THE LOWN GROUP NORTH STAR

NEWSLETTER *Fall 2026*

Dear Lown Community,

As most of you know, we are busy preparing to move into our new office in December. For us, the most exciting part of the move is that our Primary Care and Cardiology teams will finally be together in one space. This will make it easier for us to share ideas, discuss best practices, and collaborate on patient care. Our physicians and staff are already planning new offerings that will make use of our new location, including: group exercise sessions and fitness and stability assessments in our new exercise room, Walks with a Doc on our outdoor walking trails, and bone density and body composition measurements using our new DEXA scanner. We hope you will love the new office as much as we do!

In this issue of *The Lown Group North Star*, we are proud and delighted to welcome our sixth Primary Care Physician, Dr. Gregg Furie, who joins us from Brigham and Women's Hospital. Our feature article by Drs. Simeone and Mahrokhian offers important, practical information about sleep, including why it matters and how you can improve the quality of your rest. And our newest Cardiologist, Dr. Naomi Rounds, discusses Ikigai, a beautifully simple Japanese concept that describes the things that give our lives purpose and meaning.

Before closing, I would like to introduce a concept that has been gaining traction as a predictor of longevity and wellness: intrinsic capacity. Defined by the World Health Organization, intrinsic capacity describes the combination of a person's physical and mental abilities. It includes five key areas: 1) Cognition: memory and thinking, 2) Vitality: energy and physical resilience, 3) Sensory health: vision and hearing, 4) Psychological wellbeing: mood and emotional health, and 5) Mobility: strength, balance, and walking ability. As we age, our ability to remain active and independent depends in large part on these abilities, as well as the environment around us. While there is not yet one test that measures overall intrinsic capacity, researchers are working to find ways to track these abilities over time and identify changes early to prevent further decline. I love the idea of measuring intrinsic capacity because it focuses on wellness and prevention rather than disease.

At The Lown Group, we have long recognized the importance of intrinsic capacity, and the ways in which it impacts both our "lifespan" and "healthspan". Lifespan is the number of years we live. Healthspan is the number of those years we live WELL—with independence, good function, and as little pain and disability as possible. For most of us, healthspan is far more important than simply adding years to our lives. For our Lown patients, our goal is not simply to help you live LONGER lives. It is to help you AGE WELL, preserving your physical and mental abilities for as long as possible.

In health and gratitude,

Dr. Dara Lee Lewis
Medical Director





Introducing our New Primary Care Provider: Dr. Gregg Furie, Joining December 2026!

Gregg Furie, MD, MHS graduated from Harvard Medical School in 2007 and completed residency training in Internal Medicine and Primary Care at the University of Pennsylvania. He was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar at the Yale School of Medicine, where he also received a Masters of Health Science degree. He is board certified in Internal Medicine and an Instructor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.
Dr. Furie's clinical interests include preventative medicine and chronic disease management informed by the most up-to-date scientific evidence. He believes deeply in a collaborative approach to clinical care, working closely with patients to help them achieve their health goals. His patients appreciate his thorough, compassionate, and attentive practice style.
Dr. Furie is a national expert on the health effects of climate change and environmentally sustainable healthcare delivery as well as a committed medical educator working with medical students and residents.
Outside of work, you can find Dr. Furie spending time with his wife and two children, in his woodshop or garden, or outside hiking, skiing, or sailing.

What We're Reading

Ikigai: Giving Every Day Meaning and Joy by Yukari Mitsuhashi



Every so often, a book offers a simple idea that stays with you long after you finish reading it. In *Ikigai: Giving Every Day Meaning and Joy*, Yukari Mitsuhashi explores the Japanese concept of ikigai—the people, activities, interests, and everyday moments that give our lives a sense of purpose. What I especially appreciated about the book is its reminder that purpose does not have to come from a great accomplishment or lifelong pursuit. It can be as simple as spending time with people we love, tending a garden, enjoying a favorite hobby, contributing to our community, or looking forward to a familiar morning routine.

As a cardiologist, I spend a great deal of time thinking about what helps people live longer, healthier lives. But longevity is not simply about adding years to life; it is also about finding meaning and enjoyment within those years. Mitsuhashi's reflections are a wonderful reminder to consider the parts of life that keep us engaged, connected, and looking forward to tomorrow. In a world that often encourages us to focus on what we should be doing next, Ikigai encourages us to appreciate what already makes our lives meaningful.

Readers interested in exploring the concept further may also enjoy *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* by Héctor García and Francesc Miralles. While Mitsuhashi's book takes a more personal and reflective approach to finding meaning in everyday life, García and Miralles place greater emphasis on longevity, lifestyle, and the habits associated with living a long and fulfilling life. Both offer valuable perspectives, but one may resonate more deeply depending on the reader—whether you are drawn to a thoughtful exploration of personal purpose or a broader look at the connection between purpose, lifestyle, and longevity. Either can be a wonderful starting point for reflecting on a question worth revisiting from time to time: **What gives my life meaning and joy?**

Book Review by:
Naomi Kenmotsu Rounds, MD
Cardiologist



Dr. Furie and Dr. Rounds are currently welcoming new patients. To learn more, please contact our enrollment team at 617-651-5950.

The Science of Sleep

Sleep is not simply time when the body and brain “shut down.” It is an active biological process essential for memory, mood, immune function, metabolic health, and cardiovascular health. Regularly sleeping less than 7 hours per night is associated with increased risks of numerous health conditions. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that adults obtain a goal of 7-9 hours of sleep per night.

Several habits can help protect sleep: maintain a consistent sleep and wake schedule, seek morning daylight and exercise regularly; limit caffeine later in the day and alcohol near bedtime; and keep the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.

Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) is strongly recommended as the first-line behavioral treatment for chronic insomnia and has been shown in numerous randomized trials to improve sleep quality, sleep onset, and nighttime awakenings. One evidence-based principle from CBT-I is particularly useful for nighttime awakenings. If your mind starts making tomorrow's to-do list at 2 a.m., don't engage with it. Keep a notepad beside your bed and briefly write down anything you are afraid you'll forget. Then remind yourself, “It's written down; I can deal with it tomorrow.” Even better, spend 10 minutes before bed writing down tomorrow's priorities and any unresolved concerns. This gives your brain a designated time for planning—and helps keep your bed a place for sleep, not problem-solving. If you remain awake and frustrated, get out of bed and do something quiet in dim light until you feel sleepy, then return to bed. This “stimulus control” approach helps reinforce the association between bed and sleep rather than bed and wakefulness.

When good sleep habits have been established and CBT-I has been completed but insomnia continues, it may be worth discussing possible underlying medical conditions with your physician. First, look for conditions that may be contributing to poor sleep. Obstructive sleep apnea can cause loud snoring, gasping or choking during sleep, morning headaches, and excessive daytime sleepiness. Restless legs syndrome causes an uncomfortable or “crawling” sensation in the legs, often accompanied by an urge to move them, particularly at night. Anxiety and depression can also contribute to persistent insomnia. If these conditions have been treated or ruled out, medication may be an option.

Sleep medications work in several different ways. Some reduce nighttime hyperarousal by calming the brain, while others help reinforce the body’s natural circadian sleep signal. A newer class of medications works differently: rather than broadly sedating the brain, they reduce the brain’s wakefulness signal, allowing sleep to occur more naturally.

Benzodiazepines are among the oldest sedative-hypnotic medications. They enhance the effects of GABA, the brain’s primary inhibitory neurotransmitter, thereby reducing hyperarousal.

Different benzodiazepines, Ativan and Xanax for example, vary in their degree of sedation, anxiety reduction, muscle relaxation, and duration of action. Although they can be effective in the short term, their use is limited by concerns about tolerance, dependence, cognitive impairment, and changes in normal sleep architecture, including reductions in deep and REM sleep.

Z-drugs, such as zolpidem (Ambien), also act through GABA receptors but are more specifically directed toward sleep. They can reduce the time it takes to fall asleep and increase total sleep time. Unlike benzodiazepines, they are not intended to treat anxiety. Potential risks include next-day impairment, memory problems, and unusual or complex sleep behaviors, such as sleepwalking.

Dual orexin receptor antagonists (DORAs) are a newer class of sleep medications. Rather than broadly sedating the brain, they block orexin, a chemical system that promotes wakefulness. By reducing this wakefulness signal, DORAs, such as Dayvigo and Quvivo, may allow the brain’s natural sleep processes to take over. They support healthy sleep architecture and have fewer cognitive effects than traditional sleep medications. Early research suggests that they may even help the brain clear harmful proteins like amyloid beta and tau.

Medication should complement—not replace—good sleep habits, treatment of underlying conditions, and CBT-I.

When medication is appropriate, the goal should be to use the lowest effective dose for the shortest appropriate duration.

Treat sleep as a health priority—not leftover time at the end of the day. If you’d like to talk more about your sleep, your primary care physician is the best person to connect with.

Lilian S. Mahrokhian, MD
Primary Care Physician

Harley A. Simeone, MD
Clinical Director of Primary Care





We’re Moving, December 2026!

The Lown Group will be relocating to a new, enhanced office space, conveniently located to better serve you and our growing practice.

New features

- State-of-the-art accredited testing
- Free covered parking
- Updated blood draw station
- Fully handicap accessible
- Outdoor space, walking trails, and café



