Margie Rackley has coordinated free flu shot clinics for Enloe Medical Center for 15 years, but one she organized at the Torres Community Shelter last fall touched her heart.

“I was so impressed by the compassion the staff shared for the individuals staying at the shelter,” says the program assistant of the Enloe Outpatient Center.

The free flu shot clinic is one of several Enloe offered in 2016 to protect the community against four common flu strains. Butte County Public Health provides the vaccines, and Enloe provides the staff and supplies to administer them.

Protecting underserved patients

Each year, Enloe hosts three free flu clinics for the public and several private clinics for specific organizations, like the Torres Shelter, the Jesus Center and the Esplanade House. Enloe’s Regional Cancer Center and Mother & Baby Education Center also provide vaccines for patients and pregnant women.

Helping the underserved is part of Enloe’s culture. The medical center donated $20,000 to the Torres Shelter in 2016 when the organization announced it was facing closure due to lack of funding. The one-time gift helped the shelter stay open.

Enloe administers free vaccinations for more than 3,000 adults and children every year. Those with private insurance can receive the vaccinations, too.

The flu is a big deal

Millions of people get the flu each year and hundreds of thousands are hospitalized because of it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Up to 49,000 people die from the flu annually.

Rackley notes that most people see the flu as an “inconvenience” that can cause fever, chills, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue and vomiting.

“But when you get a flu shot, you’re not only protecting yourself, you’re protecting high-risk senior and infant populations as well as people with chronic health conditions in our community,” says Jolene Nixon, RN, director of Enloe Clinic Services. “The more people are vaccinated against the flu, the less the flu can spread.”

A flu shot contains inactivated viruses or no virus at all and cannot cause the flu. Nixon says people probably believe this myth because there are many viral illnesses that people can be exposed to before receiving a flu shot.

What can you do?

- Get a flu shot each year. The virus changes constantly. Even if the components in the vaccine haven’t changed, the immunization will serve as a booster.
- Get the shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available. It takes two weeks for antibodies to develop and protect against flu virus infection.
- Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through droplets when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. So cover your cough and wash your hands well and often.
Few diagnoses are as feared as Alzheimer’s disease. This progressive form of dementia destroys a person’s memory and ability to think clearly, communicate effectively and perform daily tasks.

Advancing age is the greatest-known risk factor for developing dementia, along with health habits and genetic risk factors, explained neurologist Joel Rothfeld, MD, Ph.D., at a recent Enloe seminar titled “Brain Health: Preventing Dementia and Treating Alzheimer’s.” Other risk factors can’t be controlled, such as family history, genetic predisposition and gender.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia. One in 10 Americans ages 65-plus and nearly half of those over age 85 have dementia; 65 percent are women, due in part to women living longer.

More than forgetfulness

Although it’s normal to misplace your keys or forget a name, Alzheimer’s disease (and all types of dementia) continues to progress, eventually leading to irreversible, total mental impairment and the inability to care for one’s self.

Diagnosis and treatment

No one test can diagnose Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. For patients experiencing memory or cognitive problems, evaluation by a physician for memory impairment is key to helping determine if the issues are related to a reversible, treatable issue (e.g., depression, anxiety, nutritional deficiency) versus a dementia. A memory specialist can identify a dementia, which can lead to earlier medical and behavioral interventions that can slow the progressive memory decline, though it cannot be stopped.

Research has identified that damage to key functional proteins in the brain occurs in Alzheimer’s patients, resulting in death of brain cells involved in cognitive tasks. Research trials are attempting to block the conversion of normal brain proteins into toxic compounds that lead to nerve cell death. Currently, there is no cure for Alzheimer’s disease.

However, two classes of FDA-approved medications can slow the progression. Early use of these medications can provide more benefit than current medical therapies available. Other symptoms, such as disrupted sleep, anxiety and agitation that often occur with the progression of Alzheimer’s disease, can be addressed with both behavioral and medical interventions.

Lifestyle factors can play a role in determining who develops Alzheimer’s. Taking these steps may lower your risk for the disease and also contribute to good overall health.

> Control your blood pressure and cholesterol
> Exercise your body and mind, and reduce stress
> Eat a heart-healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight
> Avoid tobacco and excess alcohol
> Stay socially connected
> Get adequate sleep

Keeping Alzheimer’s away

Research indicates that daily aerobic exercise and stimulating cognitive activities can delay the onset of dementia and slow its progression by protecting the existing, intact memory circuits of the brain. Read, travel, do crossword puzzles, take up a sport or join a choir. Challenge your brain and you’ll stand a better chance of maintaining mental fitness well into your golden years.

Help is available

For more information about Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, talk to your health care provider and visit our healthy e-library at healthlibrary.enloe.org. Additional resources are available at the Alzheimer’s Association of Northern California at www.alz.org/norcal and at the National Institute of Aging at www.nia.nih.gov.
Avoid those unwanted pounds

If the cold weather keeps you inside, you may find yourself dreading the unwanted weight gain that often comes with inactivity and eating more high-calorie foods. Don’t get discouraged — use these strategies to keep off those extra pounds.

> Enjoy more fruits and vegetables. Filling half your plate with fruits and veggies helps you feel full while eating fewer calories so you won’t be as tempted by high-fat, sugar-laden options.

> Watch your portions. Measure your meals for a week or two to get an accurate idea of standard serving sizes. Use smaller plates to downsize your meals and portion out snacks instead of eating them from the container. Split restaurant servings in half, saving the other half for later.

> Learn something new. Enrolling in a class to learn a new skill or hobby keeps you busy and active. This can boost your mood and help you avoid boredom and mindless snacking in front of the TV.

> Drink more water. Increasing your H2O intake hydrates your body and is a healthier alternative to sugary, high-calorie drinks.

> Bring the fun indoors. When it’s too dark or too cold for outdoor activities, try mall walking, or online exercise or yoga videos.

You can also join us at our monthly Walk With a Doc event on the first Saturday of each month. For dates and locations see enloe.org/events.

> Build muscle. Try crunches, pushups, resistance bands or lifting hand weights at home. If you join a fitness center, schedule time with a trainer to learn how to work exercise equipment and maximize your workout. Remember to speak to your doctor before starting any new diet or exercise program.

Most of all, have fun and don’t give in to the winter blues. For a Body Mass Index (BMI) calculator and healthy recipes, visit healthlibrary.enloe.org.

Your gift can help save lives — including your own

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Enloe Medical Center gets nearly 20,000 patient visits for cardiac diagnostic and treatment services each year. This number will continue to rise as the population increases and ages.

Kristy Hughes, an avid swimmer, was one of those patients. “Never in my wildest dreams had I ever imaged having a heart attack,” says the mother of three. “I mean, I was only 49.”

Join Enloe Foundation as it works to help others like Hughes by raising $5 million in charitable gifts for the construction of the new Cardiovascular Care Center inside the hospital. The new center will double the current capacity for treatment and accommodate advanced equipment to meet the growing cardiovascular care needs in the North State.

Consider making Enloe one of your charities of choice. Every dollar counts, because every heartbeat matters. For more information, visit enloe.org/giving or call 530.332.4550.
Slow cooker harvest beef stew

Let the slow cooker do the heavy work for you in this favorite time-saving recipe.

**Ingredients:**

1 ½ lbs. beef for stew, cut into 1-inch cubes

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

¼ cup all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 pound (3 medium-sized) Russet potatoes, peeled and cubed

4 medium carrots, peeled and sliced (about 2 cups)

2 medium onions, cut into wedges

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 ¼ cups less-sodium beef broth

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 cup thawed frozen peas

Chopped parsley, optional

**Instructions:**

1. Season the beef with pepper. Coat the beef with 2 tablespoons flour. Heat the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the beef in 2 batches and cook until it is well-browned, stirring often.

2. Place the potatoes, carrots, onions and garlic into a 5-quart slow cooker. Top with the beef. Add 3 cups broth and thyme. Cover and cook on HIGH for 5 to 6 hours or until the beef is fork-tender.

3. Stir the remaining flour and broth in a small bowl until mixture is smooth. Stir in the flour mixture and peas in the cooker. Cover and cook for 15 minutes or until the mixture boils and thickens. Garnish with parsley if desired.

**Tip:** Do the majority of the prep work the evening before, cutting up the beef, onion and carrots. Peel and cube the potato right before adding into the slow cooker to avoid discoloration.

Nutritional analysis per 2-cup serving: 311 calories; 4.2 g fat; 211 mg cholesterol; 42 g carbohydrates; 7 g fiber; 24 g protein.

Enloe welcomed these new doctors in 2016

Enloe is committed to bringing new physicians of all specialty practices to meet the needs of our growing community.

Carlos Almanza, MD
Hospitalist

Joanne Alonzo, DO
Cardiovascular Disease

Deborah Battaglia, MD
Emergency Medicine

Randall Borg, MD
Anesthesiology

Lorraine Chun, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Shannon Dietzmann, MD
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Anthony Ding, MD
Ortho Trauma Surgeon

Calvin Hu, MD
Orthopedic Surgery

Rebecca Johnson, MD
Pathology

Michael Kuhne, MD
Ortho Trauma Surgeon

Dmitry Leongardt, MD
Hospitalist

Ross Nayduch, MD
Family Practice

Vikram Podduturu, MD
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Hossein Razavi, MD
Hospitalist/Pulmonary Medicine

Mandy Robertson, MD
Hematology/Oncology

Desmond Smith, MD
Internal Medicine

Daniel Tismal, MD
Hospitalist

Antonio Thomas, MD
Anesthesiology

Kathleen Torres, MD
Hospitalist

Alice Ulhoa-Cintra, MD
Hematology/Oncology

Navin Varma, MD
Neurology

Bill Whitlatch, MD
Neurosurgery

Nicole Whitlatch, MD
Medical Oncology

To view their profiles, visit: doctors.enloe.org.