

“A friend in his 60s went for a battery of tests. . . .  
Never did they ask about his memory.”

ERIC HALL, Alzheimer's Foundation of America



Charles Marino, 97, answers questions on a memory test from Emma Sulejmani, a nursing student at William Paterson University, at an Alzheimer's screening yesterday.

# MEMORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

purposes or as a replacement for a consultation with a doctor.

“We believe that one needs a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation by a qualified physician, a thorough review of their medical history, a physical and neurological exam, as well as laboratory and imaging tests,” said Judith Julian, a spokeswoman for the Alzheimer’s Association’s Greater New Jersey Chapter. She added that her group, unlike the Alzheimer’s Foundation, does not endorse the community screenings, feeling the disease is just too “complex.”

Anyone who scored a 23 or less on the memory screening test was referred for further assessment to a physician by officials from Home-Care Options, the nonprofit agency that sponsored the Paterson screening. Nineteen of the 81 people were flagged for potential problems after taking the test, which was administered by nursing students from William Paterson University.

Josephine White, 79, of Wayne watched nervously as her score was tallied, and she spoke about how she likes to keep her mind active with crossword puzzles and reading. Although White admitted to sometimes forgetting what she is about to do, requiring her to pause and “go back and think about it,” the great-grandmother left with good news. Like Marino, she nearly aced the test.

“It makes me feel good,” she said.

Angela Stewart may be reached at [astewart@starledger.com](mailto:astewart@starledger.com) or (973) 392-4178.

# In this test, total recall is a relief

BY ANGELA STEWART  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

When Charles Marino was bused to the Paterson Museum from his adult day care center yesterday to undergo a memory screening test, he braced himself for the likelihood of being referred to a doctor for an Alzheimer’s evaluation.

After all, he is 97.

To his delight, Marino nearly aced the 10-minute exam, a widely used tool designed to help detect significant memory loss.

“George Bush,” he confidently blurted out when asked to name the president.

When instructed to count down from 100 by 7, Marino didn’t flinch, doing it five consecutive times before

he was asked to stop. And Marino had no problem repeating three words spoken to him by a nurse or following orders to fold a piece of paper in half and place it on the floor.

His mental status score: 29 out of a possible 30 points.

“I used to read a lot,” Marino later told a reporter, saying he especially was fond of sports biographies.

“I started at 8 years old,” added the Wayne resident, who ran a butcher shop with his father for many years before joining the produce department of a local supermarket, where he worked into his 70s.

Yesterday marked the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America’s sixth annual National Memory Screening Day, an observance that saw free tests like the one Mar-

ino took being offered at 2,200 sites across the country, including 50 in New Jersey. Coinciding with National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month, the initiative is aimed at promoting early detection of memory problems and encouraging timely intervention.

“Three months ago, a friend of mine in his 60s went for a whole battery of tests as part of a complete physical and they checked every part of his body,” said Eric Hall, the foundation’s president and CEO. “Never did they ask about his memory.”

An estimated 350,000 New Jersey residents — as well as their families — are affected by Alzheimer’s, a degenerative disease of the brain that causes a steady decline in memory. These memory screenings are strictly preliminary, however, and are not used for diagnostic

[See **MEMORY**, Page 21]