

FEATURING "IN GOOD HEALTH" FROM **MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER**

Monmouth

HEALTH & LIFE

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THE READERS' CHOICE ISSUE



READERS' CHOICE

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{ WELCOME LETTER }

Providing The Best Care Is Our Passion

This issue of *Monmouth Health & Life* features the magazine's annual Readers' Choice Awards, and in our In Good Health pages, we spotlight the most recent national recognitions that distinguish Monmouth Medical Center as the health care provider of choice in our region.

We recently learned that Monmouth Medical Center is among just 148 U.S. hospitals named to the digital platform Money's inaugural list of the Best Hospitals in America. Created in partnership with The Leapfrog Group, the list identified hospitals that consistently deliver the safest, highest-value care for patients and excellence in hospital experience.

This latest honor comes on the heels of this hospital receiving its 15th consecutive Leapfrog A rating in the spring. It also follows an announcement last fall of our third recognition as a Top Teaching Hospital by The Leapfrog Group, which is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive honors American hospitals can receive.

I am also tremendously proud to share that we are one of 34 U.S. hospitals honored by the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) with the 2022–2025 Lantern Award. This prestigious award recognizes Emergency Departments that demonstrate exceptional and innovative performance in leadership, practice, education, advocacy, and research. The award serves as a visible symbol to our community that excellence is valued, and that exceptional emergency care is provided here.

All of these national recognitions are designed to inform communities how well their hospitals perform in providing the highest quality care in a safe and compassionate environment. Each one is a testament to our staff's unwavering commitment to our patients, our communities and each other.

The award recipients will be recognized at the Hall of Honor awards ceremony October 2nd in Denver, Colorado.

In sharing the news of our recognition, ENA President Jennifer Schmitz called the award a testament to our ED leadership and team, adding "you should be so proud to be able to achieve this award during one of the most challenging times in healthcare."

This award comes on the heels of the MMC ED receiving the Crisis Response Team Award from the New Jersey chapter of the ENA in recognition of the department's significant contributions and response to the challenges of the public health crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our team truly prioritizes delivering the highest quality care and ensuring the comfort of our patients from the moment they enter our Emergency Department. The Lantern Award serves as a visible symbol to our community that excellence is valued, and that exceptional emergency care is provided at MMC. Please join us in congratulating our ED team members, physicians and leaders.



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



{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

BACK ON TWO FEET

A Middletown woman is walking pain-free again thanks to a pair of total knee replacement surgeries



at Monmouth Medical Center's Joint Replacement Center.



Slowing down is a fact of life as one ages, but Fillippina Nitti didn't expect to be nearly unable to walk before the age of 60. Years of bilateral knee pain were taking a toll on the Middletown resident, and she was running out of solutions to improve her condition.

She had tried many treatments—two knee arthroscopies, lubrication and steroid injections, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory drugs and countless braces—but the pain never subsided.

"I couldn't walk, and I couldn't go around the corner," Nitti recalls. "It was getting debilitating. My oldest son and I had a tradition of going to Comic Con, but I couldn't go anymore because I wasn't able to stand in line."

So, before her 58th birthday, Nitti heeded the advice of her husband, who previously had knee replacement surgery performed at Monmouth Medical Center. He told her to see his surgeon, David Chalnick, M.D., Medical Director of the Joint Replacement Center at MMC.

Nitti told Dr. Chalnick that she was experiencing so much pain and discomfort in both knees while doing daily tasks that it was diminishing her quality of life. He recommended staged bilateral total knee replacement, in which he would perform replacement surgeries on two different dates. Nitti completed a few physical therapy sessions to develop strength, then underwent surgery on her right knee in April 2021. After a day of recovery at MMC, Nitti was back at home—and in awe.

"I was able to fully bend my knee, which I wasn't able to do in previous years," she says. "I was expecting to be in pain after the surgery, but there really wasn't any. It was

amazing, and Dr. Chalnick and the staff were amazing too—they treated me like it was my birthday. That's why I went back."

In February of this year, just after Nitti turned 59, Dr. Chalnick performed total knee replacement surgery on her left knee.

"Staged replacement is fairly common for patients who have bilateral disease and need two replacements," Dr. Chalnick says. "The time between surgeries is variable and depends on what is appropriate for the patient and their schedule. We've done surgeries within a few weeks or several months. We do what's best for each individual patient."

After three months of physical therapy, Nitti was back to living the life she once

enjoyed. "For so long, I would have to climb stairs one step at a time because the pain was so bad," she says. "Now, I'm walking and climbing steps without pain. I'm working on walking more and riding the stationary bike. They were truly life-changing

"I was able to fully bend my knee, which I wasn't able to do in previous years. I was expecting to be in pain after the surgery, but there really wasn't any."

— *Fillippina Nitti*

procedures."

Nitti's was one of more than 800 joint replacements performed annually by MMC's Joint Replacement Center, Dr. Chalnick notes. The program is dedicated to the care of knee and hip joint replacement surgery patients, and features a specialized team that uses state-of-the-art technology and techniques.

"We've had disease-specific Joint Replacement Certification since 2009," Dr. Chalnick says. "I'm proud of our program. We work very hard so every patient has a good experience throughout their hospitalization. We have exceptional team members that include nurses, social workers, physical therapists, residents and fellowship-trained surgeons."

Members of the Joint Replacement Program team, from left, Physical Therapist Leilani Toomey, DPT; Nicole Wilps RN, BSN, Assistant Clinical Director and Program Coordinator; Medical Director David Chalnick, M.D., and Christina Connor, BSN-RN-CAPA, are shown in the onsite rehabilitation gym.

 For more information about the Joint Replacement Program at Monmouth Medical Center, visit rwjbh.org/mmcjoint.

{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT EARNS EXCELLENCE AWARD

Monmouth Medical Center's E.D. lauded for top-notch leadership, innovation, advocacy and research.



Hospital leadership including President and CEO Eric Carney and Chief Nursing Officer Darla Harmer gathers with Emergency Department staff members.

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) is one of 34 U.S. hospitals selected to receive the Emergency Nurses Association's (ENA) Lantern Award, which recognizes emergency departments that demonstrate exceptional and innovative performance in leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research.

The award recipients will be recognized at the Hall of Honor awards ceremony Oct. 2 in Denver.

The ENA Lantern Award application focuses on innovative practices and noteworthy attributes of the emergency department, collaborative approaches to delivering optimal care for patients, performance and outcome metrics, characteristics of the nursing team and facility and emergency department demographics. It distinguishes an emergency department's commitment to quality, safety and presence of a healthy work environment.

"This award is such a testament to you and your team—to be able to achieve this award during one of the most challenging times in healthcare, you should be so proud," ENA President Jennifer Schmitz said in announcing MMC's award. "To be able to keep your team engaged and on track despite the challenges of the pandemic is so remarkable."

In 2021, the MMC Emergency Department received the Crisis Response Team Award from the New Jersey chapter of the ENA in recognition of the department's significant contributions and response to the challenges of the public health crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Recognition with the Lantern Award is such a great reward for our team," says Sharmine Brassington, PhD(c), MSN, RN, Administrative Director of Emergency Services. "They are a focused and dedicated team, especially with COVID-19, they exemplify altruism, resiliency and endurance. Showing up to work every day to provide culturally competent and conducive patient care."

Chief Nursing Officer Darla Harmer, MSN, RN, NE-BC, notes that the Emergency Department's patient satisfaction scores have been consistently high despite the challenges of COVID-19.

"Our team prioritizes patient care from the time of arrival," she says. "The Lantern Award serves as a visible symbol to our community that excellence is valued, and that exceptional care is provided in our Emergency Department."



President and CEO Eric Carney and Chief Nursing Officer Darla Harmer, shown center, gather with team members from throughout the hospital in recognition of Monmouth Medical Center's recognition by the digital platform *Money* as one of the Best Hospitals in America.

MMC RECEIVES HONORS IN INAUGURAL 'BEST' LIST BY MONEY AND THE LEAPFROG GROUP

The digital platform *Money* announced its inaugural list of the Best Hospitals in America on July 6th, with Monmouth Medical Center among just 148 U.S. hospitals to receive the award.

Created in partnership with The Leapfrog Group, a national watchdog organization of employers and other purchasers focused on health care safety and quality, the list identifies the facilities that consistently deliver the safest, highest-value care for patients and excellence in hospital experience.

Among the criteria that weighed heavily in the Best Hospitals in America List selection process was a hospital's infection rates, maternity care, pediatrics, medication management, hand hygiene practices, nursing workforce and critical care. Leapfrog also tracked the number of high-risk surgeries, including bariatric surgery for weight loss, lung cancer surgery and hip replacement surgery, among others.

The recognition comes on the heels of MMC receiving its 15th consecutive Leapfrog A rating in the spring. It also follows an announcement last fall of MMC's recognition for a third time as a Top Teaching Hospital by The Leapfrog Group, which is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive honors American hospitals can receive.

"These recognitions are designed to inform communities how well their hospitals perform in providing the highest quality care in a safe and compassionate environment. Every member of our team is essential to achieving and sustaining these outstanding results," said MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus President and CEO Eric Carney. "They are a testament to our staff's unwavering commitment to our patients, our communities and each other. They truly make a difference to those we serve."

"COVID-19 changed how people think about and prioritize health care—and *Money's* Best Hospitals will help readers navigate this new normal with these great recommendations," said Mike Ayers, Executive Editor at *Money*.

"Leapfrog is honored to partner with *Money* to recognize hospitals that truly put patients first," says Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "Americans are heavily invested in our health care system, and we have a right to expect the best quality in return. *Money* recognizes that hospitals on this list meet the highest standards of quality and safety and tirelessly work to improve health care in their communities across the country."

The Leapfrog Hospital Survey is the gold standard for comparing hospitals on standards of safety, quality and efficiency. To compile its new list of the top hospitals in the country in partnership with *Money*, the Leapfrog Group used data from the 39 performance measures in the seven different categories in its 2021 hospital survey, which participants were required to submit by August 31, 2021.

To qualify for the list, eligible hospitals were required to carry an "A" letter grade on the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assessment for fall 2021. Hospitals were also required to meet a qualitative assessment of excellence, and were disqualified if they exceeded national mortality rates for heart attacks, heart failure, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or coronary bypass surgery or if they earned a "C" or worse on the 2022 spring Safety Grade assessment. Leapfrog applied additional criteria related to safe medication ordering practices, intensive care unit staffing and performance related to certain high-risk surgeries including bariatric surgery, hip replacements and lung cancer surgeries.



For more information about Monmouth Medical Center, visit rwjbh.org/monmouth.

{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

SHARING STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE

Peloton's Robin Arzón delivers inspirational keynote speech at Monmouth Medical Center's Power of Pink Luncheon.



the first-ever recipient of *Glamour's* "Daring to Disrupt" Award.

"The RWJBarnabas Health mission 'Let's Be Healthy Together' fits perfectly with Robin's joy of movement and its transformative powers," says Caitlin Olson, Regional Vice President of Development for MMC and its southern campus. "Her powerful and positive message is in keeping with our healthcare system's mission to ensure people of all ages have the means and ability to live healthier, more fulfilling lives."

The luncheon, presented by dedicated MMC Foundation community leaders who make up the Leon Hess Cancer Center Council, was held at the Rumson waterfront home of Mary and John M. Kiely. John M. Kiely is the CEO of the Kiely Family of Companies, Tinton Falls.

The event was co-chaired by Sima Yakoby Epstein, DMD, and Debbie Menkowitz, along with boutique co-chairs Jessica Buchner and Michelle Kutsak. Providing welcoming remarks was New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy, a past chair of the MMC Foundation Board of Trustees.

One of the Foundation's flagship events, the Power of Pink Luncheon raises funds to enhance the care delivered to oncology patients at MMC, and its dedicated volunteers have raised more than \$6,000,000 to benefit the hospital's Leon Hess Cancer Center. This year, proceeds from the event will benefit the development of innovative cancer services at the new Vogel Medical Campus in Tinton Falls.

"The Council has been a wonderful partner and I want to assure you that Monmouth Medical Center is here with you, every step of the

way," says Eric Carney, President & CEO of MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus. "The resources you help provide allow us to move forward as an institution and expand in the region, while at the same time, making sure each patient receives the personalized, individual care they need. As we take this journey together, we are so grateful to those who step up and lead the way."

Also on the program, two respected RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region oncology physician experts—board-certified internal medicine physician and medical oncologist, Seth D. Cohen, M.D., Regional Director of Oncology Services for the RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region, and Richard S. Lazzaro, M.D., FACS, Southern Region Chief of Thoracic Surgery—discussed the new regional thoracic oncology program. In partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, the new program is bringing state-of-the-art treatment to patients with lung cancer and other thoracic diseases.

Robin Arzón, center, with Power of Pink Co-Chairs Sima Yakoby Epstein, DMD, left, and Debbie Menkowitz.

A capacity audience at the July 21st Power of Pink Luncheon, a premier fund-raising luncheon for Cancer Services at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), welcomed keynote speaker, Robin Arzón, Vice President of Fitness Programming at Peloton. Arzón provided a rousing address, stressing that "movement is medicine" and encouraging everyone to "focus on what you can do rather than any limitations."

"Instead of calling someone out, call them in, call someone in to this community," she said in concluding her remarks. "And let us continue to ask ourselves these three questions: 'What is my why?', 'Why not me?' and 'What decision would we make if we were twice as strong and twice as confident?' When we are able to invoke the heroism in ourselves, our communities are unstoppable."

An avid ultra-marathon runner, best-selling author and global fitness leader, Arzón's life mission is to redefine, reform and rethink possibility through movement. In 2020, she was named one of the most influential people on *Fortune* magazine's 40 Under 40 list, and in 2021, she became



To learn more about how you can support Monmouth Medical Center, visit rwjbh.org/monmouth-medical-center/giving.