

nicu Family News



The NICU Family News is produced by the Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Family Advisory Council (FAC). It is designed to provide you with information we hope you will find useful during and after your family's stay in the NICU.

DID YOU KNOW...

... over 2 million germs can live on your cell phone/camera at any one time. Always gel or wash your hands after touching your phone or any electronic device in or near the NICU.

■ ■ Saint Barnabas Medical Center
■ ■ Barnabas Health

The SBMC NICU is now on Facebook
www.facebook.com/SBMCNICU



94 Old Short Hills Road, Livingston, NJ 07039
1-888-724-7123 barnabashealth.org/sbmc

Spring Time Activities

After this long, snowy winter our graduate NICU parents are very much looking forward to being outside with the kids. They have some recommendations of some of their favorite parks with playgrounds and some other things to do outside this spring for little ones of all ages. For more info on these and other NJ parks go to www.njplaygrounds.com.

Favorite Parks with Playgrounds:

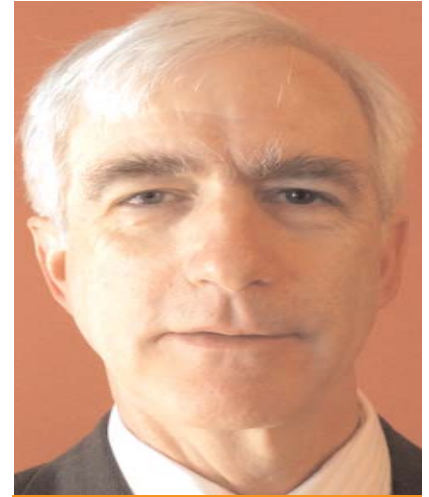
- **Gardner Field** (Denville) - great for big and little kids; fenced in
- **Little Sports Court** (Livingston) - great for real little ones; partly shaded sandbox
- **Nomahegan Park** (Cranford) - parents love the tree-shaded playground on hot days
- **Ponderosa Farms Park** (Scotch Plains)-lots to do, just opened June 2012
- **Shunpike Castle Playground** (Chatham) - lots to climb; swings too
- **Snyder Avenue (Spray) Park** (Berkeley Heights) - yes there is seasonal "spray" here too
- **Verona Park** (Verona) - great playground and pond for paddle boating; home of the SBMC Miracle Walk to benefit the NICU each fall

More To Do Outside this Spring:

- **Branch Brook Park Cherry Blossom Festival** (Newark) April 5-13: Free concerts and performances, runs, kids run/walk, bike race, trolley tours, and a poster contest for older kids (www.essexcherryblossom.com)
- **Trailside Nature and Science Center** (Watchung Reservation): Admission to the center, playgrounds, horse stables, and hiking are all free, but kids' workshops have some fees
- **Williams Nursery** (Westfield): Has an Easter egg hunt and pictures with the Easter Bunny each year (908-232-4076)
- **Essex County Environmental Center** (At Eagle Rock Reservation): Has ongoing events throughout the year (some charge a small fee per child).
- **Van Saun Park** (Paramus): Lots of picnic, playground and sprayground space. Across the street they also have a nice small scale zoo where children can explore the animals up close. There is also a train and a carousel for the children to ride (some fees)
- **Turtle Back Zoo** (West Orange): Many up close animal exhibits for kids of all ages to enjoy and learn (everything from sea lions to wolves). Also has a carousel, train, pony rides, and playground (some fees).

Interview With: Kerry Scott Bergman, MD, FACS, FAAP Director of Pediatric Surgery at SBMC

Dr. Bergman has been on staff and working in the NICU for more than 15 years.



Dr. Bergman

Q: What are the criteria for you to be called in to see a baby in our NICU?

A: The Pediatric Surgeon is asked to see any baby with a known or suspected problem that might require some kind of surgery. This includes complicated congenital malformations, such as part of the esophagus or intestines missing, lung cysts, holes in the diaphragm and many others. More commonly, premature infants will have a groin hernia, which would be fixed prior to discharge. Some babies develop problems with the intestines from infection or perforation, and many require one or more operations to repair the damage.

Q: What kinds of conditions do you see and/or are common to the premature population? What is the treatment for them?

A: Inguinal hernia is the most common problem, but we also treat intestinal problems, patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) that fails to respond to medical treatment, as well as the many congenital anomalies that may affect the preterm infant as well as the term baby.

Q: Why did you become a pediatric surgeon to begin with?

A: Pediatric Surgery is the last trace of General Surgery. We perform abdominal and chest operations, we take care of children with head and neck problems, and we are involved in the treatment of children with cancer. We have patients from infancy to teen years, and see a huge spectrum of congenital and acquired diseases.

Q: What do you like most about working with the patients and /or families in the NICU?

A: The hours we spend caring for these babies is paid back many times over by the years of quality life we can provide. Many of the problems we now routinely treat were deadly only a few decades ago. Working together with the Neonatologists and the NICU nurses, we provide care that insures a meaningful, long term outcome.

Q: Have you seen any beneficial changes in the NICU since you have worked here?

A: The most striking thing is in the technology. The change in ventilator techniques, the use of inhaled nitric oxide, and the improvements in non-invasive respiratory support have reduced the incidence of chronic lung disease in even the most premature infant. And, when I started my training, there weren't even any pulse oximeters, tools we consider standard for every baby in the NICU today.

Q: Do you have any suggestions or advice for NICU families?

A: Listen, and ask questions. We understand that you don't always hear everything we say, as it can often be overwhelming. And we know that no parent wants to meet the Pediatric Surgeon, but we are here to help your child, if needed.

Save-The-Date
14th Annual Miracle Walk
To Benefit the SBMC NICU

**Sunday,
October 5, 2014**

Verona Park, Verona, NJ

To learn more or register:

MIRACLEWALK.COM ■ 973-322-4259
FACEBOOK.COM/MIRACLEWALK

Our Experiences with the Pediatric Surgeon, Dr. Bergman

Dr. Bergman is a hero to our family. If you ask my daughter Lily what the scars on her stomach and back are from she will tell you that they are from when she had to "fight the dragons". And then she will tell you how Dr. Bergman fought them with her!

The first time I met Dr. Bergman I was just coming out of general anesthesia after an emergency c-section. I was very out of it, and was trying to grasp the fact that my daughter was born, two months early, and that she needed surgery right away.

Dr. Bergman explained the situation to me in a very matter of fact way, and used basic terms. I remember him saying, "It's all plumbing, we will fix it". I'm not sure how anyone could be reassuring at such a time, but Dr. Bergman was. Even then, at such a difficult moment I was confident that Lily was in good hands.

Dr. Bergman has a very friendly and forthright manner. I trusted him from day one because he spoke with us, and not at us. While in the NICU, I never felt like I had to look for him, he was always there when something was going on, always ready to explain things, answer questions and offer a variety of analogies to help me understand the issue of the moment. He was patient and kind, yet never sugar coated anything. He explained things in as understandable a way as possible and never seemed to mind the repeated questions. He made drawings to help us understand. And then he made them again to help our families understand.

As Lily got older, I became even more indebted to Dr. Bergman because he has such a great manner with her as well. This was very important as she continued to need tests and surgeries throughout her first couple of years.

Being in the NICU with your baby/ies is undeniably one of the toughest things that many of us will have to face. It seems as if there is a constant stream of "stuff" thrown at you- new people, scary medical terms, noisy machines etc. Having a healthcare team that I was comfortable with, confident in and felt welcome as a part of, made things bearable for my family and me. Dr. Bergman was a key part of our healthcare team and our family will forever be grateful for all that he did to help us make our way through that most challenging of times.



Lily and Dr. Bergman catching up at Miracle Walk!

- Erin R.

At 11 weeks pregnant we learned that our son, Tiernan, had an omphalocele and would be born with one or more organs in a sac outside his abdominal wall. As a result, after birth Tiernan required surgery. And that is how we came to know Dr. Kerry Bergman. Not a meeting we would have chosen, if given the option, but one that we are thankful for every single day since the birth of our little guy.

Todd, my husband, and I first met Dr. Bergman during a consultation when I was 18-19 weeks pregnant. At that time, we were still quite unsure about the nature of Tiernan's abdominal wall defect and its implications for his future health. However, during our consultation with Dr. Bergman he did three things that made us immediately comfortable with him. First, he asked us if we had chosen a name for

our son and from that point on referred to Tiernan only by name (with a slight variation once or twice before Tiernan's birth). Second, he seemed very sure of himself. There are a number of professions for which you want a person that is beyond everyday confident and surgeon is definitely one of them, especially a pediatric surgeon who is going to have the life of your newborn in his hands. Third, he provided me with two phone numbers. He gave me his cell phone number so I could text him when I went into labor and he provided me with the phone number of a mother of a former patient who I could call to ask questions. Knowing that our son's health was important enough to him to want us to contact him ourselves was reassuring. And so was speaking with someone who had been through it before from my same position.

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Important Phone Numbers:

NICU
973-322-5300

NICU Step-down (3100)
973-322-5310

NICU Nurse Manager
973-322-8938

NICU Social Workers
973-322-5503 or 8408

NICU Case Managers
973-322-2045
973-322-2678

Birth Certificate Office
973-322-5327

Lactation Consultants
973-322-5684

NICU High Risk Infant
Follow-Up Program
973-322-2631

Want to Help the Family Advisory Council?

The FAC is made up of graduate parents dedicated to helping new NICU parents. We meet monthly to discuss ways to do this. We're always looking for recent graduate parents to share their experiences and ideas to make our NICU the best it can be. We welcome your ideas and participation. Contacts:

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973-322-5453

Hayley Hirschmann
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973-322-5453

Our Experiences... (continued)

We didn't see Dr. Bergman again until the morning Tiernan was born. Although somehow, magically, he popped back into our life the afternoon my labor began. While at work I received a text out of nowhere from Dr. Bergman asking me to tell Tiernan that he was ready and waiting and suggesting that I eat spicy food to move things along. I joked back that I would do my best. Less than 12 hours later I was at the hospital in labor. I sent Dr. Bergman a few updates via email throughout the night and just as I was about to begin pushing,



Tiernan now, with baby brother Brogan.

ing, Dr. Bergman strolled into the delivery room. Both he and the NICU nurses were standing by as Tiernan made his debut. They quickly checked our little guy then gave Tiernan to Todd and I for a short time before whisking him off to the NICU and surgery. A couple hours later Dr. Bergman reappeared to update us on Tiernan in the only way he could, matter of fact with just the right amount of sarcasm to reassure us and keep the mood as light as it could be at that time.

Over the next five days Dr. Bergman's presence was noticeable. He was there each morning and when a colleague made rounds over the weekend he texted me to check in. Then, just as it looked like our son may be coming home, we received an early morning call from Dr. Bergman. We rushed to the hospital in time to speak with Dr. Bergman and see our little man, just six days old, before Tiernan went in for emergency surgery. For a second time in less than a week Tiernan's life was in Dr. Bergman's hands and there is no one we would have trusted more. Over the following two and a half weeks Tiernan proved to be a tough customer in the NICU but both Dr. Bergman and the NICU staff were nothing short of amazing in their care of Tiernan and us. And, as many NICU parents know, when your baby(ies) come home the what if's remain. But Dr. Bergman continued to provide amazing care and support as we settled into family life. We texted him whenever we had a concern or a question and he always responded quickly and in a way that calmed our fears. And he never made us feel as if we were bothering him or overreacting.

From the moment we learned about Tiernan's omphalocele Todd and I wanted our son and his health to be a top priority for whoever took care of him. And even before Tiernan's birth, we knew that to be the case with Dr. Bergman. He may be the only doctor we've ever been sad to hear say no more follow ups needed. His ability and confidence in conjunction with this sense of humor and approachability makes him like no other doctor we have ever known. And those qualities are what make him the perfect surgeon to specialize in pediatrics and comfort anxious parents. **- Susan & Todd R.**