

know? A coffee."

Brenda Logan, manager of inpatient rehabilitation services at Enloe Medical Center, said Baxter-Wetmore has a passion for supporting people who undergo amputations. The hospital, Logan said, has worked with her to set up support group services, offering meeting space and guest speakers for four months out of the year.

There is a strong need in Butte County for peer support counseling for not only amputees, but also people who have suffered strokes or other life-altering events, Logan said. The shared experience between counselor and patient can help to foster a comfortable space to ask questions and confront challenges. Clinical experts are trained to help patients overcome physical and societal barriers but may not be as well versed in addressing psychological and emotional ones.

"It takes a village," Logan said. "We keep abreast of new techniques and things available to our patients, but that heart to heart is vital, and having somebody in your corner is really important."

The needs of those living with limb loss are myriad, Baxter-Wetmore said. Some patients isolate themselves in their homes and

Amputee outreach:

Next support group meeting: 1 p.m. Thursday (Sept. 19) at Kalico Kitchen, 2396 Esplanade

For more info, contact Shelly Baxter-Wetmore at 530-343-0005 or oneleglife2017@gmail.com.

may benefit from speaking with someone who also is living with limb loss. Others may not have insurance policies that will cover certain equipment, such as prosthetic limbs. Baxter-Wetmore's prosthetic leg, she said, cost \$38,000, and she had to convince her insurance company to get it covered.

The Camp Fire has also complicated matters. One fire survivor she knows recently underwent a leg amputation and is living in a motorhome in Paradise. Making such homes accessible, she said, could prove challenging for lower-income residents.

Baxter-Wetmore said she is aiming to serve as an advocate for her fellow amputees, offering help or pointing them toward the appropriate resources.

"It's a little bit of a different life, but I want people to know it's a good life," she said. "You can have a good life." □

WEEKLY DOSE

Sayonara, soda!

Those sugary sodas may be as bad as you suspected. A study published last week in JAMA Internal Medicine found that those who drank two or more glasses a day of sugar-sweetened soft drinks had a higher risk

of dying from digestive disorders, while those who drank the same amount of diet drinks had higher risks of dying from cardiovascular disease. The study followed more than 450,000 people from 10 European countries for up to 19 years, and none of the people had cancer, diabetes, heart disease or stroke before their participation. The heart of the matter seems to be something called "leaky gut." High blood sugar and high sugar intake impair your gut's immune system, altering the healthy microbes that prevent infection and intestinal inflammation. Researchers' advice: switch to healthier drinks—you know, like plain-old water.



HAVE LYME?

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Monthly Support Group

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