driving force behind the initiative. "And it's estimated that by the year 2050, that number will grow to at least 13 million. As the population ages, more and more people are diagnosed with the disease. So this is a good move for the community at large."

With its organizational "to-do" list well in hand, says Santulli, the new initiative puts into practice what is shown in the literature: that in Alzheimer's disease, paying careful attention to the total needs of the individual with the illness, and the family, is at least as important as "high-tech" medical and pharmacologic interventions.

"The benefits to families and caregivers who have ample education about the illness and its management, as well as abundant opportunities to share their experiences with other caregivers translate directly to persons with the disease," says Santulli.

"It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it takes a village to care for somebody with Alzheimer's. Medical care is only a small part of it."

For more information

on the new alliance or any of its services, contact Santulli at (603) 650-5804.

The three-group alliance is new but already has accomplished much. The Upper Valley region will benefit from several new services, health education initiatives and program enhancements including:

- **The recent appointment** of Program Coordinator Kesstan Blandin, BA, MA, PhD (candidate), who will oversee a wide range of core programs of the Alzheimer's Association, including Helpline and Care Consultation, family caregiver education, early stage patient education, public health education programs and other community-outreach projects.
- **The Alzheimer's Support** and Education Group now meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Friday, from 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm, in the DHMC Health Education Center.
- **The One-to-One Program**, in which novice caregivers are partnered with mentors who have at least two years' experience in looking after a loved one with dementia.
- **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**, a life-skills and confidence-building course specifically designed for individuals who care for an older adult with a long-term illness or condition, such as dementia. The course is offered twice a year by the Centers for Health and Aging at no cost to participants. For information, call (603) 653-0868.
- **Publication** of *The Dartmouth Memory Center Handbook*. Formerly released under the title, *The Upper Valley Memory Center Handbook*, the 200-page book is an invaluable reference for caregivers and families of persons with memory disorders who seek up-to-date, reliable information about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. For Santulli, the handbook's creator and recent author of *Talking to Families with Alzheimer's* (to be published by WW Norton and Co. next year), the handbook is a labor of love. He has devoted countless volunteer hours researching information sources and Internet sites to discern between those that are helpful and those that aren't, and it is distributed free of charge. Now down to the last few copies of its original 7,000-copy print run, he hopes the new edition will be ready for distribution very soon.

"Norman & Beatrice"

A play by Barbara Hammond about love and dementia was performed at the DHMC Community Health Fair in November.

For a free DVD of that performance, call **603-653-1912**.

Sponsored by:
Dartmouth Memory Clinic
DH Center on Healthy Aging
& the NH Alzheimer's Association

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 22

Keeping Your Balance

As we reach our 40s, our balance gradually begins to diminish. Balance problems can also increase the risk for fractures in those people with osteopenia and osteoporosis. The more inactive we become, the less able we will be to perform activities which require moving in multiple directions and stepping across different levels. Bring a new sense of balance to your life and learn valuable exercises which will help improve your balance and protect you against the risk of falling and injuring yourself. This class, entitled "Keeping Your Balance," will be held today at the Women's Health Resource Center on the mall in Lebanon. Cost is \$40. To register or to get more information, call 603-650-2600.



February 7, 8 AM to 3:30 PM Get Heart Smart Symposium

In observance of American Heart Month, join DHMC heart and vascular specialists to learn about the latest research and treatment options for heart and vascular diseases. Get tips on how to keep your heart fit and suggestions for choosing healthy foods to eat. Meet heart and stroke survivors and hear their first-person stories. A heart-healthy breakfast, sponsored by the CO-OP food stores, will start the day off on the right foot. The symposium is free and open to the public. Seating is limited so call 603-653-9395 today to reserve your seat. For a detailed schedule of presentations, go to dhmc.org and click on events.



February 11, 12 NOON to 1 PM Advance Directives Class

A tragic, unexpected accident or a sudden downturn of your health is nothing any of us want to think about. But it is important to be prepared. Who will speak for you in a medical emergency if you can't? Do you have an advance directive in your medical record? The Health Education Center at DHMC is pleased to offer a free course outlining why this is one of the most important issues for your personal health care and for your family, plus learn how to fill out the proper documentation. The class will meet in the Health Education Center on Level 4. To register, please call 603-650-8710 or email Health.Education.Center@Dartmouth.edu.



February 13 & 27, 12:30 to 1:30 PM Alzheimer's Support and Education Group

The Alzheimer's Support and Education group now meets twice a month on the second and fourth Friday in the DHMC Health Education Center on Level 4 of the Doctor's Office Building. Free and open to patients and family members.



February 17, 6 to 7:30 PM MS Support Group

DHMC is pleased to offer a new support group for those living with multiple sclerosis and their families. During this monthly informal meeting, participants can talk about their concerns and questions while learning helpful tips from each other on how to enhance life while living with MS. The MS support group will be held on the third Tuesday of each month from 6 to 7:30 PM in the Health Education Center on Level 4 at DHMC. There is no need to pre-register. For more information, call 603-650-7491.



DARTMOUTH-HITCHCOCK MEDICAL CENTER

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DHMC is a charitable organization and has a financial assistance policy.