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health & life

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WELCOME LETTER

CELEBRATING THE SEASON

ANOTHER HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US, AND AT MONMOUTH Medical Center we have much to celebrate.

Monmouth Medical Center offers award-winning medical care, and 2016 was a very successful year that was highlighted by being among only eight hospitals in New Jersey to receive a four-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the highest hospital rating achieved in the state. This impressive rating is a reflection of the hard work, dedication and expertise of our entire team here at Monmouth.

Excellent care is something all patients expect and deserve. Hospitals work hard to achieve top ratings—it is not an easy goal to reach; it takes the knowledge, teamwork and dedication of the entire hospital staff. This hard work was also recently recognized with a number of other awards and designations, including:

- Monmouth Medical Center once again received an “A” Hospital Safety Score by The Leapfrog Group, the nation’s leading experts on patient safety. The “A” score was awarded in the October 31 update to the Hospital Safety scores assigned to U.S. hospitals based on preventable medical errors, injuries accidents and infections. In Monmouth County, Monmouth Medical Center is the only hospital to consistently receive an A rating.

- Additionally, the safety of our maternity service was recognized by Leapfrog, as Monmouth Medical Center was the only area hospital to fully meet every safety standard in all areas of maternity care. I’m very proud to say that the Leapfrog Group has validated what we have known for a very long time—our maternity services’ longstanding commitment to providing quality care is outstanding.

- Monmouth recently was named the Best Hospital in Monmouth County by the readers of *The Asbury Park Press*, and for a fourth consecutive year, the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at Monmouth Medical Center was also determined to be a “Best Of.” Our breast center was once again named a recipient of the Women’s Choice Award as one of America’s Best Breast Centers, acknowledging its dedication to providing exceptional patient care and treatment. We have earned this award for four consecutive years by having met the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) standards from the American College of Surgeons.

- In November, the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center completed a very successful 2017 NAPBC survey, with the surveyor praising our overall excellent program and dedicated staff and very patient-centered care. This prestigious certification recognizes the Wilentz Center for meeting all national standards for quality and safety for breast-cancer specific care.

It is enormously gratifying for me as president and chief executive officer to conclude this first year of my administration by celebrating our ongoing success. From the Monmouth Medical Center family to yours, I wish you the happiest of holiday seasons and the healthiest of new years.

BILL ARNOLD
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER AND THE
UNTERBERG CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL



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IN GOOD HEALTH

MEDICINE + TECHNOLOGY + PATIENT CARE AT MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER



Caring for the smallest, most fragile patients

MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER'S NICU TREATS
NEWBORNS WITH LIFE-THREATENING HEALTH ISSUES.

New beginnings

Alexander Broome (pictured with mother Ginessa) weighed 1 pound, 9.75 ounces when he was born at just 26 weeks in December 2015. During his three-month stay at the Monmouth Medical Center NICU, he required a ventilator and CPAP, experienced digestive problems and underwent hernia surgery. With help and support from the NICU staff, Alexander, his mother and father, Greg, overcame all of the hurdles they faced. The family stayed in the parent transition room on three occasions while Alexander was at MMC and can't say enough how important that was for them. Finally, on March 25, 2016—99 days after his birth and weighing 5 pounds, 3 ounces—Alexander was able to go home.



The Unterberg Children's Hospital team of neonatologists includes, from left, Carlos Alemany, M.D.; Diane Attardi, M.D.; Susan Hudome, M.D., medical director of the NICU; Kirby Rekedal, M.D.; Erin Qualter, M.D.; and Meera Kale, M.D.

A NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU) IS, ACCORDING TO Bonny Adler, MS, RNC-NIC, "a very busy place." She would know. As clinical director of the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation Regional Newborn Center, Monmouth Medical Center's NICU, Adler helps treat more than 500 of the hospital's tiniest and sickest patients a year. "These babies need constant monitoring and 24-hour care from a team of health care providers," Adler says, to treat conditions such as prematurity, low birth weight, acute life-threatening illnesses and congenital disorders, as well as for delicate surgeries.

This NICU was the first of its kind in New Jersey and among the first six offered at community hospitals nationally. Today, it remains among the best rated nationally, thanks to a combination of the most sophisticated technology and the expertise of a small army of highly trained caregivers.

That technology includes Giraffe Omnibed Isolettes, the most advanced technology available to monitor and control the babies' environment. They can serve as both a closed and open warming unit, says Susan Hudome, M.D., medical director of the NICU and chief of Neonatology. "We don't have to move the baby from an isolette to an open warmer if emergent procedures are needed. This is safer and less stressful for tiny, fragile infants," she says.

The NICU belongs to a national database called the Vermont Oxford Network, which helps track and improve outcomes. "The data allows us to assess and improve quality of care in real time, as advances in the field are implemented," Dr. Hudome says. "We remain consistently in the top quartile nationally for survival, and have lower complication rates than many comparable units."

The NICU, with the assistance of Michael's Feat, renovated its parent transition room to give it a homier feel. The Michael's Feat Parent Suite allows parents to spend the night with their newborn and assume the responsibility for the care of their child, including mastering any special equipment needed. The room was built with the main renovation but decorated and funded last Christmas by Michael's Feat, which previously decorated and supported the resource room in the main waiting area. "We use family-centered care that provides open visiting hours, which offer many opportunities for families to bond with the baby and prepare for the day when he or she can go home," Adler says.

JOINING THE TEAM

The department recently added two new neonatologists. Meera Kale, M.D., attended medical school in India and completed her pediatric residency at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn. She then did fellowship training in neonatology at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital. Erin Qualter, M.D., graduated from Albany Medical College, completed her residency in pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Center then did her fellowship in neonatology at Mount Sinai Hospital. "These doctors have been trained specifically to handle the most complex and high-risk situations and are a great addition to the NICU team," Adler says.



Erin Qualter, M.D. Meera Kale, M.D.

Dr. Kale had worked at Monmouth Medical Center part time before joining the staff full time in January 2016. Dr. Qualter also has a master's degree in nursing.

Not only do Dr. Kale and Dr. Qualter add more hands on deck as the practice grows in scope and in coverage, "people just out of training can help bring new ideas and help us grow," Dr. Hudome says.

Physicians, though, are only part of the equation when it comes to caring for premature babies. "It takes more than just one doctor or nurse," Adler says. "It takes a team of neonatologists, nurse practitioners, nurses, respiratory therapists, social workers and case managers who draw on their experience, advanced skills and compassion to provide the best care possible to the smallest patients."





John DiDomenico and hematologist oncologist Seth Cohen, M.D., medical director of Oncology Clinical Research and Outpatient Infusion for the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center

AGAINST ALL ODDS

AN OCEANPORT RESIDENT DIAGNOSED WITH STAGE IV PANCREATIC CANCER IS SPREADING A MESSAGE OF HOPE.

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF PATIENTS HAD NEVER HEARD of pancreatic cancer before their own diagnosis, according to Pancreatic Cancer Action, and half the population cannot name a single symptom of the disease. Monmouth Medical Center, a leader in cancer care, urges everyone to know the symptoms and risks.

When John DiDomenico was diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer two years ago, he knew the odds were against him: this disease is one of the deadliest types of cancer.

But thanks to a rigorous regimen of chemotherapy and what John sees as the unique abilities of his Monmouth Medical Center oncologist, the 63-year-old Oceanport resident today considers himself a “1 percenter”—among the small group of people still alive more than two years after an inoperable pancreatic cancer diagnosis. As such, he has set out to spread the message that a diagnosis of late-stage pancreatic cancer is not necessarily a death sentence.

“It’s my mission to provide hope to others with this disease that are face to face with this very bleak prognosis,” he says, noting that the typical life expectancy following a stage IV pancreatic cancer diagnosis is six months. He is also looking to spread the word that it isn’t necessary to travel to New York City or other far-off destinations for the very best cancer care—there is no special sauce, John says. He credits his remarkable survival to his hematologist oncologist Seth Cohen, M.D., medical director of Oncology Clinical

Research and Outpatient Infusion for the Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center, as well as the staff of oncology nurses at the Monmouth Vantage Point infusion center, or his “angels,” as he calls them.

Currently, Dr. Cohen is a principal investigator of numerous clinical trials of various tumor types at Monmouth Medical Center. “Seth utilizes a scientific approach, along with a heavy measure of the human touch,” John says. “My goal is to give people who have a similar diagnosis hope that survival is an option. Dr. Cohen has the ability to stand toe-to-toe with anyone treating pancreatic cancer. I really want to spread the word that there is someone right here in our community with an attention and feel for the management of pancreatic cancer. Hope is there for me, and it can be for others as well.”

Noting that he was originally referred to Dr. Cohen by his primary care physician, Jeffrey Felzenberg, M.D., for hematology care after suffering a pulmonary embolism in 2011, John says a Thanksgiving 2014 visit to Monmouth Medical Center’s Emergency Department for very sharp pain in his lower right back revealed the diagnosis of a pancreatic tumor. After seeking opinions at two New York hospitals, he decided to come back to Monmouth and Dr. Cohen.

“I felt very comfortable with Seth,” he says. “Yes, pancreatic cancer is deadly, but he is able to manage a very ferocious disease—and his level of success is real. I want others to know that there

is hope, there is someone right here in our community who is as proficient as anyone treating pancreatic cancer. There is a lot of hope based on results created here, and I want to offer myself as an example of what can be done.”

John’s wife, Annie, concurred – adding that at their initial visit with Dr. Cohen, he never said anything about having six months to live. “He said we are not going to talk about life expectancy and urged us not to go online and look at the statistics,” Annie says. “Seth has always been John’s personal cheerleader—there were days where he would feel defeated, but if he had a visit with him, he would leave feeling so uplifted.”

It is estimated that 41,780 people in the U.S. (21,450 men and 20,330 women) will have died from pancreatic cancer by the end of the year. It is a disease that is often difficult to diagnose because there are no specific, cost-effective tests that can easily and reliably find early-stage pancreatic cancer in people who have no symptoms. This means it is often not found until stage IV, when the cancer can no longer be removed with surgery and has spread from the pancreas to other parts of the body.

John is fighting hard against this aggressive disease that has seen him admitted to Monmouth Medical Center’s ICU three times, and in addition to Dr. Cohen, points to the hospital’s outstanding nursing care and the additional medical care he has received from Dr. Felzenberg and Ben Terrany, M.D., a gastroenterologist.

John emphasizes that because the message surrounding pancreatic cancer is so negative, the psychological component and family advocacy are essential to keeping people with pancreatic cancer alive. “I have a great family who is so supportive of me,” he says, pointing to his family, which includes: Annie, his wife of 42 years; Gabriella, his 33-year-old daughter, her husband, Tim, and their 3-year-old daughter Lucia Susanna; John, his 29-year-old son, and his girlfriend Cora; and Timeo, his 20-year-old son. “It is so much easier on them as well as me to have this treatment close to home. Quality moments spent with them are priceless.”

“Dr. Cohen knows how to ground the psychological with the physical. Cancer patients today are looking for someone with a deeper understanding of what science and technology have always brought to the human condition, and there is someone right here who truly understands this,” John says.

In addition to raising hope, John is eager to use his story to raise awareness of the need for data sharing, fundraising for the small group of patients surviving with advanced pancreatic cancer and funding for research into a cure.

“There are not a lot of solutions, and finding solutions will only come through a sharper attention, and money,” he says. “I will do anything I can to help raise awareness—I want charitable value to come from this.”

A LEADER IN CANCER CARE

The Leon Hess Cancer Center at Monmouth Medical Center stands at the forefront of providing the most extensive array of highly advanced cancer services, delivered by a multidisciplinary team of specialists in a caring and supportive environment.

For decades, Monmouth Medical Center’s leadership role in oncology services has been broadened through the ongoing expansion of state-of-the-art programs and technologies offered in all areas of cancer prevention, detection and treatment. The Leon Hess Center brings together a host of specialists in a convenient setting to offer comprehensive cancer services. Monmouth Medical Center is accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons as a “teaching hospital cancer center”—the group’s highest designation.

Treating cancer through the use of chemicals, hormones or biological products is the focus of medical oncology. At the Leon Hess Center, these cancer-fighting medications and therapies are delivered by medical oncologists during the complete course of treatment. Many times, they also direct patients through the pathways of the entire cancer experience, providing supportive care and coordinating treatment offered by other specialists as part of the center’s interdisciplinary approach to cancer care.

Monmouth Medical Center’s board-certified medical oncologists are experienced in every phase of cancer treatment management, including planning, coordination and collaboration. They work closely with radiation oncologists and surgical oncologists to ensure patients receive the most effective treatment—whether it involves one or more cancer therapies, given simultaneously or concurrently.

In addition, the hospital’s medical oncologists are supported by highly skilled nurses and other allied health professionals in both outpatient and inpatient settings to provide individualized care that meets the medical, physical and psychological needs of patients before, during and after treatment. They offer patients the convenience of a private pharmacist on site, patient navigator and social workers, as well as access to the latest clinical trials and personalized medicine that is based on genetic-based therapy that allows physicians to choose highly targeted treatment plans.

The Leon Hess Center provides patient-focused outpatient chemotherapy, infusion and transfusion services through the Oncology Day Stay Unit at Monmouth Medical Center and satellite infusion centers located in West Long Branch and Lakewood. Staffed by chemotherapy-certified oncology registered nurses, the units provide a comfortable setting for outpatient chemotherapy and various procedures as ordered by the physician. Laboratory testing and other services are performed as patients rest in comfortable recliners and CBC (complete blood count) tests are performed by the hospital’s state-of-the-art laboratory. A host of other services are also provided for non-oncology as well as oncology patients, including blood and platelet transfusions, IV hydration, iron infusions, colony stimulating factors, lab services, blood draws, central line maintenance and bone marrow biopsy.

To learn more, visit mmccancer.com.

Living through giving

LIFE-ALTERING TRAGEDIES INSPIRE ONE WOMAN'S GIFTS FOR THE FUTURE.

AS CHAIR OF THE CRANMER LEGACY SOCIETY AT MONMOUTH Medical Center, Karen Siciliano is on a mission to educate people about something near and dear to her heart: planned giving. The successful Long Branch businesswoman was inspired to take on this cause after experiencing two life-changing events:



Karen Siciliano

First, Karen's mother was just 60 years old when she lost her life to breast cancer after a misdiagnosis. Karen believes that if Monmouth Medical Center's Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center had existed then, her mother's fate might have been different.

A few years later, September 11 happened. At the time, Karen was putting in her 18th year as a successful Wall Street broker. For her, like many others in the region, the tragic event had a personal impact and forever changed Karen's outlook on life. She lost 26 friends that day, many of whom worked in the World Trade Center at Cantor Fitzgerald. Karen tried to return to work one week after the terrorist attacks, but the "sights and sounds were raw." Ultimately, she resigned.

After a period of soul-searching, Karen landed on her feet and decided it was time to pursue something she contemplated six months before—running her family's Red Bank-based business, Siciliano Landscape Company, L.L.C.

New outlook on life

The combination of tragic events reminded Karen of how fleeting life can be and led her to Monmouth Medical Center.

"I wanted to establish a legacy for my mother by contributing to the Wilentz Center," she says. "By doing so, I keep her spirit alive through the breast center.

"After going through these tough life experiences, I learned that there's no better time than now to plan your legacy gift," she

adds. "Many of the friends I lost on 9/11 did not have wills. It became important to me to put into writing where I wanted my assets to go when I'm no longer here. Through planned giving, I can take matters into my own hands. My planned gift will provide for everything and everyone that's important to me."

Karen says that planned giving is one of the most painless ways to give. "It's an IOU that puts money into purposeful use after your passing and leaves the world a better place," she says.

"ONCE YOU SEE FIRSTHAND HOW YOUR GIFT TOUCHES THE LIVES OF OTHERS, IT'S A REWARD IN ITSELF."

—KAREN SICILIANO

'Responsibility to contribute'

As owner and president of Siciliano Landscape Company, a third-generation family business, giving back is part of the company's DNA. The business regularly supports fund-raising events to benefit Monmouth Medical Center's programs and services, including donating a garden at the breast center.

In addition to her role with the Cranmer Legacy Society, Karen also serves on the Board of Trustees of Monmouth Medical Center and is a Monmouth Medical Center Foundation Advisory Board member.

"As members of the community, we have a responsibility to contribute. Monmouth Medical Center's specialized services for women and children fuel my passion," she says.



TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER, VISIT BARNABASHEALTH.ORG/MONMOUTH. TO SHARE THIS ARTICLE WITH A FRIEND OR TO RECOMMEND IT ON YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE, VISIT MONMOUTHHEALTHANDLIFE.COM.



HIGHLIGHTING BREAST HEALTH AWARENESS



DURING BEST OF MONMOUTH, Monmouth Medical Center Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center breast surgeon, Sumy Chang, M.D., and patient navigator, Erin Dooley, answered attendees' questions about breast health and breast cancer.

One in eight women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. The Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at Monmouth Medical Center was established in 1994 to provide patients with clinically excellent and compassionate care in a supportive and comfortable setting that provides the very best in breast cancer detection and treatment. In 2010, the Wilentz Breast Center became the state's first Certified Quality Comprehensive Breast Center of Excellence.

In 2016, The Wilentz Center received the coveted Women's Choice Award as one of America's best breast centers for the fourth consecutive year. The Women's Choice Award helps women and their families by providing recommendations they can trust when making health care choices. Recommendations are the single most important consideration used by women in selecting a hospital or care center, and when women know which breast

centers in their area are among America's best, they can make better decisions and smarter healthcare choices.

The Wilentz Breast Center earned the Women's Choice Award by having met the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) standards from the American College of Surgeons. As one of America's Best Breast Centers, the Wilentz Breast Center also carries the Seal of the American College of Radiologists as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence, and scored above-average on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services patient satisfaction measures.

To learn more, visit www.monmouthwilentzbreastcenter.com.

» Beginning January 2017, Monmouth's Pediatric Emergency Department will be expanding to 24-hour, 7-day/week coverage.

» Monmouth is the only hospital in the region to offer Makoplasty robotic surgery for partial knee and total joint replacement and will soon be the first to introduce robotic total knee replacement surgery.

MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

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