

**Overview of Educational Activities for  
*Beyond Chicken Soup: Jews and Medicine in America***

**Jewish Museum of Maryland  
March 13, 2016 – January 18, 2017**

For each of its major exhibitions, the JMM develops an array of educational material and activities that meet state-mandated curricular standards. For *Beyond Chicken Soup: Jews and Medicine in America* our staff has worked closely with administrators from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to create resources that support the State’s focus on the Common Core Standards along with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) goals for student achievement. A companion exhibition curriculum, designed by JMM staff, includes background information, lesson plans, and a glossary that teachers will use to prepare their students in advance of a field trip. We have also developed engaging on-site activities for school groups that reinforce exhibition themes for a variety of grade levels.

*Beyond Chicken Soup: Jews and Medicine in America* is an immersive and experiential exhibition; visitors travel through a succession of specific environments which are embedded with interpretive texts, original objects (including medical instruments, uniforms, historical manuscripts, diplomas and more), images, archival documents, hands-on discovery activities, and media presentations. The material culture for this exhibition is particularly rich. Each section is populated with artifacts, documents and images that are connected to the history of medicine from the JMM’s collections, and are on loan from other institutions including the National Library of Israel.

The first space visitors encounter is the study of Dr. Harry Friedenwald, part of a three-generation medical dynasty of Baltimore physicians, who collected historic books, manuscripts and artifacts relating to Jews in medicine. His collection was dedicated to exploring the long history of Jewish contributions to medicine going back hundreds of years. Many of the books from the collection date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and are written in many different languages: Greek, Hebrew, Latin, German French and English. Greek and Latin became the universal languages of medicine in the Renaissance, allowing doctors from different parts of the world to exchange ideas. An activity in this section of the exhibit engages students in deciphering modern medical words based on their Greek and Latin roots, revealing how the words were built as they gain a better understanding of words used in contemporary medicine.



*FR 580 – Manuscript of Maimonides Aphorisms  
Courtesy of the National Library of Israel .*

As students enter the Doctor’s Office they will encounter a recreated early 20<sup>th</sup> century doctor’s office that features belongings from Dr. Morris Abramovitz’s office, a Jewish immigrant who practiced medicine in East Baltimore. In this section, they learn about the transition from home care to having patients visit a doctor’s office as well as the new medical technology that helped usher in the “golden age of medicine” in the mid 20<sup>th</sup>

century. Today, medical care takes place in a variety of setting that look quite different from the doctor's office on display. As students leave the doctor's office, they will encounter large images of today's diverse healthcare settings and locate the different settings where they receive health care, including the school nurse's office, a pharmacy walk-in clinic and urgent care center.

The hospital section includes a section on nursing, historically a profession for women that promised freedom, independence, and mobility, and did not challenge traditional gender roles. The establishment of the nursing school at Sinai Hospital enabled Jewish and non-Jewish women to obtain a career in nursing. The role that nurses have played in hospitals has changed over time with the advancement of technology. Gender roles have also changed with men embracing nursing as a career path. At this station, students will take part in an activity where they will be shown the vital signs for four different patients in the hospital and then decide whether the patients are in a healthy range based on the standard temperature, blood pressure, and pulse.



Sinai Hospital Nursing School Graduation, 1963  
Sinai Nursing School Collection

Being a pharmacist was a desired profession for many second generation Jews- as it combined two professions that Jews tended to gravitate towards, medicine and retail. Morris Cooper used his position as a pharmacist with close ties to the community to educate patrons about the history of medicine and to promote public health campaigns. Following his lead – by examining photos of his windows on display in the exhibit – students will create their own window displays as they think about the role of both the pharmacists and advertising in the broader context of healthcare and medicine.

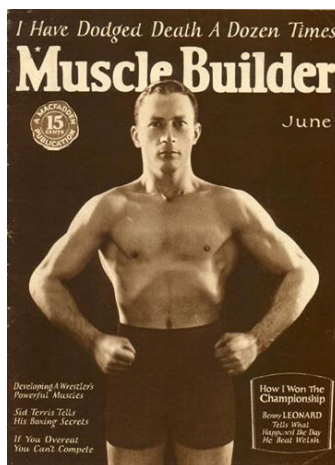
Students will also learn that going back to biblical times, people seeking remedies for illnesses turned to nature as they tested the healing properties of plants and herbs. Garcia de Orta, a Portuguese Jewish physician who immigrated to India in 1534, documented the uses of new medicinal plants, including cinchona bark, the natural source of the antimalarial agent, quinine. His book, *Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India*, brought revolutionary New World remedies to Europe. In a display in this section of the exhibit, students will open drawers containing samples of herbal remedies as they use their senses to explore properties of selected plants, make connections to ancient and modern pharmaceutical knowledge and learn about the long history of the medicinal use of plants.



Courtesy of Brown University  
John Carter Brown Library

Laboratories are important settings as they are where scientists use scientific knowledge to further their understanding of diseases and the human body. In the 1950s, the discovery of DNA revealed how traits are passed from generation to generation through the genetic code. In this section students will learn that genes (dominant and recessive) are codes that shape the physical features of the body through an activity that illustrates the inheritance of recessive traits and the concern about hidden diseases that motivates people to take genetic tests.

Finally, the Fitness Center encourages students to think about health, exercise and nutrition and how the notion of being “fit” has changed from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through today. They will learn about American lightweight boxing champ Benny Leonard who was undefeated and viewed as a model of health and physical fitness in 1925 when he began to market his “home course” in body building. In one activity, students can test their strength and in another look at how the American diet has evolved over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by viewing plates showing sample meals from different decades.



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Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections  
of the Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame.