

# MEDICAL GAZETTE

FROM THE DESK OF DAVID L. MELLMAN MD

## Welcome Jeannette Guerrasio MD

In 2019, Dr. Guerrasio joined Dr. Mellman's primary care concierge practice. She shares his core values which place the doctor-patient relationship, developed through compassion and listening, at the forefront of excellent medical care. Only through knowing one's patient can medical care be personalized and provided at the highest level.

Dr. Guerrasio will use her experience as an educator to help patients maximize their health and quality of life, introducing them to preventative care options, educational resources, the Integrative Health Program and an array of diagnostic and treatment options.



- **Diplomate, The American Board of Internal Medicine**
- **Practiced adult Internal Medicine at the University of Colorado for over 12 years, with additional training and expertise in Geriatric Medicine**
- **Recipient of multiple humanism awards honoring her compassion and commitment to the well-being of others**
- **Nationally and internationally recognized medical educator**
- **Became a Full Professor at the University of Colorado, while remaining highly dedicated to clinical medicine**

To My Future Patients,

I love and have always loved being a physician. I deeply care about people and I enjoy hearing their stories. I feel honored to be a part of my patients' lives and to be given the opportunity to help and support them in the best ways that I know how.

I've spent the last 12+ years at the University of Colorado, where I practiced as an Internal Medicine physician seeing adults of all ages, though more than half of my patients were older than 75. I am both trained in Internal Medicine and completed a mini-fellowship in Geriatric Medicine. While at the university, it was very important to me to continue to see patients, so that I could continue doing what I loved and to share it with students and residents through role modeling and teaching at the bedside.

Wanting to spend more time with patients than in a traditional practice, a physician friend recommended that I meet with Dr. Mellman. At first, it seemed to me to be like a lucky encounter, but I must give my friend credit for his insight. We share similar values in the practice of medicine and in caring for patients. I feel honored to be able to join him in caring for the many patients who have trusted him for so long and for whom he deeply respects and is protective of.

You may notice when you meet me that I'm originally a New Yorker, from Long Island. I get my love of people and sense of humor from my dad and my passion for learning from my mom. I went to medical school at Albany Medical College and completed residency at the University of Connecticut, before moving out to Denver. I then completed a mini geriatrics fellowship through UCLA. I'm married to a cartography/spatial ecologist and we spend our free time hiking and snowshoeing in the mountains with our Lab/Shepherd mix and Shiba Inu. Our very vocal cat remains the matriarch of our home, protesting over the sounds of my squeaky oboe playing.

I look forward to meeting and getting to know each of you over time. My hope is that my addition to the practice adds breadth and depth to your care, as well as availability and consistency with coverage when Dr. Mellman is away.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Guerrasio, MD



# Trophies of Life

by Jeannette Guerrasio MD

“Aging is not lost youth, but a new stage of opportunity and strength”

– Betty Friedan

Every time I look in the mirror my hair glimmers a bit more than the week before as the brown hairs are lost to their silver and gray replacements. The color in my cheeks seems concentrated in red dots and brown spots. The wrinkles around my eyes remind me of every time I’ve laughed so hard that I cried. They are my trophies of life.

Just as our bodies change with time on the outside, they change on the inside as well. All of these changes are our trophies of life. Trophies that come with a perspective and longitude of experience that allow us to offer deeper contributions to the world. However, it is easier to accept some more than others, especially those that don’t impact the quality of our lives.

For years I have studied how aging impacts the mechanics of our bodies to better understand how to care for patients as they get older and how to prevent injury and preserve independence. Aging impacts many things such as balance and strength, how individuals tolerate medications, process information, digestion, sexual health, urination and elimination of wastes, and how quickly people rebound after illness. Understanding the impacts of aging allow us to prevent unnecessary or decrease the rates of declines in function.

Let’s use dehydration as an example.

Dehydration is one of the most common problems encountered by people as they get older and being dehydrated can lead to constipation, weakness, lightheadedness, confusion, falls and injury.

What is it about getting older that makes dehydration more common?

- **Thirst perception** – As people get older, they feel less thirsty when they are dehydrated, so they are less aware that they need to be drinking more water.
- **Renal Concentrating Ability** – If a 20-year-old stops drinking water for 12 hours, they will urinate less, and their urine will be much more concentrated as their body holds on to water to prevent dehydration. If an 80-year-old stops drinking water for 12 hours, they will not decrease their urination and they will continue to urinate a very dilute urine. This further worsens dehydration.
- **Vasopressin Effectiveness** - As you get dehydrated, the blood in your body gets more concentrated (higher osmolality) and your body releases a hormone (arginine vasopressin, aka - AVP) to conserve water and maintain hydration. As people get older their bodies are less responsive to this hormone.
- **Less Water** – The amount of water in one’s body decreases with age dropping approximately 5% in males and 7% in females. Without the extra fluid reserves one is used to having, it doesn’t take much more loss (either diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or even sweating) to become dehydrated.
- **Access to water** – For some older people, getting water is a challenge. Limited mobility and cognition make it harder to get to the sink or the refrigerator to get a drink as often as one should.





With this understood, dehydration can be addressed and its complications avoided or at least minimized.

- Be aware of the risks of dehydration especially as the warm weather approaches
- Encourage drinking throughout the day rather than consuming large amounts of fluid with meals
- Keep a water bottle close at all times to increase access to water
- Enjoy foods with high water content
- Limit caffeine and alcohol which are diuretics and lead to a loss of body water and dehydration
- Find a beverage that you enjoy... if you don't like drinking water all the time, find another alternative like herbal teas, etc.
- If you are taking water pills, this can be even more challenging, and you will need to work closely with your doctor to find the right balance for you.

This was just one example of how aging impacts the body. There are many along with simple, every day habits that can be adjusted slightly to greatly improve one's quality of life and decrease the risk of functional decline and preserve independence.

For more information on practical everyday tips on how to combat the impacts of aging you can attend our workshop in August with more details to come. We hope to address all of the audiences concerns plus include topics such as improving balance and strength, how individuals tolerate medications, process information, improving digestion, sexual health, urination and elimination of wastes, and how to help people rebound quicker after illness.

**If you are interested in meeting Jeannette Guerrasio MD, please call  
303-325-6515 to set up an appointment.**