

Monmouth

HEALTH & LIFE

JUNE/JULY 2023 | \$6.95 | MONMOUTHHEALTHANDLIFE.COM | VOLUME 21 ISSUE 3

SUMMER SCENES

FUN'S ON DECK
TAKE YOUR PATIO PARTY
FROM GOOD TO GREAT

LIFE'S A BEACH
WHAT'S NEW
ALONG THE SHORE?

YOUR GUIDE TO
THE GREAT OUTDOORS



**SAND
&
SURF**
at
Monmouth
Beach

Exceeding The Standard For High- Quality Care

I am so very proud that both Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and our Southern Campus hospital in Lakewood have achieved “A” ratings in the Spring 2023 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade. For MMC, it is the 17th consecutive “A,” the longest “A” streak in our region.

It is our responsibility to deliver the safest, most high-quality care to our patients every day. These increasingly difficult to earn “A” ratings are a testament to the unwavering commitment our physicians and staff demonstrate daily to consistently deliver the very best and safest care. Each rating period The Leapfrog Group raises the bar to obtain an “A” grade, and as they raise that bar, we rise up to meet it.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. For me, the Leapfrog “A” is the most important quality recognition in health care, as it is not based on reputation or survey data, but is truly about outcomes. The Leapfrog Group tells communities more about things like how well their hospitals prevent infections and encourages handwashing, how much they value patient safety by supporting strong health care teams and if they have protocols and standards in place for preventing errors. Its letter grades are an easy way for consumers to choose the safest hospital to seek care and have quickly become the gold standard measure of patient safety.

These “A” grades are truly reflective of the ability of both campuses to maintain the safest care. Our hospitals’ “A” grades demonstrate the commitment and intentional focus on safety and quality by all of our caregivers and recognize the high-quality care we deliver to our patients and their families every day.



ERIC CARNEY
President and Chief Executive Officer
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER
AND MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER
SOUTHERN CAMPUS



{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

MONMOUTH HEART AND VASCULAR SETS GOLD STANDARD

The Eatontown facility receives international Vein Center accreditation for high-quality patient care.

Monmouth Heart and Vascular Specialists has been designated an Accredited Vein Center, an achievement few centers treating venous disease have reached. An RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group interdisciplinary cardiology and vascular surgery practice located in Eatontown, Monmouth Heart and Vascular is accredited by the IAC as both a Non-Invasive Vascular Lab and a Vein Center, setting the gold standard in vascular imaging and treatment of venous diseases.

Accreditation by IAC shows that the Vein Center has undergone an intensive application and review process, demonstrating a commitment to quality patient care in the management and treatment of patients with venous disease, ranging from varicose and spider veins to treatment of deep venous thrombosis and wounds related to venous disease. IAC, the leading accreditation entity, sets standards of care and accreditation pathways for vascular testing, management and treatment of venous disease, and non-invasive cardiac testing, all of which have now been achieved by the Monmouth Heart and Vascular Group.

"We have the ability to provide both non-invasive diagnostic testing and minimally invasive treatment in our outpatient Vein Center. Our vein program includes a customized approach to each patient, improving efficiency, patient satisfaction and, most importantly, patient outcomes," says Randy Shafritz, M.D., FACS, Chief of Vascular Surgery at Monmouth Medical Center. "This new accreditation assures patients that our Vein Center is dedicated to delivering high-quality patient care that meets the standards of a center of excellence."

Monmouth Heart and Vascular provides



Monmouth Heart and Vascular surgeons Randy Shafritz, M.D., right, and Adam Sagarwala, D.O.

a wide range of therapies to treat the vast scope of vascular conditions with a multidisciplinary team that works collaboratively to determine individualized treatment plans for each patient. Monmouth's vascular specialists offer expertise in the combined use of endovascular and open surgical techniques in treating patients with abdominal/thoracic aortic aneurysms (AAA, TAA), carotid arterial disease, mesenteric arterial/venous vascular disease, peripheral artery disease (PAD), advanced renal disease (including compre-

hensive hemodialysis access procedures and maintenance), venous insufficiency, venous outlet obstruction, deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and varicose veins.

Monmouth Heart and Vascular Specialists state-of-the-art facility, located on Route 35 in Eatontown, provides easily accessible, compassionate and comprehensive cardiovascular care and connects the community with renowned RWJBarnabas Health cardiac surgeons who utilize innovative approaches to care and the latest technology.



To learn more about Monmouth Heart and Vascular, call 732.440.7336.

Welcome to the Joel Opatu Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation

Phase 3 - Maintenance Program



Michael Reid is shown with Cardiac Rehabilitation RN's, from left, Trever Ralph, Anne Nives and Mallory Collins.

TAKING HIS OWN HEALTH TO HEART

After his younger brother suffered a heart attack, a Shark River Hills man improves his cardiac health after receiving treatment at Monmouth Medical Center.

June is National Men's Health Month, an observance created to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of diseases such as heart disease, cancer and depression.

For Shark River Hills resident Michael Reid, it was heart disease awareness raised by his younger brother's heart attack at age 48 and encouragement from his middle brother that led him to see a doctor about his own heart health. "My doctor sent me to Monmouth Medical Center for a cardiac CT scan, which showed a 94 percent blockage in one coronary artery, and percent blockage in two other arteries."

A restaurant general manager for more than 30 years, Reid, 57, underwent a cardiac catheterization at Monmouth Medical Center's (MMC) sister hospital, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick on July 7, where a stent was placed to open the blockage. He then turned to MMC's Joel Opatut Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Program, which is designed for individuals recovering from heart and lung disease.

Complicating his recovery was his November 21st long COVID diagnosis, which caused chronic fatigue as well as vision, hearing and short-term memory loss. "Long COVID is very serious—I was sleeping 12 hours a day and had to really push myself to get out of bed," he says. "Now, thanks to the kind, dedicated and caring staff at Mon-

mouth Medical Center, I am getting my life back."

"These people really care about you—some people just go through the motions, but here they know everyone by name and they truly care about every patient," he adds. "They are so extraordinarily kind; I know I have memory issues, and they are so patient and listen to my stories over and over."

The Joel Opatut Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Program is the first program in Monmouth County to be certified for both cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation. Certification recognizes that programs reviewed by the national AACVPR board meet the highest standards of care, including a therapeutic plan, intervention and evaluation, certification of staff, prepared-

ness for medical emergencies and physician involvement, explains RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group cardiologist Ajay Shah, M.D., Medical Director of Cardiac Rehab.

"The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at Monmouth Medical Center is designed for individuals like Mr. Reid who are recovering from heart disease, as well as individuals who wish to improve their cardiac health through disease prevention and health promotion," he says. "Through education, exercise and counseling, participants receive instruction to prevent or decrease risk factors for developing heart disease."

For Reid, the benefits of the program include significant weight loss and gain in strength.

"A year and a half ago, I weighed 342 pounds, and now I'm down to 238," he says. "I have seen unbelievable improvement; when I first joined the program I started by lifting 5 pound weights, and now I am lifting 40 pound weights and doing an hour of cardio training every day."

And to give back and help raise awareness of the debilitating effects of Long COVID, he volunteers with Pause to Thrive, an organization MMC has partnered with for more than two years on the wellness retreats offered free to those in the community coping with long-term effects of COVID-19. Reid serves as a mentor to assist Pause to Thrive's goal of providing individuals an opportunity to personally take charge of their health and move forward after experiencing physical and mental health challenges from illness and disease, a role he unofficially holds at MMC as well.

"I give pep talks to encourage other patients," he says. "Everyone needs positive reinforcement, and we can all use help and encouragement, which is something I get every day at Monmouth Medical Center."

Did you know?

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for men and women, taking the lives of nearly a half million people each year. Twenty-five percent of the U.S. population has one or more types of cardiovascular disease. This includes high blood pressure, which affects 50 million Americans. Approximately 4.6 million Americans have a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, with 400,000 new cases occurring annually.



Ajay Shah, M.D.



For more information about the Joel Opatut Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center or to schedule an appointment, call 732.923.7454. For a referral to an MMC cardiologist, call 732.440.7336.

{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

GREAT TEAM, GREAT OUTCOMES

With a little help from A+ patient reviews, the chair of the Department of Surgery at Monmouth Medical Center explains why patient satisfaction and outcomes are paramount.



The MMC Surgical Services team earns consistent five-star Google reviews for outstanding care.

Year after year, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) is proud to receive an “A” grade from The Leapfrog Group Hospital Safety rating. But the hospital is also the recipient of many accolades from the community it serves, particularly surgical patients who have great experiences because of MMC’s Surgical Services’ team, which emphasizes top-notch, personalized and research-based surgical care.

MMC’s team of 140 surgeons is led by RWJBarmabas Health Medical Group surgeon Dmitry Oleynikov, M.D., Chair of the Department of Surgery at Monmouth Medical Center since 2020. “Monmouth Medical Center is one of the oldest surgical residencies in the state of New Jersey,”

he says. “We have a culture of academic learning and improvement. Our Department of Surgery can perform cutting-edge procedures in a safe way to focus on patient outcomes and safety.”

In fact, MMC utilizes technologically advanced systems for surgeries across all disciplines—performing primarily robotic and laparoscopic procedures, which require only small incisions—and applies cutting-edge technology to tackle the most difficult clinical cases. “One of the areas where we’ve done really well is the entire operating room experience,” Dr. Oleynikov says. “The nurses, anesthesiologists and surgeons are all focused on getting it right every time, and caring for patients with the utmost care.”

Says one recent patient of their surgical experience at MMC: “My preoperative team and post-operative staff were exceptional in treating me with dignity and professionalism.” Dr. Oleynikov emphasizes that this team effort is a major part of MMC’s patient satisfaction rates. “I can’t underscore how important it is to have that team approach, because that’s what ensures the safety of our patients,” he says. “That’s my greatest source of pride and joy at MMC.”

Another pleased patient shares, “I can’t state enough how amazing the entire staff was. Every single nurse and staff member couldn’t have been nicer, caring or more pleasant. I’m still amazed at the great



To learn more about the Monmouth Medical Center Department of Surgery, call 732.222.5200 or visit rwjbh.org/monmouth-medical-center/treatment-care/surgery/.



**Monmouth Medical Center Chair of Surgery
Dmitry Oleynikov, M.D.**

“listens to my patients’ wants and desires and really impresses upon them that the surgery is a journey we’ll take together,” he says. A recent hernia repair patient knows this firsthand, recently sharing: “Dr. Oleynikov took the time to thoroughly explain the procedure and made me feel extremely comfortable,” he says. “The surgery went off without a hitch, and any residual soreness was gone in a few days.”

Again, Dr. Oleynikov credits MMC’s success to the surgical team as a whole. “Nobody wants to stand in line at the Post Office and have a grumpy person at the end of the line,” he laughs. “A nice experience is extra important in medicine, and we have a systemic approach to really personalize the patient experience, whether they’re my patient or a patient of the 140 surgeons in my department.”

treatment I got at Monmouth Medical Center.”

At MMC, there’s no such thing as “general surgery.” Dr. Oleynikov notes that the physicians treat each case as part of a specialty surgical group, whether you’re getting an operation to repair a hernia, surgery as part of cancer treatment or to treat gastrointestinal disorders at the Comprehensive GI Motility and Reflux Program. As a result, many of MMC’s nurses are specialized just as the surgeons are and work within “nursing pods” in the operating room to provide care for each discipline. “Our baby had surgery here,” says “K.G.” of the Pediatrics Department. “The surgeon, anesthesiologist and nurses were amazing!”

To streamline the surgical process, Dr. Oleynikov notes that MMC employs surgical liaisons, in addition to clinic team members, to help patients navigate the process. “Everything is integrated, from scheduling to the pre-op calls to the day of surgery,” he says. “All of these pathways are really thought out, so the process is seamless.”

Depending on the procedure, surgery will either be performed in the main OR or in the hospital’s Cranmer Ambulatory Surgery Center. “You walk in, you get surgery, and you go home a couple hours later,” Dr. Oleynikov says. “Very few places in the Northeast can say that they can do advanced robotic surgery in an outpatient setting, including procedures such as hernia repair.”

Dr. Oleynikov describes his bedside manner as that of an experienced physician who



Kellie Graf receives her DAISY award from Lauren Fleming, Magnet Program Director.

GRAF EARNS DAISY AWARD FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE

Kellie Graf, MSN, RN, CPAN, Director of Clinical Care for Surgical Day Stay, Preadmission Testing and Pediatric Procedural Sedation—a member of Monmouth Medical Center’s (MMC) Perioperative Services leadership team—has been honored with the quarterly DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. In nominating Graf, her colleagues submitted a nomination that included these comments:

- “Kellie is such a vital part of the Perioperative leadership team and organization. Her hard work, dedication, and leadership skills are extraordinary. She has such a positivity about her—she models this behavior for her team.”

- “Kellie is courteous, respectful, and communicates professionally to everyone she interacts with within the organization. She puts the safety of the patients first and promotes professionalism in all she does. It is an honor to work with Kellie and her dedication and commitment to her staff, peers and this organization is unmatched.”

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Foundation was formed by the family of Patrick Barnes who died at age 33 of complications of idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), an auto-immune disease. His widow, Tena, (a DAISY Co-founder) created the acronym and the Foundation, and established the DAISY Recognition Program to honor the work nurses do every day at the bedside.