BIOMATRIX
Specialty Infusion Pharmacy

News

Winter 2026
Volume 21 | Issue 1

Dedicated to Making a Difference

"Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

— Dr. Seuss

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WINTER 2026

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Every day, in every interaction, we are a specialty infusion pharmacy dedicated to making a difference.

Fine Print

Editor-in-Chief: Maria Santucci Vetter
Editors: Susan Moore, Justin Lindhorst, and Jeanette Kizer-Jones

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A Note from the Editor

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2026, we look forward to a year brimming with promise and exciting opportunities for the bleeding disorders community. Ongoing advancements in therapies and evolving treatment options are empowering patients with more choices and renewed hope for managing their condition.

A new year brings a fresh start – a chance to set new goals, make meaningful resolutions, and embrace fresh possibilities. For many in our community, this season also means navigating changes to insurance policies. We recognize these adjustments can be daunting, whether that means switching providers, dealing with extended prior authorization, or facing service denials. If you encounter any non-clinical hurdles, remember that BioMatrix is here to support you. Our knowledgeable team can review your situation and may be able to assist, regardless of whether you currently use our services. This support remains available to everyone in the bleeding disorders community (bit.ly/bd-patientnavigation).

On behalf of everyone at BioMatrix, we wish you a joyful, prosperous, and healthy 2026! May it be filled with hope and new possibilities!

Best wishes for a wonderful year ahead!

Maria Santucci Vetter
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Courage to Feel:
Why Emotions Matter for Our Well-Being

BY GARY MCCLAIN, PH.D.

How are you feeling? Hold on! Before you answer, I want to clarify that I'm asking about your emotions. Are you feeling glad, sad, mad, scared, or ashamed? These are some of the words therapists use to help clients identify their feelings.

If you're using these words, or others, to determine how you feel, that's great! However, you might also find it uncomfortable to talk about your emotions or may struggle to identify what you're genuinely experiencing. If being aware of your emotions doesn't come easily and discussing them is challenging for you, you're not alone! Emotions are a fundamental part of being human, and being aware of and expressing them can enhance your overall wellness and improve communication.

If you're living with a chronic condition like a bleeding disorder, or if you have a child or family member who is, you likely experience a wide range of feelings. My clients often share stories about how a challenging day, especially when dealing with a bleed or another medical issue, can turn into an emotional rollercoaster for everyone involved.

What are you doing with your feelings?

Pretending that you don't have feelings, often referred to as swallowing your emotions, doesn't make them disappear. This coping mechanism can only lead to pain for both you and the people who care about you.

Here are a few examples:

- I recently spoke with the wife of a man who has a bleeding disorder and has faced several setbacks. She wept as she described how her husband is dealing with a lot, emotionally, but refuses to talk about his feelings. The only emotion he expresses is occasional anger, especially when she encourages him to open up. She understands that he is suffering, as she is, but she feels helpless in finding a way to support him.
- A teenager is experiencing feeling like an outsider at his school. He has a slight limp due to his bleeding disorder and has been made fun of by some of the guys in his classes. As the junior prom quickly approaches, he worries that no girls will want to go with him. He's feeling quite low, but he doesn't want to acknowledge it. He tells himself that he won't let this situation affect him, but, of course, it does. He hesitates to share his feelings with his parents out of fear they will be upset. He thinks they have had enough to handle given the challenges they've faced over the years.
- In a more recent case, a single parent discussed her struggles in communicating her feelings to her children and family. She finds herself questioning whether she should express those feelings at all. Her company is struggling, and she worries about finances and healthcare if she loses her job. She wants to "be strong for my kids" and fears that showing her sadness and concern might lead them to worry as well. She is concerned that talking about her feelings might cause her to break down. So, she avoids discussing her worries and fears. How lonely she must feel.

In these cases, the individuals are trying to deny their emotions. They believe that expressing feelings is a sign of weakness or fear that it might lead them to lose control. They also may think they need to protect their loved ones from their own emotions.

Unfortunately, many of my clients describe feelings as an "elephant in the room." Everyone in the household is filled with emotions, yet nobody is discussing how they feel. It's crucial to realize that discussing emotions must begin by allowing yourself to be fully aware of your feelings and honest with yourself about how a situation or event may affect you.

In other words, take ownership of your emotions. So, how can you start doing this? Here are a few ideas:

In the moment, engage your rational mind.

Clients often say to me, "Sometimes I am completely overwhelmed! My feelings just run away with me. How can I prevent that from happening?" Here's how:

Start by accepting that feelings are a natural part of being human and allow yourself to acknowledge your emotions. Many of us grew up in families where expressing feelings was discouraged, leading us to suppress our emotions. As a result, we learned to swallow our feelings.

If this was your experience, you also may have learned, perhaps the hard way, that unacknowledged feelings build up and find their way out. Often, this may happen at the wrong place and time, and with a much greater intensity than the situation warrants, like blowing up over something trivial or insignificant.

Recognize your feelings as they come. Give yourself permission to express what you're feeling to others as those emotions arise, rather than holding them back for days. This may take practice, but if you make a habit of sharing your feelings regularly, you'll likely find yourself feeling less at risk of losing control over them. In other words, let go of the assumption or belief that you don't have a right to your feelings.

Take a step back when needed.

When you find yourself caught up in a situation, it can be overwhelming, making it hard to manage your emotions. You might feel alarmed by the intensity of your feelings and worry about how they may affect others. Often, if you react impulsively, your reactions can do damage to yourself and those around you. You may feel even more overwhelmed and out of control if you think your emotions are being ignored or disrespected by others.

This is a crucial time to step back from the situation. It might involve raising your hand to signal that you need a few minutes, or it may mean briefly leaving the room. The main point is to take the necessary actions to care for yourself and your emotions in the moment.

Breathe.

You can use your breath to help prevent being overwhelmed by your emotions. This technique is known as diaphragmatic breathing. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to expand fully. Then, slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeat this a few times, and you may be amazed by the calming effects. Diaphragmatic breathing helps you achieve a sense of peace and calm, allowing you to engage your rational mind so your emotions don't run away with you.

Thoughts about anger…

Getting angry is a natural part of being human.

Keep in mind that anger is a primary emotion. When someone treats you or someone you care about with disrespect or aggression, it's completely understandable to feel angry. Nature has wired us to experience anger. The complications arise from how we choose to respond to that anger, with an emphasis on the word "choose."

Anger is Often Referred to by Therapists as a "Covering Emotion." This means that we may have underlying feelings, such as fear, disappointment, or sadness, that we are not acknowledging. If we avoid acknowledging these emotions, we might find ourselves veering into anger instead.

It's important to recognize that anger can feel more comfortable and socially acceptable than the deeper emotions it's masking. For example, have you ever felt deep sadness or disappointment, only to find yourself on the verge of losing your temper? If so, you were likely using anger to cover up those other feelings.

Let's be honest – anger can feel better than the emotions it covers up.

Sadness can feel like a heavy heartache, looming over you like a dark cloud. Fear fills our minds with "what ifs," reminding us that we may not be in control of the situation causing our fear and might feel helpless to prevent it. Disappointment can be truly crushing. It's human nature to latch on to anger to temporarily escape these feelings.

When you find yourself angry, stop to regroup and do whatever you need to calm down, whether that's taking a few deep, calming breaths or stepping away from the situation to regroup. Reflect on what's triggering that anger. This will help you manage the urge to escalate your emotions from zero to sixty.

Don't let yourself hide behind anger.

Sometimes you may feel angry simply because you are mad, but other times, what seems like anger might actually be sadness or fear that you're reluctant to acknowledge. Instead of facing these deeper feelings, you might resort to blowing up. If you're feeling overwhelmed, like when dealing with the challenges of living with a bleeding disorder or being the caregiver of a child with one, anger can often be your default reaction. So, what can you do about it? Ask yourself, "Am I truly angry about something specific, or is it difficult for me to admit how I really feel?"

It can be helpful to sit down and sort through your

emotions with someone who can listen. Remember, anger can create a distance between you and those around you, especially at times when you need their support the most.

Be ready to sincerely apologize

You're facing a lot, and you're doing your best, just like your loved ones are. If your anger gets the better of you, acknowledge it, and commit to doing better next time. Don't hesitate to ask for help – this is an important part of damage control.

Come on guys! You have feelings, too!

You might remember the "strong, silent type" of man from movies in the 1940s. He's the self-reliant guy with a poker face who never reveals his emotions. Instead, he focuses on taking charge. Well, guess what? Many men today still suppress their emotions, and this behavior isn't benefiting them or the people who care about them.

What about you? Or the man in your life? It's not easy for men to open up about their emotions. I know I'm generalizing here; many men have no problem discussing their feelings. However, it seems to me that a lot of men do struggle with this. Often, I hear about this from the women in their lives – partners, wives, children, and even their parents.

Human beings experience emotions. Suppressing them or pretending they don't exist doesn't make them go away. When men avoid discussing their feelings, they miss the chance to connect with their loved ones, offer support, and receive support in return.

The one emotion that men are often more comfortable expressing is anger. It seems more acceptable for men to get angry than to show sadness or fear. Sure, dealing with challenges, such as a bleeding disorder or other chronic health issue, can definitely make one angry. However, anger can also serve to mask or deny feelings of fear or sadness. Moreover, it can create a barrier between you and others.

When I speak to men, I tell them that holding in their feelings isn't beneficial. It can have physical effects, leading to stress, depression, and anxiety. Additionally, it can drive a wedge between them and the people around them.

Men often express to me that they avoid discussing their feelings because they fear losing control, appearing weak, or not being strong for their loved ones. Here's what I tell them:

Letting Your Feelings Out Doesn't Mean You Will Lose Control

In fact, it's quite the opposite. When emotions are kept inside, they build up over time and need an outlet. This internal buildup can cause stress, negatively impact your well-being, and potentially affect your health. Accumulated emotions can lead to persistent tension, resulting in physical issues such as high blood pressure, heart problems, and stomach issues, as well as mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.

Start each day being aware of your emotions

To proactively manage your emotions, try this approach:

Begin with an inventory of your feelings

Ask yourself: How am I feeling today? Happy? Sad? Frustrated? Just plain old mad? Identify what might be causing these feelings. If you're feeling angry, dig deeper to discover why. If you can't pinpoint an answer, cast a wider net for other feelings that might be contributing to your anger.

Reflect on what you can and can't control

Acknowledging your level of control, or lack thereof, can help you maintain perspective. Is it time to recite the Serenity Prayer and accept what you cannot change? Or is it time to take action on an issue you've been avoiding?

Determine what you need to maintain a healthy mental state

Be proactive! If you start the day with difficult feelings like sadness, frustration, or fear, think about how you can cope. Is there someone you can call for a supportive pep talk? Would a walk help? Maybe meditation or listening to calming music? Even engaging in a religious or spiritual practice can be beneficial. It's helpful to have a toolbox of coping skills you can draw from as needed.

Maintain self-awareness

It's only human to feel overwhelmed when something triggers strong emotions. The key to managing this is being aware of yourself throughout the day. Recognize when you're feeling particularly vulnerable. Being your authentic self enhances your wellness, and doing your morning emotional inventory can help kick-start your self-awareness for the rest of the day.

Make your home a safe space for emotions

Encourage your family members to feel comfortable discussing their emotions. This can have an incredibly positive impact on the emotional well-being of everyone in your household.

Practice using feeling words

Many of my clients have expressed fear that if they talk about their emotions, everything will fall apart, and the roof might come crashing down on them. I can assure you this won't happen. Give it a try! Start by sharing how your day went, such as: "I felt frustrated at work today when…" or "When I saw that traffic was backed up, I was worried that…" Congratulations, you just expressed a feeling! That wasn't so bad, was it?

Don't assume your loved ones can't handle your emotions

One of the most common reasons I hear for holding back emotions is the desire to protect others. However, they can often see your feelings on your face, so chances are, you're not fooling anyone. Additionally, your loved ones may be more resilient than you think and would appreciate the opportunity to help. If you're unsure whether they can discuss feelings with you, why not ask? And while you're at it, offer to listen to how they feel too.

Encourage your children to express their emotions!

Children intuitively sense how their parents are feeling and may hesitate to share feelings that they fear might upset you. This can prevent them from getting the support they need. As children navigate various changes while growing up, they often experience significant stress and may need help expressing their emotions.

Have a heart

Living with a bleeding disorder can evoke a wide range of emotions. While you can't control how you feel, you don't have to let your feelings control you. Accept all your emotions and allow yourself to be human. Acknowledge the variety of your feelings. Yes, emotions can be scary and intimidating, but it's important to let them be expressed and see the light of day.

Give yourself a break, and you'll be better equipped to do the same for others. We're all in this together!

About the Author

Gary McClain, PhD, is a therapist, patient advocate, and educator, specializing in helping clients deal with the emotional impact of chronic and life-threatening health conditions, as well as their families and professional caregivers. He works with them to understand and cope with their emotions, to learn about their lifestyle and treatment options, to maintain compliance with medical regimens, to communicate effectively with each other and healthcare professionals, and to listen to their own inner voice as they make decisions about the future. His book, *"The Power of Closure: Why We Need It, How to Get It, and When to Walk Away,"* was published by Tarcher Perigee in 2024. His website is: JustGotDiagnosed.com.

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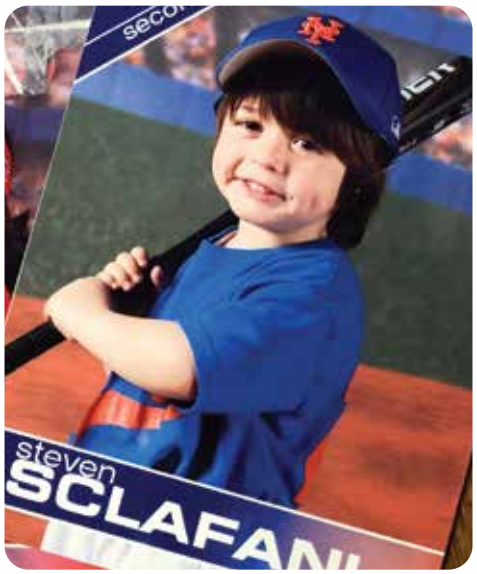
My Field of Dreams: Embracing Life with Hemophilia and a Love of Sports

BY STEVEN SCLAFANI

My journey in life has been fueled by my love for sports, particularly baseball, which I played competitively throughout my life. Currently, I am pursuing my Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree at New York's Utica University and have recently earned the credentials of Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS).



Having completed my fifth and final year of collegiate baseball, I now enjoy more free time for exercising, playing pickleball and golf, and, above all, watching the New York Mets. Throughout my journey, I have also navigated the challenges of having severe hemophilia B, which has shaped my experiences and outlook on life.

I have been fortunate to have a family that has always stood in my corner and supported me. Growing up with hemophilia was challenging for my family. Neither of my parents knew anything about hemophilia before my diagnosis at a young age, but they quickly educated themselves. Both became deeply involved in the hemophilia community; my dad even joined multiple boards to advance studies and knowledge.

As a child, I often heard that I could or could not do certain things. I believe that many children with bleeding disorders

are told “no” too quickly when it comes to participating in sports. There are so many valuable lessons and character-building qualities gained from playing team sports, and it’s unfortunate that any child might miss out on them.

I have always loved baseball, but it didn’t become super competitive for me until I was around 10 years old. I remember my hematologist advising against playing travel baseball due to the increased risk of joint bleeds. Although I politely listened to her, as soon as we got in the car, I told my dad that I was not giving up baseball. He heard me loud and clear and understood my passion. I ended up playing baseball until I was 22. My hematologist wasn’t trying to take away something I loved; she was doing her job to keep me safe.

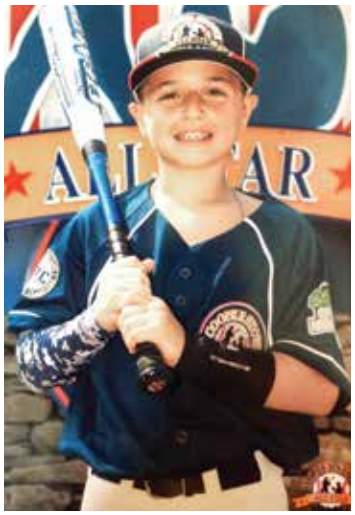
I consistently pushed back on the limitations placed on me. This prompted the formation of a supportive team, comprising of my hematologist, parents, and me. We worked together to ensure my safety while allowing me to remain active. As a child, I also played basketball and flag football. Being able to play involved regular phone calls and at least yearly check-ins with my hemophilia treatment center to monitor my factor levels and joint health.

Prophylactically, I infused clotting factor three times a week. This regimen worked well for the first 17 years of my life, but college presented new challenges. For the first time, I was on my own, juggling school and baseball, which led me to fall behind on my factor treatment schedule.

When I came home after my first year, I spoke with my parents and doctor and explained that what had previously worked for me was becoming less effective due to my busy lifestyle. They helped research available treatment options, and we found a product with a longer half-life that only required one infusion per week. I started using this product more than five years ago and haven’t had any issues since.

The main takeaway from my experience is the importance of being your own advocate. If you want to pursue something, find a way to make it happen! While I’m not advising someone with hemophilia to play contact sports or engage in dangerous activities, I do encourage anyone interested in athletics to seek out a sport they can enjoy.

Build a relationship with your treatment team and make your voice heard; collaborating with them will help keep you safe and healthy. Never be afraid to speak up. If there’s something you don’t like or are uncomfortable with, express your concerns!



This communication is even more important today given the availability of newer medications with longer half-lives, subcutaneous options, and additional benefits. What works for one person may not work for another, so it's essential to find the treatment that suits you best.

My message to parents is that it is essential to be on your child's side and provide support. Children with hemophilia often hear "No" too frequently. Instead of simply telling them what they can't do, I encourage you to sit down with them and explore alternative options. Allowing your child to experience life is vital. If I had been placed in bubble wrap and confined to my home all the time, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

Through my involvement in sports, I learned teamwork, the importance of accountability, and valuable lessons about time management. These qualities have shaped my life and education. With the advancements in treatment options today, I hope that young hemophiliacs and their parents will learn to advocate for themselves and enjoy all the amazing experiences I was fortunate to have.

To young people, it's important to recognize that your diagnosis is just one aspect of who you are. Embrace your strengths, pursue your passions, and never let your bleeding disorder define your identity. You are a person first. You may have hemophilia or some other chronic condition, but that does not define you. I have never introduced myself as "Steven, the hemophiliac." I wanted to avoid being treated differently. Don't let your diagnosis dictate your life. Embrace your individuality and overcome the challenges.

By advocating for yourself and seeking out experiences that challenge and inspire you, you can lead a fulfilling life. Remember, you are not alone on this journey; connect with others who share similar experiences and support one another as you navigate life. With determination and resilience, you can conquer every challenge that comes your way.

IN SEARCH OF RELIEF: DIARY OF A KNEE REPLACEMENT

BY RICHARD VOGEL

Over the years, the decision to have knee replacement has weighed heavily on my mind. The persistent pain had become a constant companion, overshadowing even the easiest of days. As a 69-year-old man with severe factor VIII hemophilia, the extreme damage to my right knee began in childhood, well before the many therapies we are lucky to have today. With each passing day, my mobility along with my overall well-being deteriorated. As I contemplated surgery, I decided to keep a diary to share with others who may be considering a similar procedure.

April 9 – The consult

It's time... The valgus deformity in my leg has been increasingly troublesome, affecting my gait and causing a lot of pain in my hip and knee. For those unfamiliar, a valgus deformity refers to a condition where a bone segment is angled outward away from the body's midline. In my case, while my ankles remain spaced apart, my knee bows inward, creating an awkward stride that's both painful and limiting. Today, my wife, Suzanne and I traveled to New York City for an appointment with an experienced surgeon, the same one who replaced my hip in January 2024.

Exuding confidence, the doctor assured me he could correct the alignment of my knee. My main concern was that my osteoporosis might complicate the procedure – I imagine my femur shattering, but he reassured me by explaining how he would carefully shave down and resurface the affected bone with implants, even using glue if necessary.

As he showed me before-and-after X-rays of other hemophilia patients who had undergone similar surgeries, I felt a sense of hope. Suzanne and I both felt confident in the surgeon and the procedure. We scheduled it for August 21, 2025.

July 16 – The plan

Today I attended my annual comprehensive appointment at the Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC), where the details of my surgical plan began to take shape. Like my hip replacement surgery, I will infuse my blood clotting medication 15 minutes before surgery, then again the next afternoon. I will have additional infusions on days four, seven, ten, and thirteen following the operation. After that, the physical rehabilitation will be intensive, requiring bi-weekly infusions for six weeks. I feel reassured knowing that the HTC hematologist had contacted both my surgeon and the hematologist in New York, ensuring seamless coordination for a smooth surgical process.

Valgus deformity causing the knee to severely bow inward

Aug 7 – Surgical clearance

Full steam ahead! At the pre-surgery appointment with my primary doctor, labs were drawn and an EKG performed. While the EKG was abnormal, it wasn't surprising. I have had abnormal EKGs in the past due to a slight delay in a bundle branch block, which indicates a partial blockage or delay in the heart's electrical signal to the ventricles. However, this condition is mild and poses no concern. I received the go-ahead for surgery.

Aug 18 – Day before surgery

This afternoon, my wife and I arrived at our hotel in Manhattan. My anticipation is building. With a 5:30 a.m. check-in set at the hospital tomorrow morning, we decided to meet our niece and nephew for dinner. My thoughts flickered between excitement and nervousness – hopefully, this wasn't my last supper!

Before settling in for the night, I followed the pre-surgery protocol, taking a shower with plain water and thoroughly wiping my body with antibacterial wipes.

Aug 19 – Surgery

Surprisingly, I slept well last night! Suzanne and I caught a taxi, and got to the hospital with time to spare. After checking in, we were escorted to a small room where I repeated the antibacterial wipe ritual before changing into the hospital gown. A nurse started my IV. The surgeon arrived, his attitude calm and assuring, as he reviewed the surgical timeline. The plan was clear: the incision would be made at 9:00 a.m., with the knee replacement expected to take around 90 minutes. The entire process, from start to finish, would likely take three hours. If all went smoothly, I could anticipate waking up in recovery by 1:00 p.m.

As they wheeled me toward the operating room, I turned and told my wife I love her. Suzanne has been very supportive of my decision to proceed with the surgery. She has joined me at every appointment, voicing her concerns and asking questions. I know during my recovery, she will become my caretaker and will take on many of the responsibilities that usually fall to me. I am deeply grateful for her strength and commitment.

The operating room was freezing and didn't resemble the plush rooms depicted on TV. It was very sterile looking, almost like a warehouse. As the medical team placed me on the operating table I let them know, "No, I can't bend my elbows." After some maneuvering, I finally agree, "Yes, that's comfortable."

Prior to drifting into unconsciousness, I reminded the anesthesiologist about a past surgery experience - waking up to painfully dry eyes that had adhered to my eyelids, causing my cornea to tear. It's important to communicate these concerns with medical staff to help eliminate any chances of a repeat complication. He acknowledges my concern, nodding reassuringly. Just as I felt the anesthetic take effect, I glanced at the clock - 9:00 a.m., right on schedule.

6:30 p.m.

I slowly opened my eyes, the world coming into focus around me. My eyes felt surprisingly clear with no dryness or irritation. I glanced at the clock on the wall: 6:30 p.m. What the heck? The surgery was only supposed to take three hours! But at least I'm alive! My leg was still there, a good sign. I could move my feet without much pain, another positive sign. Yet I reminded myself not to be fooled by the lack of pain this time. After my hip replacement, I woke up feeling surprisingly good too, only to realize later that I was still under the effects of a nerve block. This time, I knew the temporary relief from pain would eventually catch up to me.

Suzanne was allowed in the recovery room, and I was relieved to see she wasn't crying or wearing a look of dread. She explained that there were some complications. When they opened my knee, the outer part was solid bone on bone - marble-like, but a good sign. However, the inner part of my knee was mushy, which is not good.

Presurgery

Post surgery - Much swelling

Post surgery - Incision healing

Two weeks post-op - Incision healing

The surgeon described it as soft, like modeling clay. Bone needs to regenerate itself, and it does so by being used. Over the years, my gait had changed, causing none of my weight to be applied to the inner part of my knee, resulting in its degradation.

Pre-Surgery - Right knee Valgus deformity

Post-Surgery, Valgus deformity corrected

Since this was an unexpected complication, the surgeon had to come up with a new plan on the fly. I think of it as a quarterback who calls a play, then sees a defense he doesn't expect. Instead of going with the play that won't work, he calls an "audible" so they can gain some yards. As a solution, the surgeon scraped down the bone, resurfaced it, and used a longer implant in my femur to bolster strength and stability.

Now came the time to test things out. A physical therapist arrived in the recovery room ready to help me stand up. I took a few steps forward, then backward, and side to side. I could put pressure on my knee with minimal pain. A promising beginning.

Soon after, I was carted away to my hospital room in good spirits. My appetite stirs as I glanced through the hospital menu. Although there's no wine selection to celebrate with, several enticing options caught my "foodie" eye - grilled octopus salad and pan-seared scallops. Now this is the life!

Aug 20 – Day 1 post-op

Patients never rest well in a hospital. Between the constant poking and prodding for vitals, blood draws at all hours, glaring lights in the hall, and the symphony of beeping alarms from various monitors, who can sleep? It's only been one night, and I can't wait to be discharged.

Physical therapy (PT) arrived to start my first post-op day. As I tried to stand up, a surge of blood rushed to my knee, causing a blaze of excruciating pain. Ouch! As the pain began to ebb, I grasped the walker and took my first steps down the corridor, moving painstakingly slow. We arrived at a room with a staircase, where I showed off my ability to ascend and descend the short flight. This wasn't my first rodeo; adaptation has been my mantra for years, and it seemed my progress impressed the therapist. We returned to my room, where they reattached the cryo cuff, which circulates ice water around my knee, providing soothing relief after my walk.

Adhering to the infusion plan, a nurse arrived to administer my next dose of clotting factor. I had to show her how to mix it since she was unfamiliar with hemophilia medications. She then administered the product through my IV. My factor level before the infusion registered at 82% – not too shabby, right on target!

Aug 21 – Day 2 post-op

As expected, my leg was swollen and painful. However, the bleeding was well-managed. The hospital physical therapist, impressed with my progress, informed me that they planned to discharge me from their care. If hematology clears me, I could head home today.

Aug 22 – Day 3 post-op

Yet, here I was, still in the hospital. Hematology decided to keep me for an extra day to monitor my factor levels, which were holding strong at 86%. After another infusion, freedom will be just around the corner.

Navigating through the chaos of Manhattan traffic on a Friday afternoon is always an ordeal, but Suzanne and I finally arrived home around 6:30 p.m. My pets were waiting at the door to greet us. I slowly made my way up the 13 steps to my bedroom. It felt so wonderful to be back home and in my bed!

Aug 23 – Day 4 post-op

After a good night's sleep, I carefully hoisted myself up and maneuvered the walker to the bathroom. My knee remained swollen and painful; however, I am limiting my reliance on pain medication. Other than the occasional trip to the bathroom, the bulk of my day has been spent in the comfort of my bed.

Aug 24 – Day 5 post-op

I have my infusion plan and am pleased to have no issues with bleeding. Though still in pain, I mustered the strength to descend the 13 steps, eager to get movement and watch some television. As I settled onto the couch, I became immersed in "The Wild Wild West," an old show I used to watch with my mother when I was a child and laid up with a knee bleed - the same knee that just got replaced. Full circle...

Aug 25 – Day 6 post-op

As anticipated, the pain and tightness persisted. Bruising was beginning to come to the surface.

Aug 26 – Day 7 post-op

A week has passed since my surgery. Although still very painful, I was feeling a little better each day. I was able to navigate the stairs with a little more ease, a small victory worth celebrating. This afternoon a visiting nurse came by to assess my recovery, and her encouraging words reassured me that I am on the right track.

Aug 27 – Day 8 post-op

Today, I had a visit from a physical therapist and went over more exercises to help my recovery. Afterwards, carefully maneuvering a few steps, I ventured out onto the back patio. It felt great to sit outside and soak in the sunshine.

Aug 28 – Day 9 post-op

I'm starting to get a little bored.

Aug 29 – Day 10 post-op

The physical therapist returned for another home visit today, arriving with more exercises. My knee was still bruised and painful, but the swelling has started to subside.

Aug 31 – Day 12 post-op

Each day seems to bring a little more relief than the last. I've been walking, performing my exercises diligently, and enjoying the peaceful moments outside in my backyard. The pain is easing, and with it, my spirits are lifting as I am pleased with the progress I'm making.

Sept 02 – Day 14 post-op

This morning, I had a two-week follow-up appointment with the surgeon. I walked into the office using crutches, which allows me to stand a bit straighter rather than hunched over the walker.

X-rays were taken during this visit, and we reviewed the pre-op and post-op images. How amazing to see how the surgeon corrected the valgus deformity. I actually feel a little taller! The surgeon is pleased with my recovery progress, and so am I. He encouraged me to start practicing with a cane.

Back home, PT arrived for another session. We attempted to have me walk with a cane, but realized I need more practice before I can stand steady. My goal now will be to switch to just one crutch by this weekend and, hopefully, to a cane by mid-week.

Sept 16 – Week 4 post-op

I had a busy weekend. Feeling strong enough, I decided to make an appearance at a couple of work events. My colleagues kept an eye on me to ensure I was safe. I used crutches to get around, although I'm starting to use a cane more often at home. Instead of having services at home, I've begun going to outpatient physical therapy. I will attend sessions twice a week to strengthen my quadriceps, which are the muscles in the front of my legs. After years of improper use, these muscles are extremely weak. It's going to take some hard work. While I can lift my leg, I can't lift it straight up; it bends slightly at the knee. Straight leg lifts are very difficult!

Sept 30 – Week 6 post-op

I continue to attend PT twice a week, am diligent with my home exercises, and focused on walking correctly. After years of compensating for my gait, I need to retrain my brain to walk properly. No more swinging out my stiff leg!

Oct 14 – Week 8 post-op

This past weekend, Suzanne and I went to dinner with friends and then to see a favorite comedian. It was nice to be out. On another evening, my wife and I went to dinner and a play to celebrate our anniversary. On both occasions, I appreciated not having my stiff, straight leg sticking into the aisle and potentially tripping someone. For the first time in years, I was able to bend my knee and keep my leg in front of me.

Oct 21 – Week 9 post-*oops!*

I've started walking short distances around the house without assistance, though I still rely on a cane outdoors. At PT yesterday, I managed 10 minutes on a stationary bike. I haven't ridden a bike in over 50 years! The last time was for my 13th birthday, after much pleading with my parents. Sadly, after a few falls and knee bleeds, they returned the bike and bought me new albums instead.

Feeling a bit too spunky by my success on the stationary bike, I walked back to the therapy table without my cane. However, after just a few steps, my leg gave out and I fell – hitting my head, breaking my glasses, and fracturing my hand. Good thing I infuse before each PT session!

Dec 09 – 16 Weeks post-Op

I saw my surgeon today, eager to share my progress: 3 miles in 15 minutes on the stationary bike, a treadmill video of my improved gait, and stronger quads, though I'm still working on that elusive straight-leg lift. The surgeon was pleased until I mentioned my fall six weeks ago and my knee's lingering instability. An X-ray confirmed the bad news: the tendon attached to my kneecap is torn.

Now, I face another decision: should I have surgery to reattach the tendon? The upside would be a bendable, stable knee; the downside would be another 6-8 weeks of being non-weight-bearing and losing some of my hard-won progress in PT. While I'm deeply disappointed, I'm treating this as just a minor setback in my recovery.

In Conclusion:

Would I have the surgery again? Most definitely. Did I wait too long to get the knee replacement? Absolutely! As a stubborn person living with a bleeding disorder, I was determined to keep my original body parts, despite my knee deformity. However, my body was compensating for my gait, and I was slowly damaging other joints. My hip eventually needed replacement because of how I swung my leg out; my left knee bore most of my weight, and my back struggled to keep everything aligned. Over the years, the discomfort took its toll.

I stick to my infusion protocol, attend physical therapy religiously, and never skip my home exercises. For anyone contemplating any surgery, these steps are essential to ensure the best possible outcome. The path to recovery may be tough but the results and improved quality of life can be tremendously rewarding.

Though recovery remains challenging, the same stubbornness and determination that once had me avoiding surgery now fuel my progress. The tendon repair surgery is scheduled for January 22, 2026. I'll be back on that bike in no time!

About the Author

Rich Vogel is a Bronx native living in East Brunswick, New Jersey. As a person with severe hemophilia A, he has been a passionate advocate for the bleeding disorders community for decades. Rich has served as president of both the Hemophilia Association of New Jersey and the Hemophilia Federation of America, where he helped pass the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund Act of 1998. He served on the HHS Blood Safety and Availability Committee as a voting member and was a consumer representative for Region II. He currently serves as a BioMatrix Territory Account Executive and continues to champion patient rights and support others through education and advocacy.

Outside of advocacy, Rich is a professional photographer and videographer. He lives in a historic farmhouse with his wife, Suzanne, and enjoys cooking, gardening, and deep sea fishing.

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Let's get together to talk about IXINITY®

After more than 20 years working in the bleeding disorders community, I am still inspired and motivated by the friends and families I meet every day.

Dave Todd,
Hemophilia Territory Manager
MO/KS/NE/IA/IL/WI/ND/SD/MN

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ATTEND THE 2026 MOIN CONFERENCE IN PUERTO RICO!

Human connection is a powerful thing. When that connection is defined by shared life experiences, like living with a bleeding disorder, that connection is even stronger.

After attending his first national bleeding disorder conference, Puerto Rican native and Executive Director of the Asociación Puertorriqueña de Hemofilia y Condiciones de Sangrado (APH), Anthony Llanes, was inspired by the strength he found in connecting with fellow community members. "The sense of community touched me so deeply," he explains. "Sharing stories, learning from experts, and just the general sense of togetherness lit a spark within me. I felt supported and seen in a way that I hadn't experienced much growing up on the island."

That spark grew into a desire to provide the same experience for members living in Puerto Rico. After much time, planning, and effort, Anthony's vision for a full-fledged bleeding disorder conference was realized. The MOIN Conference is now in its third year and growing! Hosted by the PHC, MOIN is a weekend-long conference that provides connection, education, and resources tailored to Spanish-speaking families. Programming is entirely in Spanish and open to both Puerto Ricans and Spanish-speaking community members from the US mainland.

Join a Growing Community

The MOIN Conference offers a truly unique program that is making a difference for Spanish-speaking community members. What started as a vision of inclusion and opportunity has grown into a national conference offering connection and community. Anthony, his volunteers, and all the board members at the Asociación Puertorriqueña de Hemofilia y Condiciones de Sangrado are working hard to make MOIN 2026 the best conference yet.

Attend MOIN 2026 May 1-3!

Registration for MOIN 2026 is now open! The cost is $40 per adult and $25 for children. This covers all meals plus lodging. Attendees are responsible for their own airfare and transportation. If you belong to a local chapter stateside, check with your executive director to see if travel grants or financial assistance are available.

Register by scanning the QR code below.

Don't miss your opportunity to be involved!

Tickets for Conferencia MOIN 2026:
https://hemofiliapr.org/english/news-events/calendar.html/event-form/registration-form/110766/tickets

Asociación Puertorriqueña de Hemofilia y Condiciones de Sangrado
https://hemofiliapr.org/
PMB 633
PO Box 29005
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00929-0005
(787) 647-7985; info@hemofiliapr.org

BIOMATRIX ON THE *Move*

The BioMatrix Education Team, along with our incredible Territory Account Executives (TAEs), is thrilled to connect with community members and host engaging educational events nationwide! We offer a dynamic range of topics and activities, including online sessions, that everyone can enjoy. Are you ready to bring an exciting session to your group – whether it's large or small, in-person or virtual? We're here to help make it happen! Simply reach out to your TAE or send us a message at education@biomatrixsprx.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

FLORIDA

Mary Foertsch

Sanofi and BioMatrix hosted an ***Educational Luncheon*** August 30th for the local bleeding disorders community at Paddlefish Restaurant in Disney Springs.

Kara and Lilly

The afternoon began with Eric Burgeson from Sanofi CoRE presenting Altuviiio®, followed by Brenda King from BioMatrix leading an interactive discussion titled *Finding Your Harmony*, focused on the differences between anxiety and stress and offered management strategies. After lunch, attendees enjoyed exploring Lake Buena Vista.

Dave and Tony

We look forward to continuing our support and educational efforts for the community and are grateful for the chance to engage, support, and serve!

PENNSYLVANIA

Tina McMullen

Maggiano's Little Italy in King of Prussia served as the gathering place for members of the bleeding disorder community to come together on September 5th for an ***Evening of Education***, conversation, and a wonderful dinner.

Carl, Chris and Albert

Attendees heard from Shaneka Storey, Pfizer Hemophilia Patient Navigator, who introduced Hympavzi™, Pfizer's once-a-week subcutaneous pen treatment option for individuals with hemophilia A and B. Participants also had the opportunity to engage with a model of the new pen. BioMatrix provided a brief overview of our *Patient Navigation Program*, highlighting how we assist community members in resolving insurance issues and overcoming non-clinical barriers to care.

Many thanks to Pfizer for sponsoring this event and for their dedication to bringing education to our community. A special thank you goes out to everyone who joined us!

CALIFORNIA

John Martinez, Gabriela Griffin, Felix Garcia, and Hector Heer

For nine consecutive years, ***Familia de Sangre*** has organized the largest Spanish-language bleeding disorders conference in the U.S. This year, the event was officially designated as a national conference, attracting over 700 attendees!

Hosted by the Hemophilia Foundation of Southern California, the Hemophilia Association of San Diego County, the Central California Bleeding Disorders Foundation, and the Northern California Bleeding Disorders Foundation, the event took place at the Anaheim Marriott September 5–7. It began with a reception, dinner, and an opportunity for attendees to visit industry booths.

The second day featured educational sessions on various topics, including product information, nutrition, and emotional health, catering to diverse interests. Throughout the weekend, we were busy at the BioMatrix booth welcoming visitors and discussing our services. The atmosphere was lively with a cornhole competition for a chance to win a $500 donation to their local foundation, which was awarded to the Hemophilia Foundation of Southern California!

Sunday morning, friends and families gathered in the hotel lobby to receive tickets for a day at Disneyland Park, where even more fun awaited. We eagerly anticipate the *2026 Familia de Sangre* reunion!

Emily, Gaby and Maria

Lázaro and Gaby

Gaby and Elizabeth

Maria and Gaby

HFSC Executive Director Rigoberto Garcia accepts the Cornhole Challenge $500 from Gabriella Griffin of BioMatrix!

TEXAS

Jeanette Kizer-Jones

Layla, Jessica and Taha

Jayden and Patty

Claudia, Jose and Elian

In 2025, the Texas Central Bleeding Disorders Association proudly celebrated 60 years of advocacy, education, and community support. The milestone was marked with a special ***Fall Education and 60th Anniversary Celebration*** on September 6th at the renowned Billy Bob's 81 Club in the historic Fort Worth Stockyards. Attendees enjoyed delicious BBQ, applauded decades of achievements, and donned their best Western attire, adding a festive spirit to the memorable occasion!

Standout personalities from our local community participated in interviews conducted by Ryan Crowe, Board Member and Historian. Ryan recently received the *Loras Goedken Outstanding Leadership Award* at the 2025 NBDF Conference – a well-deserved honor. The shared experiences of an HTC social worker, tainted blood survivors, and prominent community members provided valuable lessons for everyone present.

Celebrating these important milestones helps us recognize how far we have come as a community. Yet there is still so much more we can achieve together. Cheers to the next 60!

TENNESSEE

Jenni Denham and David Tignor

EJ and Kathy

The Tennessee Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorders Foundation, CSL Behring, and BioMatrix hosted a fun-filled ***Axe Throwing Family Event*** in Knoxville at Babelay Farms. Held September 9th, the outdoor venue offered a variety of activities for everyone. We enjoyed a tasty picnic before heading out to try our hands at axe-throwing. The weather was beautiful, making the evening even more delightful.

"Axeperts" Mason, Beckett, Pam, Luke, Leah and Elizabeth

Essential instructions and a demonstration from the owners on how to throw an axe ensured that everyone went home with all their fingers and toes intact! Apprehensive at first, we quickly discovered that there were some true "axeperts" among us! Cornhole and a jumbo Jenga game were also available.

Gathering in such a relaxed environment allowed everyone to enjoy each other's company. We may not have hit the bullseye every time, but we certainly had fun trying! Special thanks to Executive Director Amanda Wilson and her team for organizing this outstanding event!

FLORIDA

Marcy Foertsch

BioMatrix and CSL Behring hosted an ***Educational Dinner*** for community members at Whiskey Cake restaurant in Tampa on September 10th. The event began with Senior Manager, Coagulation Products at CSL Behring, Alexander Monica, who welcomed the group and introduced peer speaker Pete Dyson. As someone living with a bleeding disorder, Pete shared his experiences with Idelvion®. We then enjoyed an energetic round of BioMatrix *Advocacy Trivia* with Halloween candy as prizes, ending the evening on a sweet and empowered note! We look forward to hosting many more opportunities to engage, support, and serve our community. Thank you to CSL Behring for sponsoring this event!

VIRGINIA

Terry Stone and Michelle Stielper

Michelle and Derek

Thanks to the collective advocacy efforts of our bleeding disorders community over the years, we continue to see remarkable advancements in treatment. These include not only new factor products but also gene therapies and alternative administration methods.

From September 12-14, at the Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, the Virginia Bleeding Disorders Foundation (now with a new name!) welcomed more than 180 attendees to its annual ***Medical Symposium***. This event provided participants with a valuable opportunity to learn about products and protocols from industry partners and to engage with specialty pharmacy representatives for essential information and support. The weekend was filled with presentations from manufacturing partners showcasing both new and established product options.

This must-attend event offered families the chance to learn, connect and have fun at the water park. This gathering also marked a bittersweet farewell to Kelly Waters, who served as Executive Director for 19 years. She was sent off in style as she embarks on new adventures. We are thrilled that Heather Conner has stepped into the Interim Executive Director position and will lead the chapter forward with the support of the Board of Directors. Congratulations, Heather! BioMatrix looks forward to supporting you and the chapter!

KENTUCKY

Rania Salem

Friends and families of the Kentucky Hemophilia Foundation gathered on September 13th at the Hyatt Regency in Louisville for its ***Annual Education Meeting***. The day began with breakfast and an inspiring keynote presentation by social worker Donna Fleming, who spoke on *Then and Now: The Bleeding Disorders Journey*, highlighting the challenges, progress, and resilience of our community.

Elijah and Rania

During breaks, everyone explored vendor booths, gaining insights into new resources and services. These vendor interactions not only provided valuable information but also strengthened connections between families, healthcare providers, and industry partners.

Alexis and Nikulai

Participants selected from two breakout sessions: *Family Connections*, focusing on communication and relationship-building, and *The Art of Gratitude*, which emphasized the value of gratitude for those managing chronic conditions. The afternoon included chapter updates, annual reports, and the introduction of new board members, setting a positive tone for the upcoming year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ursela Kamala, Executive Director. Working with you is an honor and a privilege!

NEW JERSEY

Richard Vogel and Carolina Luna

Navigating new hemophilia treatments can be overwhelming, but BioMatrix and Pfizer hosted a helpful ***Lunch and Learn*** on September 13th at The Brookdale in Bloomfield to help.

Pfizer Patient Navigator, Jill Coyle, introduced Hympavi™, an innovative subcutaneous therapy. Following Jill, John Martinez, Associate Director of Advocacy & Education at BioMatrix, discussed *Finding Your Harmony*. John discussed the difference between anxiety and stress and provided practical strategies for managing them.

Thanks to everyone who attended! We look forward to hosting more supportive programs in the future!

Big smiles from New Jersey! John, Jill, Indira, Carolina, David, Janet, Richard, Joe, Arun, Sydney, Trevor and Issaiah

KANSAS

Jeanette Kizer-Jones

The Midwest Hemophilia Association (MHA) held its highly anticipated ***Family Education Weekend*** on September 13-14 at the Marriott in Overland Park, with a focus on education, connection, and celebration!

Tim and Abbie

Sessions led by industry partners and local hematologists included interactive discussions for teens facilitated by GutMonkey and two engaging workshops for children by BioMatrix. One workshop involved crafting to learn about the clotting cascade, while the other featured the book *My Special Something* to celebrate individuality beyond bleeding disorders.

Happy Birthday, Angela!

The weekend included fun activities at Advent Health Sports Park with dinner, an indoor arcade, laser tag, and bowling. It concluded on Sunday with community awards and a special birthday celebration for the one and only MHA Executive Director Angela Brown. Happy birthday and many more!

NEW JERSEY

Richard Vogel and Carolina Luna

Just because summer is over doesn't mean you can't enjoy the Jersey Shore! On September 14th, the Hemophilia Association of New Jersey (HANJ) hosted its ***Back-to-School*** event at the Offshore Restaurant in Point Pleasant.

John Martinez, Associate Director of Advocacy & Education at BioMatrix, delivered a presentation titled *The 411 on 504s*. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 establishes accommodations that ensure students with disabilities have equal access to their education. John explained the importance of parents advocating for these accommodations, which aim to remove barriers to learning and participation in school programs and activities.

Antonella, Jenifer, Carlos and Noah

Andrea, Hilda and Dulce

When I was in grade school (well before 1973), I missed weeks of school due to knee bleeds and a broken leg. My mom took the initiative to arrange for a home tutor, access to books, and extra time for tests. Interestingly, these same accommodations are included in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Margarita Rogers, Hematology Community Relations Specialist at Bayer, then presented on transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.

After a delicious lunch buffet, everyone was treated to an afternoon at the famous Jenkinson's Aquarium. Many thanks to HANJ for organizing this fantastic event!

VIRGINIA

Michelle and Terry

Talented Aarav shows his art work!

The internet defines a retreat as a temporary withdrawal from everyday life for rest and personal growth. The Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area recognized the need for such an escape, gathering from September 19-21 at Graves' Mountain Lodge in Syria for their ***Family Retreat Weekend***. With beautiful blue skies and the backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains, attendees enjoyed a weekend of connection, education, and delicious food.

Friday focused on mingling and reconnecting, while Saturday featured presentations, including one by physical therapist Marc Gilgannon on joint health, followed by BioMatrix Content Expert Michelle Stielper's talk, *No Need to Bleed*. Michelle also set up a table for attendees to create personalized wooden picture frames with lodge photos to create cherished keepsakes from the weekend. The results were fantastic!

Special thanks to Brenda Bordelon, ED, and Robin Monin, Chapter Administrator, for organizing this refreshing and enriching retreat. Mission accomplished!

FLORIDA

Hector and Chip

Lovely ladies, Joanna, Barbie and Lily

And handsome gentlemen, Justin, Justin and Chip

On September 25th, BioMatrix and Bayer partnered to host an ***Educational Evening*** program at the beautiful Fogo de Chão Brazilian Steakhouse in Coral Gables. Guest speaker Justin C. shared *My Journey to Jivi®*, his family's inspiring journey in managing hemophilia A. Additionally, BioMatrix Patient Support Specialist Brenda Montgomery-King provided valuable insights into our *Patient Navigation Program*. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to connect, socialize, and learn from each other's experiences. Many thanks to Bayer for collaborating with us to bring this program to our local bleeding disorders community!

DELAWARE

Tina McMullen

The atmosphere was lively at Newark's John J. Ammon Education Center for the much-anticipated ***Bleeding Disorders Education Day***, a collaborative effort by ChristianaCare and Nemours Children's Hospital. Topics included *Menstrual Health Inequity* presented by Dr. Robyn Miller, *New Treatment Options* by Dr. Matthew Lankiewicz, and *Navigating Insurance-Advocating* by Dawn Baker, ChristianaCare Community Educator. The emotional highlight of the event was keynote speaker Vaughn Ripley, who captivated the audience by sharing his remarkable journey with hemophilia. He spoke candidly about the challenges he faced and the strategies he used to build a healthy lifestyle despite the obstacles. His story left attendees feeling inspired and empowered. Vaughn truly embodies resilience and determination.

Tina and Gail

The event concluded with lunch and updates from foundation leaders Gail Novak and Sarah Pilacik. A sincere thank you to Mary Jones-Gant, Family Nurse Practitioner, and the organizing team for creating such a wonderful day of education and community!

FLORIDA

Chip Hearn

Justin and Chip

On October 1st, Bayer and BioMatrix collaborated to host an ***Educational Dinner*** for community members at Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant in Pembroke Pines. Barbie Castano Arrebola from Bayer presented *Being Prepared for a Hemophilia Emergency*, sharing practical tips for handling unexpected situations. Brenda King from BioMatrix provided an overview of our *Patient Navigation Program*. Participants had the opportunity to share their personal experiences, which fostered a deeper understanding of the importance of emergency preparedness planning. A heartfelt thank you to Barbie and Bayer for partnering on this outstanding program!

Alexandra Soto

FLORIDA

Hector Heer and Chip Hearn

BioMatrix proudly partnered with Takeda to host an ***Educational Dinner*** for South Florida's hemophilia community on October 2nd at Pisco y Nazca Ceviche Gastrobar in Doral. Attendees enjoyed delicious Peruvian food, warm fellowship, and valuable education on bleeding disorders.

Takeda's Alexandra Soto presented *My Factor, My Body*, highlighting the important role each individual plays in achieving their treatment goals. Following Alexandra, Patient Resource Specialist Brenda King provided an overview of the BioMatrix *Patient Navigation Program* offering a reminder of where to turn for assistance in accessing therapy, resolving insurance issues, and managing financial burdens related to their medical care.

With our minds and bellies full, our close-knit group leaned back to indulge in another Miami tradition: coffee, dessert, and conversation. After an hour filled with jokes, stories, family updates, and various theories on how to improve the Miami Dolphins, we bid each other "Buenas noches,"

promising to meet again soon for further advocacy, education, and socializing.

The BioMatrix Bleeding Disorders South squad sincerely thanks Alexandra Soto and Takeda Pharmaceuticals for sponsoring this enjoyable and informative evening.

KENTUCKY

Justin Lindhorst and Rania Salem

The Kentucky Hemophilia Foundation hosted ***Family Camp*** at Camp Discovery, October 3-5, at the beautiful Cedar Ridge campground in Taylorsville. Plenty of sunshine and a ton of favorite camp activities kept participants smiling throughout the weekend. Parents and children enjoyed ziplining, canoeing, archery, and team-building activities in the forest. Decorating pumpkins, stuffing scarecrows, and roasting marshmallows around a campfire were on the activity list. The final night featured families competing in the *Family Camp Olympics*, which included a hilarious series of party games.

BioMatrix provided interactive educational programming, including an *escape room* challenge where families solved tabletop puzzles to learn how to navigate an insurance appeal. They also participated in a competitive round of *Friendly Feud*, testing participants' knowledge of bleeding disorders. Infirmary nurse Missy Frey led a roundtable discussion and an interactive self-infusion workshop.

A huge thank you goes to Executive Director Ursela Kamala for hosting this incredible weekend of fun!

Hunter

Emma

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Despite the chilly temperatures, the sun shone brightly as the Northwest Ohio Hemophilia Foundation (NWOHF) hosted its ***Family Education Day*** on October 11th at the Perrysburg Hilton Garden Inn. The event began with a presentation from the staff at the Northwest Ohio Hemophilia Treatment Center, followed by breakout sessions.

Over lunch, families participated in an interactive presentation about healthy joints and bones cosponsored by Takeda and BioMatrix, which included indoor trick-or-treating for the kids. Everyone enjoyed mingling, visiting the industry booths, and watching the children have fun. Thank you to NWOHF Executive Director Carla Wells, for this festive opportunity!

FLORIDA

Chip Hearn and Hector Heer

Mapi, Luis, Liliana, Ana, Brenda, Hector and Chip

BioMatrix was thrilled to partner with Sanofi to host an ***Educational Dinner*** at Mondongo's in Doral on October 16th. With the enthusiastic help of Ana Calero, President of Foundation Hope & Life USA, we were able to spread the word far and wide, and the turnout was fantastic!

Sofia and Chip

Liliana Gomez highlighted Sanofi's innovative products and their extensive patient assistance services. Following, BioMatrix Patient Resource Specialist Brenda King shared the details of our *Patient Navigation Program*, showcasing how we're dedicated to helping community members tackle insurance challenges and navigate non-clinical barriers to care.

As the event drew to a close, guests enjoyed rich Colombian coffees with sweet desserts, giving us the perfect ending to an excellent meal. Community members lingered, sharing laughter and conversation, until heading home with full bellies, warm smiles, and appreciation for the opportunity to gather and learn.

Thank you, Sanofi for your invaluable partnership, and to everyone who took the time to share this special evening with us. We truly appreciate you!

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Roy and Brooklyn

David and Debra

It was a perfect evening on October 16 to escape the cool embrace of autumn as we gathered at the charming 35 Brix restaurant in Uniontown for a ***vWD Family Dinner***. Takeda and BioMatrix joined forces to present valuable insights and warm companionship. The evening kicked off with an informative overview of von Willebrand disease by Takeda's nurse educator, Maria Rohan. She expertly explained its complexities and the treatment options available, particularly spotlighting VONVENDI®. We then dove into fun-filled rounds of BioMatrix Bleeding Disorder Trivia. In friendly camaraderie, everyone competed to win boxes of nostalgic classic candies.

As the delightful evening ended, we reluctantly stepped out into the brisk night air, our hearts warmed by our shared understanding of the challenges and triumphs associated with bleeding disorders. We extend our gratitude to Takeda for their partnership!

ARIZONA

Felix Jacquez Garcia

Christian, William and Lori

The Coalition for Hemophilia B (CHB) organized a fantastic ***Meeting-on-the-Road*** event on October 18th at the Tempe Hilton, bringing together hemophilia B members and families from Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. It felt like a big family reunion, with some driving 7 hours to attend!

William and Felix

Michael, Victoria, and Fabiola

Leaders from Arizona Bleeding Disorders and Arizona Blood Alliance showed their support for CHB, highlighting our community's strength. While parents and adults attended enriching sessions, CHB arranged activities for kids of all ages, ensuring everyone felt included and had a great time. The evening featured a dinner program with a three-patient panel sharing their inspiring stories about living with hemophilia B, reminding us of our resilience.

A huge thank you to everyone who visited the BioMatrix booth and congratulations to our gift raffle winner. Every moment was cherished, including the shared laughter and tears. Our community is grateful for this wonderful CHB family.

DELAWARE

Tina McMullen

Matt and Blake

Education, Lunch, and Farm Fun was held at Wilmington's Ramsey Farm by the Brandywine Valley Hemophilia Foundation's (BVFH) event on October 18th. The gorgeous fall day began with a lunch provided by BioMatrix while Manuel Lopez Serrano, Sanofi CoRE Manager, spoke about living with hemophilia. Following, Bill Wilbert from BioMatrix discussed *Open Enrollment* and *Patient Navigation*.

Gail, Manny and Tina

After lunch and presentations, everyone enjoyed a hayride, pumpkin painting, a corn maze, a petting zoo, and various other activities offered by the farm. This event was a great success, and I believe it will become a tradition! A special thanks to foundation president, Gail Novak, and Sanofi for bringing education and fun to the BVHF community.

ILLINOIS

Eva Kraemer

Bill Wilbert

Open Enrollment is here, and there's a lot to know! On October 23rd, BioMatrix and Novo Nordisk hosted an ***Educational Dinner and Q&A*** at Labriola Ristorante in Oakbrook. BioMatrix Patient Resource Specialist, Bill Wilbert, covered key dates for reviewing insurance plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, ACA, and employer-sponsored options.

Attendees had specific questions about their plans, and Bill addressed them in real-time. He is currently processing patient navigation information for several participants, making it a valuable opportunity for everyone to connect in person. Our *Patient Navigation Program* benefits not only current patients but the entire bleeding disorders community, highlighting BioMatrix's commitment to helping everyone live their best lives!

Charles

Gummy worm bobbing! Felix & Steve

Raffle winner, Abrianna!

NEW MEXICO

Felix Jacquez Garcia

Back by popular demand, the Sangre de Oro ***Fall Education and Halloween Event*** took place on October 23rd at the Embassy Suites Albuquerque, and it was an absolute blast! Following a presentation by Octapharma's Amber Federizo, who discussed iron deficiencies and bleeding disorders, we shifted our focus to Halloween festivities.

The event featured music, a costume contest, bobbing for gummy worms in whipped cream (messy but worth it!), a candy guessing jar along with a photo booth that added to the fun! BioMatrix raffled Halloween decorations - congrats to the winner!

A special thanks to my fellow members of the SDO Event Planning Committee - Michelle, Monica, Maria, Felicia, Bernadette, Jess, and Izaynah. Our team enjoyed organizing this event! Also, thank you to Octapharma for their sponsorship. It was a wonderful time together!

PENNSYLVANIA

Tina McMullen

Members of the bleeding disorder community came together for an ***Evening of Education***, conversation, and a delicious dinner on October 23rd at Shady Maple Smorgasbord in East Earl. Attendees heard from Shaneka Storey, Patient Navigator, who introduced Hympavzi™,

Pfizer's option for individuals with hemophilia A or B. Attendees had an opportunity to examine and play with a model of the new pen (no needles were involved!).

Tina, Dakoda and Steph

It truly warms my heart to see attendees engaged in the education and deep in conversation, even as the venue is closing and the staff is cleaning up. That's a true sign of a successful evening. Thank you to Shaneka and Pfizer for sponsoring this wonderful evening!

ALABAMA

Jenni Denham

Carla and Jennifer

A scenic lakeside retreat at Children's Harbor in Eclectic hosted over 30 families affected by bleeding disorders from October 24 to 26. Organized by the Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorders of Alabama, the ***Camp Harvest Family Educational Weekend*** blended education with fun!

Andrea

Families attended informative sessions and open forums to gain insights on navigating life with a bleeding disorder. Highlights included a carnival with face painting, games, a dunk tank, and an abundance of Halloween candy! The weekend wrapped up with a thrilling haunted trail, creating unforgettable memories for all.

On behalf of BioMatrix, I was honored to connect with attendees, share support materials, and learn about their inspiring journeys. We proudly support events that empower our community and foster hope. Camp Harvest is about building connections and reminding everyone that they are not alone!

OKLAHOMA

Jeanette Kizer-Jones

Jeanette and Virginia

We are excited to share our collaboration between Takeda and BioMatrix, which brought ***Community Dinner and Educational*** sessions to eastern Oklahoma! Our first stop was in Tulsa on October 24th at Charleston's Restaurant. Despite the chilly weather, we had a warm evening filled with meaningful discussions about bleeding disorders led by Takeda Community Education Specialist Kevin Ellebrecht. I presented a session focusing on the unique challenges women face with a bleeding disorder titled *Women Bleed, Too!* The conversations were enlightening and sparked a desire for continued progress.

The next day, we traveled to Spiro, connecting with rural families at the Choctaw Nation Community Center. After catching up and sharing experiences, we repeated the *Women Bleed, Too!* session, generating valuable questions and discussions. Next, Kevin engaged us in a hands-on activity to illustrate the challenges of managing multiple responsibilities, culminating in a surprise "bleed" scenario.

Terry, Whitney, Jeanette, Luke, Alicia, Claudette, Herby, Kevin, & Jason

Sheryl

We concluded our time with insights on clotting and factor replacement products. BioMatrix is committed to supporting our rural communities, and we look forward to our next tour in eastern Oklahoma!

FLORIDA

Marcy Foertsch

Selfie time! Marcy with Eric and Patsie

BioMatrix was thrilled to sponsor the Bleeding Disorders of Florida ***Creepy Crawl Walk*** on October 25th! The event was an incredible success, drawing a fantastic crowd of community members to Orlando on a breezy, autumn day. With a fun Halloween theme, participants embraced the spirit of the season, showcasing their creative costumes and enjoying an abundance of candy. It was an exciting atmosphere as enthusiastic walkers and runners gathered to support a great cause and raise funds for the chapter. What a fantastic day for our community to rally together!

NEVADA

John Martinez

The Nevada Chapter of the National Bleeding Disorders Foundation held its annual ***Meeting and Industry Symposium*** on October 25th at Henderson's Sunset Station Hotel and Casino. We all enjoyed warm camaraderie as we reunited over breakfast, followed by presentations from manufacturers discussing treatment options like bypassing agents, rebalancing agents, and gene therapy.

The chapter held an interactive discussion on mental health and its impact on the bleeding disorder community. Executive Director Jacob Murdock then highlighted resources available to our community and a summary of the chapter's plans for the upcoming year. It was a fantastic opportunity for participants to come together, learn about treatment options, chapter plans, and connect with familiar and new friends!

NEW JERSEY

Richard Vogel

Elias, Maria and Angel

The Hemophilia Association of New Jersey, in partnership with Sanofi and BioMatrix, held the ***4th Annual Fall Family Event*** on October 26th. It was a beautiful autumn day filled with education, apple picking, and hayrides at Johnson's Locust Hall Farm in Jobstown.

After a tasty grilled meal, attendees had the opportunity to mingle and socialize. Sanofi CoRE Manager Manny Lopez

Miley, Cecilia, Juan and Joseline

Antonela, Jennifer, Carlos and Noah enjoy a hayride!

discussed the benefits of Altuviiio®, Sanofi's treatment for hemophilia A in Spanish, while Tyshawn Constantine spoke in English about how to maintain optimal factor levels.

With open enrollment approaching, BioMatrix's Carolina Luna presented information about our *Patient Navigation Program*, explaining how it operates and how it has helped patients with insurance and financial assistance issues.

After the presentations families were invited to explore the farm, enjoy hayrides, and pick apples!

OHIO

Rania Salem

Spirits were high and learning was in full swing! The Greater Ohio Bleeding Disorders Foundation, with BioMatrix and Takeda, hosted a ***Bone Health Family Dinner*** filled with education, laughter, and Halloween fun at the Renaissance Hotel in Westerville on October 28th.

Sir John and Lady Roxanne

Claire

Abigail, James & Luther

Takeda Community Specialist Maria Rohan shared her expertise on maintaining healthy joints, preventing joint damage, and managing care when issues arise. There's never a dull moment during Maria's presentations; her energy, insight, and passion kept the audience engaged and intrigued. Following Maria's informative talk, families participated in a lively round of *BioMatrix Trivia* before diving into Halloween fun! Both children and adults enjoyed trick-or-treating, with laughter ringing through the room as baskets quickly filled with treats, ensuring that no one went home empty-handed. Events like this bring our community together, strengthening the bonds that support patients and families through education, advocacy, and connection. They demonstrate that when we unite, there is always room for both learning and fun. We are grateful to everyone involved!

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

The Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton hosted the Greater Ohio Bleeding Disorder Foundation ***Annual Meeting*** on November 1st, where the atmosphere was filled with team spirit! Everyone proudly wore their favorite team's jerseys, which led to friendly rivalry.

Kaden

Lyndon

The day began with a panel of Hemophilia Treatment Center staff and included a lunch presentation by Judy Doyle, Novo Nordisk Community Liaison, on mental wellbeing for those living with a bleeding disorder. Afternoon sessions covered treatments for hemophilia and von Willebrand disease, followed by a screening of the film *Dismissed*, presented by Sanofi, showcasing women's experiences with misdiagnosed bleeding disorders. The event concluded with a memorable tour of the Hall of Fame. A special thanks goes to Tonya Stewart, ED, for organizing this event!

CALIFORNIA

John Martinez

On November 2nd, the Northern California Bleeding Disorders Foundation held its annual ***Unite for Bleeding Disorders Walk*** in Walnut Creek. The annual event was an overwhelming success, with over 350 participants on hand to support our community on a gorgeous Sunday morning. The walk was also a financial success as the foundation exceeded its expectations! BioMatrix was proud to sponsor a 360-degree photo booth at the event, where excited walkers documented their experience and enjoyed sharing a memento with family and friends.

FLORIDA

Justin Lindhorst, Rania Salem and Marcy Foertsch

Benjamin, Renee, Rania & Robin

HOPE Charities hosted their annual ***HOPE Conference*** from November 7-9 at the Hilton Orlando, inviting everyone to *Imagine a Life Uninhibited*. The event spanned two exciting, action-packed days filled with education, networking, community building, and fun! This year marked the largest Hope Conference yet, attracting over one thousand attendees from across the country! The sessions covered a wide range of timely and relevant topics, with breakout discussions focused on unique segments of our diverse community. Bright smiles, laughter, and positivity fostered stronger community bonds. BioMatrix was proud to support the conference and looks forward to participating next year!

MAINE

Richard Vogel

Suzanne and Karen are ready to hoop!

The New England Hemophilia Association's (NEHA) ***Fallfest*** took place November 7-9 at the scenic Samoset Resort in Rockport. Everyone enjoyed a welcome reception featuring an interactive presentation, *The Art of Gratitude*, led by

Sanofi representative Ashley Smith. Executive Director Rich Pezzillo officially kicked off the event on Saturday morning, addressing over 300 attendees. Next, a provider panel discussed pressing issues within the bleeding disorder community, creating a safe environment to voice concerns related to the evolving treatment landscape.

After networking with sponsors in the exhibit hall, a showing of *Dismissed: Women's Voices in Bleeding Disorders*, was featured, highlighting the challenges women face to be diagnosed with a bleeding disorder. The film underscores the misconception that women cannot have hemophilia. NEHA also introduced a "speed dating" format for learning about new therapies, allowing community members to engage directly with different manufacturers. The evening featured a festive *Hula Hoopla Dance Party*, sponsored by BioMatrix, where folks donned in Hawaiian shirts, grass skirts, and floral leis learned hula hooping from Maine artist Nettie Loops. The next day, Matt Delaney, NBDF Government Relations Manager, provided updates on policy issues impacting the community.

It's always wonderful to reconnect with old friends and explore new connections. Looking forward to *Fallfest 2026* in Groton, Connecticut!

VIRGINIA

Terry Stone and Michelle Stielper

Kolawole & Katherine with Felix Garcia

Nothing says home like comfort. A familiar space, familiar faces, and a common language helped Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area's Spanish-speaking community members feel right at home at the ***Annual Education Day for Spanish Speakers*** on November 8th at the Hilton Fairfax. Following a warm welcome from Brenda Bordelon, NBDF presenter Sabrina Farina delivered an engaging session titled *Mental Health: A Deeper Dive*. The focus then shifted to a topic on everyone's mind – *Open Enrollment*.

Felix Garcia, BioMatrix Educator and TAE, energized the audience for open enrollment season, making the information accessible and fun. To liven things up, he embraced his inner game show host and led a lively round of *Loteria*. The crowd enjoyed friendly competition and excitement. The event also featured a F*ood and Fitness Basics* talk by Novo Nordisk and a breakfast program hosted by Sanofi. Thank you to Brenda Bordelon and the Spanish-speaking community members who seized this opportunity to learn, connect, and celebrate together.

TENNESSEE

Cyndy Coors

Todd, Ashley, Seth, Silas, and Sawyer

Family Fun Night, hosted by the Tennessee Hemophilia Bleeding Disorders Foundation with Octapharma and BioMatrix, was an absolute blast on November 13th at Tiebreakers in Johnson City! Community members gathered for delicious pizza and socializing,

Jahill, Elizabeth & Travis

Gingerbread Sawyer

David and Moe

setting the stage for an evening packed with excitement. After dinner, we dove into incredible adventures filled with laser tag, arcade games, and bowling! The energy was contagious, and everyone had such an amazing time! A huge thank you to everyone who came out! We're already counting down the days until we can do it all over again!

VIRTUAL

John Martinez

As 2026 open enrollment ensues, BioMatrix held a second virtual ***Open Enrollment Educational*** session on November 18th. Senior Patient Resource Specialist Bill Wilbert focused on the complexities of insurance plans and the important terminology needed to make informed coverage decisions. Providing essential updates, Bill does an excellent job of presenting this complex material in an easily understood way and expertly answered the many questions from our guests. If you were unable to attend but have questions, feel free to email Bill at bill.wilbert@biomatrixsprx.com.

FLORIDA

Marcy Foertsch

CSL Behring and BioMatrix warmly welcomed members of the Tampa area bleeding disorder community to an ***Educational Dinner*** at Oystercatchers, a waterfront restaurant with stunning views of the bay. Guests enjoyed an inspiring, interactive presentation from CSL Behring peer speaker Rick S., who shared his journey living with hemophilia B. BioMatrix Patient Navigator Bill Wilbert then took the stage for an eye-opening session on *Insurance Basics*. With a fully engaged audience, we had a great Q&A session! We look forward to reconnecting with our community for more educational events, where we can continue to engage, support, and serve!

FLORIDA

Marcy Foertsch

Alexandria & Marcy

On November 22nd, STK Steakhouse in Orlando was the place to be for a Takeda/BioMatrix ***Educational Event***! The afternoon began with a lovely buffet and an even lovelier Alexandra Soto, Takeda Community Education Specialist, who spoke about von Willebrand disease and highlighted Takeda's treatment, VONVENDI®. BioMatrix's Patient Navigator Brenda King then shared insights on how BioMatrix can assist community members in accessing care and resources to address the challenges associated with living with a chronic condition.

After brunch and goodbyes, attendees enjoyed the rest of the day strolling through the many stores and boutiques at Disney Springs Marketplace. We look forward to seeing everyone again soon!

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Dr. Domm & Forrest

Mary and Jeremy

Holidays are a cherished time for embracing tradition and community, so for the fifth consecutive year, BioMatrix was pleased to partner with Novo Nordisk to organize a delightful ***Family Dinner***, held November 22nd at Brew Garden Restaurant in Strongsville. This year, we were once again honored to welcome Dr. Jennifer Domm as our guest speaker. Her insightful presentation highlighted the latest innovations in treatments tailored for the hemophilia community, shedding light on advancements that offer hope and improvement in quality of life. As part of the evening's festivities, we engaged attendees with a fun trivia challenge, testing their knowledge and sparking friendly competition. Meanwhile, the children busily expressed their gratitude by coloring acorns, each one showcasing what they were most thankful for in imaginative designs. It was a heartwarming gathering full of laughter, learning, and connection – a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the bonds within our bleeding disorder family.

NEW YORK

Rich Vogel and Carolina Luna

Matthew & Maribel

The New York City Hemophilia Chapter hosted its annual ***Education Day*** on November 23rd at the New York Hall of Science Center, Queens. The event began with ample time for community members to mix and mingle and connect with industry and pharmacy representatives. Featured was a screening of *Dismissed*, a powerful and eye-opening film that sheds light on the challenges women with a bleeding disorder face while trying to secure a diagnosis.

A highlight of the event was a panel of esteemed HTC providers who engaged with the community by answering questions and sharing insights into innovative therapies on the horizon. This year's panel brought a trio of medical expertise, Joe Stanko, NP, Northwell Health; Katy McQuinn, MD, Weill Cornell; and Chris Walsh, MD, Mt. Sinai. Their invaluable knowledge was truly enlightening.

Of course, no holiday celebration is complete without festive activities! Children decorated holiday cookies, and Santa Claus brought gifts and smiles for all! As the event wrapped up, everyone was invited to explore the wonders of the Science Center, making for a day filled with learning, joy, and holiday spirit – a perfect blend of education, community, and celebration!

NEW JERSEY

Richard Vogel

December 2nd was anything but bah humbug! ***Blood Brother/Blood Sister Night*** took place at Catherine Lombardi restaurant in New Brunswick for a memorable meal in the wine cellar. The event, sponsored by the Hemophilia Association of New Jersey, HEMA Biologics, and BioMatrix, brought everyone together to mingle and learn from one another in a festive setting. Holiday cheer carried over during the short stroll from the restaurant to the theater, where the group enjoyed a twist on Charles Dickens' classic, "A New Jersey Christmas Carol". It was the perfect way to connect, relax, and celebrate the season with others who share the bond of living with a bleeding disorder. As everyone joined in singing Christmas carols at the end of the play, the evening closed with the timeless words of Tiny Tim: "God bless us, everyone!"

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Kristin and Debra *lean* into it!

Only a few brave souls ventured out in the sudden snowstorm of December 2nd to attend a ***Lady's Educational Lunch*** at Innovative Fit in Middleburgh Heights. What an amazing time we had! Wendy Perkins from Bayer gave a presentation on the importance of understanding pharmacokinetics, how they can help with treatments, and how they can help you see how your body reacts to new products. Then, it was time to get our hearts pumping with a bungee exercise program led by Niki, the facility's owner. Let me tell you – this workout looks a lot easier than it is! The resistance from the bungee really gives your body a great challenge. Those participating were laughing almost as hard as those who were just watching! A huge thank you to Bayer for sponsoring this enjoyable event!

TENNESSEE

Cyndy Coors

Wayne, David, Jude & Robby

Rhett

Stephanie and Zoey

We had a fun night at Rodizio Grill on December 2nd, where Novo Nordisk and BioMatrix welcomed guests to an ***Educational Dinner***! Attendees discovered Novo Nordisk's innovative new treatment for hemophilia A & B, Alhemo®, through an insightful presentation. The event drew a mix of community members and bleeding disorders clinic staff, all of whom enjoyed a delicious meal and lingered to connect and share experiences long after the program concluded. The evening left everyone inspired and looking forward to future opportunities to learn and connect within the hemophilia community.

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Carmelo June

Let the festivities begin! On December 3rd, we gathered at Astoria Grill in Canton to celebrate all things Christmas, dressed in our holiday best! During dinner, Laithe Elkurd, Sanofi's CoRE Resource Coordinator, presented an overview of new products. Following the presentation, we enjoyed a trivia game that demonstrated everyone's attentiveness. Engaging

discussions ensued, with many questions asked and answered. We were having so much fun we ran out of time to create the planned ornaments. Instead, the ornament kits were sent home with the guests, who promised to send photos of their creations. We can't wait to see them!

OHIO

Rania Salem

Isabelle

Roxanne and John

On December 4th, the Greater Ohio Bleeding Disorder Foundation hosted a festive ***Holiday Celebration*** at Der Dutchman Restaurant in Plain City. Members came together to share in the spirit of the season, fostering connections and camaraderie. Folks had the opportunity to speak with industry professionals and discover valuable resources and support within our bleeding disorder community. Guests savored a delicious home-style feast, featuring comforting dishes that brought warmth to both hearts and bellies. And of course, the highlight of the event was a very special visit from Santa Claus, bringing joy to children and young adults with his jolly presence and holiday cheer! The day was filled with connection, celebration, and a strong sense of community spirit. It was a perfect way to usher in the holiday season!

OHIO

Shelia Biljes

Kayleigh, Mason and Matthew

Samantha, Mitch, Matthew, Nathan, and Reagan

What a truly magical time of the year! The Greater Ohio Bleeding Disorder Foundation, in partnership with its sponsors, hosted a delightful family ***Holiday Dinner*** at the Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens in Akron on December 6th. Anticipation filled the air as children, excitement sparkling in their eyes, eagerly lined up to meet and snap a photo with the jolly old elf himself, Santa Claus. Each child was greeted with a warm smile and a special little gift, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Collin shares his list

Izik

At the BioMatrix booth, families crafted beautiful Christmas stockings that were perfect for hanging in their homes. After the delicious pasta buffet, guests were treated to a captivating tour of the mansion and an enchanting walk through a stunning mile-long display featuring an awe-inspiring sight of over a million twinkling lights! A heartfelt thank you to the chapter for creating such a joyous and festive celebration, bringing the spirit of the season to life for everyone!

PENNSYLVANIA

Tina McMullen

Arthur

Torque

Becky and Gerald

Robert and Gail

The Brandywine Valley Hemophilia Foundation's (BVHF) ***End-of-Year Meeting*** was a resounding success. Held at the Mendenhall Inn on December 7th, the event welcomed more than 80 community members, who kicked off the celebration by visiting booth exhibitors and enjoying a delicious buffet lunch. President Gail Novak highlighted the many remarkable 2025 chapter achievements, even more impressive as we realize this exceptional organization is entirely run by volunteers!

Thanks to generous donations from several toy companies, every child received a special gift. Adults joined in the fun as well, receiving gift cards for correctly answering chapter trivia questions and participating in the many raffle drawings. After the program, attendees bundled up and visited Longwood Gardens, enjoying the dazzling displays and the breathtaking spectacle of hundreds of thousands of twinkling lights.

A heartfelt thank you to Chair Kim Hamstead and the BVHF team for organizing such a joyful and memorable day!

VIRGINIA

Terry Stone and Michelle Stielper

Brenda and Robin visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus

Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area holiday party of 2025 was the best ever! Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived just in time for the ***Holiday Gathering*** December 7th at the Fairfax Sherwood Community Center. Santa was as jolly as ever and delighted to see how much the children had grown!

Everyone enjoyed a magical performance of the *Nutcracker*, which truly set the tone for holiday cheer! Guests were treated to a festive dinner, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and, to top it all off, the annual biggest, fastest snowball fight – a beloved HACA tradition. Santa declared it *EPIC* and said even Frosty would be impressed!

TENNESSEE

Cyndy Coors, Jenni Denham and David Tignor

Courtney & Noah

A crisp, chilly night set the scene for the Tennessee Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorder Foundation (THBDF) ***Family Evening*** at Rock City's Enchanted Garden of Lights atop Lookout Mountain

McKenzie and Andrew

Amanda, ED

Makayla & Jacob

Emily, Theresa and and Rhett take in the twinkling lights

December 9th. The event, sponsored by Octapharma and BioMatrix, offered the perfect atmosphere to spark the holiday spirit! Everyone enjoyed socializing over dinner before wandering through a magical winter wonderland illuminated by thousands of twinkling lights as we explored the gardens' trails. Santa was even waiting in his cottage for children to visit! Many thanks to THBDF for bringing families together for this joyful celebration!

FLORIDA

Hector Heer

Takeda and BioMatrix partnered on December 13th to host an ***Educational Dinner*** at Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant in Doral.

Hector, Alexandra and Brenda

The evening featured Alexandra Soto-Gomez, Takeda Community Education Specialist, as the speaker, focusing on Takeda's vWD product, VONVENDI®. The event fostered active participation and insightful questions from attendees. Guests expressed high satisfaction with the valuable information provided and left the event in great spirits. BioMatrix was proud to collaborate with Takeda on another successful program!

Shanna, Gina, Julie & Emelia

TEXAS

Jeanette Kizer-Jones

'Tis the season to be jolly! On December 13th, the Texas Central Bleeding Disorders community gathered at the Dallas Beeman Hotel for the annual ***Winter Family Education Event***. The halls were decked with holiday cheer made even more bright by members and families of the community! During lunch, chapter leadership reflected on a year filled with success, spotlighting advocacy achievements, dedication to education, and surpassing their United Walk fundraising goal before the event!

Claudia, Guillermo, Elian, & Trunks

Alex, Vickie & Adrian

Claudia

Layla, Jessica & Taha

Ryan contemplating whether he's been good

Sanofi guided everyone through an uplifting gratitude activity: attendees wrote notes of thanks on paper leaves, shared their messages aloud, and hung them on a thankfulness tree. BioMatrix provided a frosty snow globe background for visitors to pose in front of, and children delighted in creating their own snow globe winter scenes with a fun sticker craft. We are truly thankful to support and serve such a wonderful community!

DELAWARE

Tina McMullen

Not even a snowstorm could chill our excitement for an unforgettable afternoon of learning, festive cookie decorating, and joyful connections with the Brandywine Valley Hemophilia Foundation (BVHF) community! Our annual ***Education and Holiday Cookie Decorating*** event lit up Timothy's Riverfront Grill in Wilmington on December 14th, turning a wintry day into a heartwarming celebration.

Paige

Gail, Blake and Tina

As we enjoyed lunch, Kendra Wrisley gave a presentation on Novo's subcutaneous product, Alhemo®, for hemophilia A and B, sparking questions and enthusiastic participation throughout the session. BioMatrix gave each family a goody bag brimming with everything needed to unleash their creativity on the cookies.

Samantha and Matt

Delanie, Lauren & Patrick

Tres Amigas! Gail, Tina & Kendra

The room sparkled with laughter as both kids and adults crafted with imaginative designs - proving that cookie decorating brings out the holiday spirit in everyone!

A big thank you to foundation president, Gail Novak, Novo Nordisk, and the entire BVHF community for a wonderful day!

Time for Fun!

1. Infusion
2. Doctor
3. Hematoma
4. Needle
5. Syringe
6. Bandage

9	3	8	6	2	4	7	1	5
2	7	5	1	9	8	3	4	6
6	1	4	7	3	5	2	9	8
7	2	1	8	4	6	5	3	9
3	4	6	5	1	9	8	2	7
8	5	9	3	7	2	1	6	4
5	6	3	9	8	1	4	7	2
1	9	2	4	5	7	6	8	3
4	8	7	2	6	3	9	5	1

Upcoming Events

FEB 14, 2026 KANSAS
Sweet Smarts for Strong Families
Midwest Hemophilia Assoc., Bayer and BioMatrix
RSVP: Angela Brown, 816-479-5900
angela.brown@midwesthemophilia.org
Larkspur Bistro; Wichita

FEB 19, 2026 VIRGINIA
Educational Dinner
Hosts: Pfizer and BioMatrix
RSVP: Terry Stone, 703-795-6269
terry.stone@biomatrixsprx.com
Union Street Public House; Alexandria

MAR 4, 2026 FLORIDA
Educational Dinner
Hosts: Pfizer and BioMatrix
RSVP: Hector Heer, 954-940-1248
hector.heer@biomatrixsprx.com
Fogo de Chao; Fort Lauderdale

MAR 12, 2026 FLORIDA
Educational Dinner
Hosts: Takeda and BioMatrix
RSVP: Hector Heer, 954-940-1248
hector.heer@biomatrixsprx.com
Pisco y Nasca; Doral

MAR 13–15, 2026 VIRGINIA
Annual Meeting
Virginia Bleeding Disorders Foundation
804-740-8643, https://vahemophilia.org/
Hotel 24 South; Staunton

MAR 21, 2026 VIRGINIA
Chapter Education Day
Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area
703-352-7641, http://hacacares.org
RSVP: director@hacacares.org
Ernst Community Cultural Center; Annandale

MAR 28-29, 2026 MASSACHUSETTS
Consumer Medical Symposium
New England Hemophilia Assoc., 781-326-7645
https://www.newenglandhemophilia.org/
Boston Marriott Burlington; Burlington

APR 9–12, 2026 NEVADA NATIONAL EVENT!
Symposium 2026
The Coalition for Hemophilia B
212-520-8272, www.hemob.org
Las Vegas

APR 16, 2026 OHIO
Couples Night Out
NW OH Hemophilia Found., Takeda and BioMatrix
https://nwohemophilia.org/
RSVP: Carla Wells, 419-291-5882
carla@nwohemophilia.org
Millbury Auto Museum; Millbury

APR 16–19, 2026 LOUISIANA NATIONAL EVENT!
Symposium 2026
Hemophilia Federation of America
202-675-6984, https://www.hfasymposium.org
New Orleans Marriott

Time for Fun!

Hi Kids!

Using the clues listed below, cross out each of the corresponding letters in the box. Keep in mind, each letter can only be used once! Answers are on page 30.

A A A A B C D D D E E E E E
E F G G H I I I L M M N N N
N N O O O O R R S S T T U Y

1. The process of injecting clotting factor into a vein.
2. A person at a Hemophilia Treatment Center who can write a prescription for clotting factor.
3. A large, sometimes lumpy and painful bruise.
4. A thin sharp tool used to put factor into a vein.
5. An item used to hold factor after it is mixed.
6. A strip of material that is used to cover an injury like a cut on your skin.

1. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
2. _ _ _ _ _ _
3. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. _ _ _ _ _ _
5. _ _ _ _ _ _ _
6. _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Sudoku!

Fill in the grid so every row, every column, and every 9 by 9 box contains numbers 1 through 9.

			6	2		7		5
2			1		8	3		6
		4			5			8
			8		6	5	3	9
3	4						2	7
8	5	9	3		2			
5			9			4		
1		2	4		7			3
4		7		6	3			

[BIOMATRIX]
Specialty Infusion Pharmacy

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Plantation, Florida 33324

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Fax: 954-385-7324

Visit us online:
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linkedin.com/company/biomatrixsprx

Dedicated to Making a Difference

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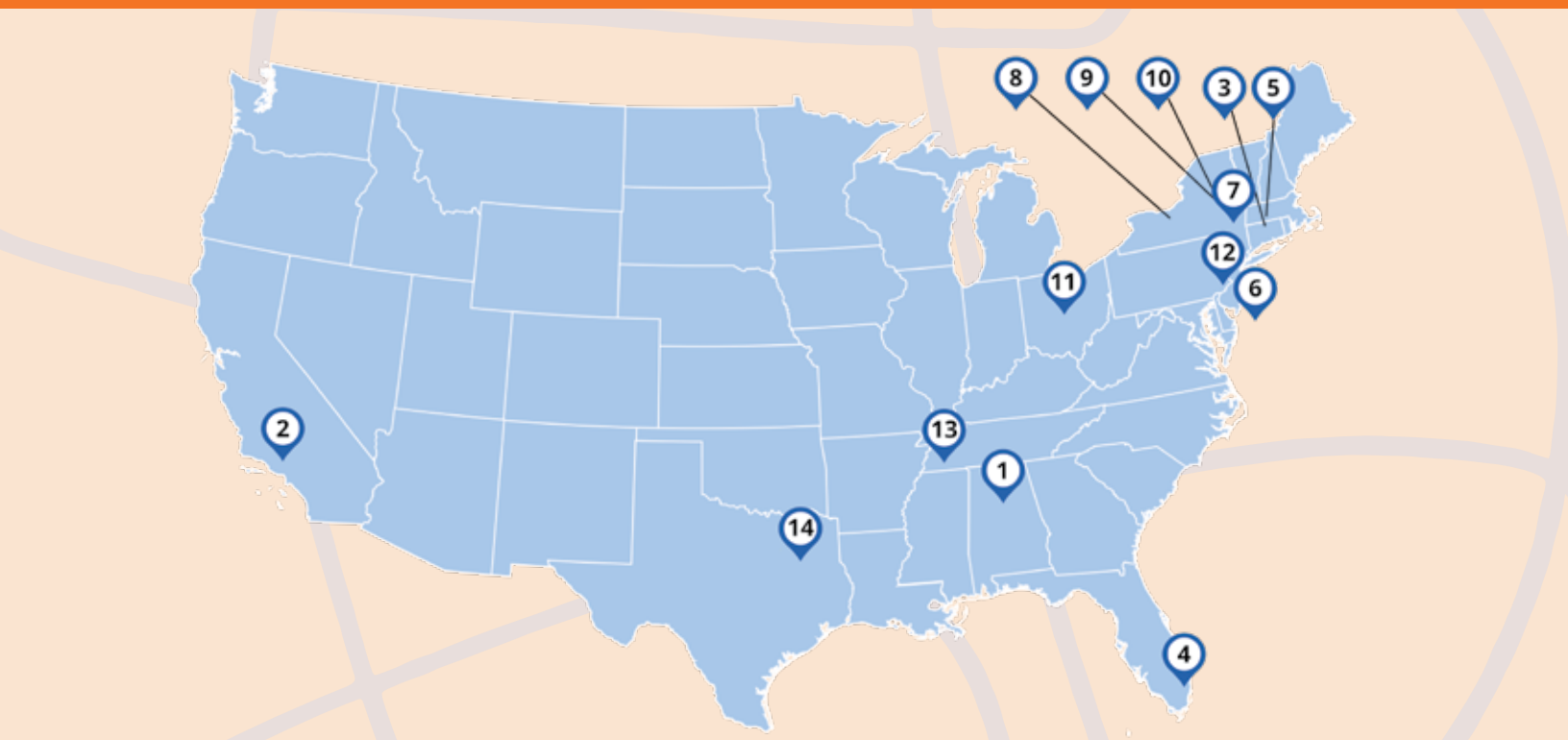

Specialty Infusion Pharmacy Locations

1. Birmingham, Alabama
2. Van Nuys, California
3. Enfield, Connecticut
4. Plantation, Florida
5. West Springfield, Massachusetts
6. Totowa, New Jersey
7. Albany, New York
8. Rochester, New York
9. Syracuse, New York
10. Syracuse, New York
11. Dublin, Ohio
12. Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania
13. Bartlett, Tennessee
14. Tyler, Texas

BEST AND BRIGHTEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN THE NATION 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023