

A Publication of
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

Spring 2021

healthy *together*

**EXPERT
WOUND CARE**

**FASTER, MORE
EFFECTIVE
PROSTATE CANCER
TREATMENT**

**WARNING SIGNS
OF A STROKE**

**SAVE LIVES
CHOOSE
VACCINATION**



Let's Beat COVID-19

The development of COVID-19 vaccines is one of the greatest achievements in medical science. At RWJBarnabas Health, we're proud to be a key part of the effort to get the vaccine into the arms of all eligible people in New Jersey.

We also remain committed to fighting the spread of the disease. That's why we join with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in urging everyone, whether vaccinated or not, to continue with the simple precautions we know are effective in preventing the spread of the coronavirus:

- Wear a mask.
- Stay at least six feet apart from people who don't live with you and avoid crowds.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often; use a hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

The reason for this continued caution: In some cases, COVID-19 vaccines may protect against severe infection, but may not necessarily prevent mild or asymptomatic infection. If this is the case, an infected person could still spread the virus.

At Monmouth Medical Center, we recently marked the one-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 patient admitted to our hospital, as well as the sweeping restrictions and public health guidelines put in place to limit the spread of the virus. The vaccine is the next precaution that we can all take to help our community move forward. While the COVID-19 "caution fatigue" many are feeling is understandable, it's so important to continue to follow public health guidelines so we don't slow the progress that's been made through so much selflessness and sacrifice over the last year. With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, the light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter with each passing day.

It will take all of us working together as a community to minimize the ongoing effects of COVID-19. Together, we can protect friends, family and neighbors and end this pandemic.

Yours in good health,



BARRY H. OSTROWSKY
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RWJBARNABAS HEALTH




ERIC CARNEY
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER AND MONMOUTH
MEDICAL CENTER SOUTHERN CAMPUS



HEALTH NEWS

A LEADER IN COVID-19 TREATMENT

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has joined its sister RWJBarnabas Health hospitals in providing monoclonal antibody treatment to COVID-19 patients who meet strict criteria. Patients receive the treatment as an infusion and are sent home to recover with a pulse oximeter to monitor their oxygen levels. They receive telehealth check-ins with their healthcare providers.

The therapy is a powerful weapon against COVID-19. As of mid-February, RWJBarnabas Health hospitals had treated thousands of patients with monoclonal antibody therapy, and 96 percent of those who were treated were spared hospitalization. To accommodate the growing demand for the treatment, MMC now has an infusion center dedicated to providing it.

A PRESTIGIOUS NURSING AWARD







Kathleen Malouf, a pediatric nurse at MMC's Unterberg Children's Hospital, is the only nurse in the United States to be named an awardee of the Johnson & Johnson Nurses Innovate QuickFire Challenge

in COVID-19 Patient Care. The award honors nurses who have come up with innovative ways to improve COVID-19 patient care. Malouf is the inventor of the IsoPouch, a disposable, transparent pouch that adheres to an isolation gown. The pouch helps healthcare workers gather supplies while wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). "I was accustomed to using my scrub pockets to hold everything I needed," says Malouf. "But when I had to wear layers of PPE, my pockets became inaccessible. I realized we needed a pocket for our gowns—almost like a fanny pack—that could store supplies."

Monmouth Medical Center | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**

300 Second Avenue, Long Branch, NJ 07039
732.222.5200

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VACCINATING NEW JERSEY

AS AVAILABILITY INCREASES, EXPERTS HAVE ONE STRONG MESSAGE FOR THE PUBLIC: GET THE SHOT.

“At the outset, we knew we would be helping with the COVID-19 vaccination effort,” says John Bonamo, MD, MS, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH). “But we weren’t aware just how much the state would be relying on healthcare systems to make this happen.”

Just as they did when the pandemic first hit, the experts at RWJBH rose to the challenge. “We opened our first vaccine clinic the week the vaccine came out in December,” he recounts. “Then we opened clinics at each of our 11 acute care hospitals.”

RWJBH is also administering the vaccine at the Middlesex County megasite in Edison, which it runs; the former Sears in the Livingston Mall; RWJBarnabas Health Arena in Toms River; Brookdale Community College in Monmouth

County; and smaller clinics, including in Bayonne and in the Greenville section of Jersey City.

“We’re also assisting municipal efforts in four counties—Ocean, Somerset, Essex

and Monmouth— by providing some or all vaccinators for their clinics,” Dr. Bonamo says, “and we’re partnering with the state, the National Guard and others. In addition, we’ve applied for more vaccination sites for physician offices.”

As of mid-March, RWJBH had already vaccinated approximately 150,500 people and was vaccinating more at the rate of 2,000 a day at its hospitals and 4,000 a day at the Edison megasite. However, Dr. Bonamo says that number will increase significantly as vaccine availability does. “We’re ramping up,” he says. “We’re in this to get it done.”

By summer, Dr. Bonamo says, vaccine supplies will make it available to all who want it. The challenge will shift to making sure everyone who’s eligible chooses to be vaccinated.

DISPELLING FEARS

“Many people started out with ‘vaccine hesitancy’—they wanted to see how other people did with the vaccine first,” says Dr. Bonamo. “As they saw others feeling good about having had the vaccine, they became more open to it.” That led to the

clamor for vaccination appointments the state saw in the winter.

Vaccine hesitancy persists, however. “There’s understandable mistrust, especially in the black community, born of all the social inequity and healthcare injustice that has happened over the years,” he says. “We’re working hard to dispel that with all kinds of outreach and town halls being done by healthcare professionals of color.”

Older adults should prioritize getting the vaccine, Dr. Bonamo says. “The years they have are precious, and many seniors who got COVID-19 did not do well,” he says. “Often, that’s because they have at least one other comorbidity—diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, lung disease or obesity—that contributes to their risk.”

Dr. Bonamo emphasizes that his message isn’t just for certain groups, but for everybody who’s eligible for the vaccine. “Get vaccinated,” he says. “That’s it. It’s safe, it’s smart, it’s advanced science and it’s the right thing to do to protect yourself and your family.”



JOHN BONAMO, MD

To learn more or to make a vaccination appointment, visit www.rwjbh.org/covid19.



From left: Matthew McDonald, MD, SVP, and Chief Medical Officer, Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH); Meg Fisher, MD, Medical Director of Clinical and Academic Excellence, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC); Kelly Keefe Marcoux, Vice President, Children's Services, RWJBarnabas Health; Eric Carney, President and CEO, MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus (MMCSC); Warren Moore, FACHE, President & CEO, CSH, and Senior Vice President, Children's Services, RWJBarnabas Health; Robert Graebe, MD, Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology, MMC; Robert P. Herrmann, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for MMC and MMCSC; and Michael Perdoni, Vice President of Clinical Operations, MMC and MMCSC



EXPERT CARE CLOSE TO HOME

A NEW MEDICAL FACILITY AT THE MONMOUTH MALL WILL OFFER INNOVATIVE SPECIALTY CARE AND WELLNESS SERVICES.

This fall, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) will provide access to comprehensive care and wellness services at the Monmouth Mall in Eatontown. RWJBarnabas Health Family Care & Wellness, located next to Boscov's department store, will feature women's and pediatric services, a laboratory, a blood-drawing station and an urgent care center. "By connecting the trusted pediatric and

women's services of Monmouth Medical Center with the outstanding offerings of Children's Specialized Hospital, patients needing expert care will have access to treatments right in their own backyard," says Eric Carney, President and CEO of MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus. "This state-of-the-art, centrally located building will expand much-needed access to exceptional care for women and children, as well as offer

important health education and wellness services for the entire community."

MATERNITY AND NEONATAL CARE

The four-story, 82,000-square-foot facility will offer a variety of services for women on the third floor. There will be maternal-fetal medicine specialists, a uro-gynecologic practice and a lactation center. The facility will also house



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-Eric Carney, President and CEO of Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus

MMC’s award-winning Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Center. “This new facility will enable more patients to access our nationally recognized and highly advanced maternity and neonatal services,” says Robert Graebe, MD, Chair and Program Director of Ob/Gyn at MMC. “Monmouth Medical Center has built one of the safest and most comprehensive ob/gyn programs in the nation, and we’re thankful for the ability to extend our reach for families in the region.”

Children in need of specialty care will also benefit from the new facility. There will be pediatric cardiologists, endocrinologists, gastroenterologists, surgeons, urologists, pulmonologists and infectious disease specialists from the Unterberg Children’s Hospital at MMC.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Children’s Specialized Hospital (CSH), an MMC sister facility, will also provide care for children at the new facility. CSH specializes in treating children with

chronic illnesses and complex disabilities, such as brain and spinal cord injuries, autism and mental health problems. When the new facility is complete, CSH will have 15 locations throughout New Jersey.

At the Monmouth Mall, psychiatrists, neurologists and physiatrists (doctors who specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation) will partner with families to provide personalized care. The second floor of the building will be dedicated to rehabilitation services for children. A variety of services will be available, including psychological, physical, occupational and speech therapy, as well as audiology.

“We are thrilled to bring Children’s Specialized Hospital’s innovative therapies and medical treatments to children and families with special healthcare needs in Monmouth County,” says Warren E.

Moore, FACHE, President and CEO, Children’s Specialized Hospital, and Senior Vice President, Children’s Services, RWJBarnabas Health. “This excitement is only amplified because we will be partnering with Monmouth Medical Center to do so—an organization that has been entrusted with the healthcare of the Jersey Shore community for 134 years. Together, we are enhancing access to the individualized, compassionate and quality care RWJBarnabas Health is known for.”

A wellness center will offer health screenings, education and support services, including those offered by MMC’s Cancer Support Community. A demonstration kitchen will be used to promote healthy eating.

Access to the facility will be convenient: There will be plenty of parking on the street and in a three-story garage.

To learn more about the programs and services at Monmouth Medical Center, visit www.rwjbh.org/Monmouth.



Gathering at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the Linda Grunin Simulation Lab and Learning Center are, from left: Monmouth University President Patrick Leahy; Jeremy Grunin, President, Grunin Foundation; Jay Grunin, Co-Founder and Chairman, Grunin Foundation and husband of the late Linda Grunin; and Eric Carney, President and CEO of Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

PROUD PARTNERSHIP

**MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER AND MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY WILL
PROVIDE SIMULATION-BASED HEALTHCARE EDUCATION.**

The Linda Grunin Simulation Lab and Learning Center, a joint partnership between Monmouth University and Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), provides simulation-based healthcare education. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was recently held at the West Long Branch facility to celebrate its opening.

The Linda Grunin Center provides state-of-the-art training to MMC's residents and medical students, as well as Monmouth University students who are training to become nurses, physician assistants, occupational therapists and other specialists. It is also a valuable resource to the community for training

first responders, including local EMTs and firefighters.

In 2019, the university and hospital officially partnered to develop the new facility at Monmouth Corporate Park in West Long Branch. Construction began in December 2019 and was completed in October 2020. The 7,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art complex provides hands-on learning in a simulation environment with high-tech mannequins and equipment. It includes four high-fidelity simulation suites with attached observation rooms for training with computerized mannequins in simulated real-life settings, as well as six standardized

patient exam rooms. The lab design and equipment incorporate the latest technology and best practices in simulation learning. The facility provides simulation-based education to MMC trainees in obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery and intensive care.

With rapidly advancing medical, safety and quality standards, it's critical for medical students to master skills prior to working with patients, according to Eric Carney, President and CEO of Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

"This is an exciting next step in our

“THIS IS AN EXCITING NEXT STEP IN OUR LONG HISTORY AS A TEACHING HOSPITAL, AS SIMULATION-BASED MEDICAL EDUCATION IMPROVES MEDICAL CARE BY BOOSTING MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS’ PERFORMANCE, ENHANCING PATIENT SAFETY AND PROVIDING INTERDISCIPLINARY TRAINING.”

*Eric Carney, President and CEO,
Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth
Medical Center Southern Campus*



ABOUT THE GRUNIN FOUNDATION

The mission of the Grunin Foundation, a local charitable organization with offices in Red Bank and Toms River, is to improve the quality of life for all members of our community by using philanthropy to drive economic excellence at the Central Jersey Shore. At Monmouth Medical Center, the Foundation has funded the renovation of the foyer leading to the hospital's main lobby. In recognition of the gift, the foyer was named the Grunin Entry Hall. Hospital leadership recently gathered with representatives of the Grunin Foundation to dedicate this portrait of Linda Grunin.

long history as a teaching hospital,” says Carney. “Simulation-based medical education improves medical care by boosting medical professionals’ performance, enhancing patient safety and providing interdisciplinary training. We look forward to our continued collaboration with Monmouth University and remain incredibly thankful to the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation for their \$3 million charitable gift that is helping to fund this innovative educational facility and program.”

Joseph Jaeger, DrPH, Chief Academic Officer at MMC, notes that simulation has long been a tenet of aeronautical and military training, yet it’s relatively new to medicine.

“At Monmouth Medical Center, we have been dedicated to training tomorrow’s physicians since the establishment of New Jersey’s first Orthopaedic Surgery Residency Program in 1945,” he says. “This facility allows us to continue to educate our physicians-in-training in the most state-of-the-art environment. We are proud to be the first in the region to offer hands-on learning in a simulation environment using high-tech mannequins and scenarios.”

Ann Marie Mauro, PhD, RN, Dean

and Professor at Monmouth University’s Marjorie K. Unterberg School of Nursing and Health Studies, notes that effective, team-based care is essential to address the complex health needs of an increasingly diverse and aging population.

“This groundbreaking academic-practice partnership provides the unique opportunity to cultivate interprofessional teams with entry-level to advanced-practice members to implement high-quality, safe, evidence-based care,” she says. “Our vision is to establish our Monmouth University/Monmouth Medical Center partnership model as the gold standard for transdisciplinary education and collaborative practice.”

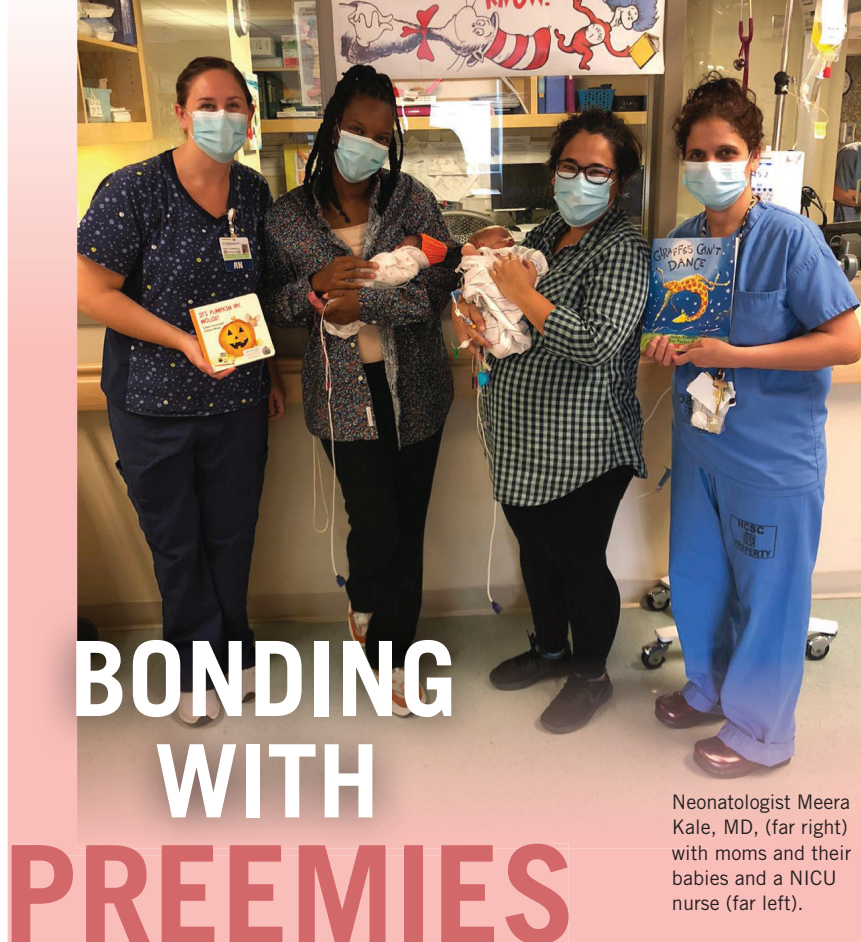
“The Linda Grunin Simulation Lab and Learning Center is a terrific example of the service culture that is at the center of Monmouth University’s mission,” adds Monmouth University President Patrick F. Leahy. “We feel a strong obligation to partner with our host communities, and we believe

this facility will provide exponentially greater long-term benefits to healthcare in our region. To be truly great, we believe universities must be anchors of community enrichment, and we are proud of our partnership with Monmouth Medical Center. Thanks to the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, our futures are inextricably linked.”

Jay Grunin, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Grunin Foundation and husband of the late Linda Grunin, says the facility will not only positively impact healthcare providers and first responders, but will also improve the health of the community and economy at the central Jersey Shore by advancing medical technology and emergency response.

“We are thrilled to support the collaboration between Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth University to bring the Linda Grunin Sim Lab to life in Monmouth County,” he says. “It’s truly the future of medical training and healthcare innovation—Linda would be so proud.”

To learn more about giving opportunities at Monmouth Medical Center, visit www.monmouthgiving.org or call 732.923.6886.



BONDING WITH PREEMIES

Neonatologist Meera Kale, MD, (far right) with moms and their babies and a NICU nurse (far left).

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS, NICU BABIES HAVE NEW BOOKS AND BLANKETS.

Several years ago, a family of one of Monmouth Medical Center's "NICU graduates" began donating books to the hospital. Each baby receives one book per month during his or her stay at the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation Regional Newborn Center. But neonatologist Meera Kale, MD, noticed that parents weren't reading the books to their babies in the NICU. "The donated books were sitting at the babies' bedsides," she recalls.

Research has shown the importance of language exposure for normal brain development. Exposure to the mother's voice while in the womb provides a unique source of sensory stimulation, says Dr. Kale. Premature babies are at risk of delays in language and reading skills. Teaching parents how to best support their baby's development is vital for optimizing the infant's outcome.

According to Dr. Kale, reading, singing, massage and kangaroo care are important ways parents can support their babies in the NICU. Increasing language exposure in the NICU leads to a greater number of vocal responses, such as coos and laughs. It can also encourage infant-parent bonding. "Research shows that babies find it comforting to hear their parents' voices," says Dr. Kale. "Their heart rates become more stable."

To promote reading in the NICU, Dr. Kale has worked to implement the "Peek-A-Book" program. Parents are encouraged to read to their babies whenever possible since babies respond best to their parents' voices. This can encourage a habit of reading and a routine that can be continued at home after discharge. Dr. Kale has received positive feedback. Said one parent: "Reading to my newborn strengthens our bond."



Diane Attardi, MD, NICU Medical Director and Chief of Neonatology, with the donated blankets

A GIFT OF COMFORT

Sheila Rener, who was born in Scotland but lived in the U.S. for more than 50 years, had a passion for sewing. When her children were growing up in Little Silver in the 1960s, she made all of their clothes—including their jeans. So, last year, when Sheila was wondering how to occupy her time during the COVID-19 pandemic, her daughter, Alison Hall, suggested that she knit blankets for premature babies. "They would be small enough that they wouldn't exacerbate the arthritis in her hands," says Alison. Sheila, 90, who was living in an assisted living facility in Tinton Falls, agreed. Allison bought soft, acrylic yarn in pastel colors and suggested that they donate the blankets to the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation Regional Newborn Center at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC).

The knitting project kept Sheila "excited and engaged," says Alison. Sheila knitted 30 blankets, and last fall, John Rener, Sheila's son, brought them to the NICU. A week later, when Diane Attardi, MD, Medical Director of the NICU and Chief of Neonatology, called to thank Sheila for her generous gifts, she learned that Sheila had passed away. "We were sad to hear this," says Dr. Attardi. "We really appreciate Sheila's labor of love." John says Sheila was thrilled that the blankets were being donated to the NICU. "My mother's eyes lit up around babies," says John. "She always went out of her way to help others."

To learn more about the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation Regional Newborn Center, call **732.923.7250**.





HEART RACING? IT COULD BE YOUR MEDICATION

**BRIEF PERIODS OF INCREASED HEART RATE ARE
COMMON AND HAVE A VARIETY OF CAUSES.**

Everyone experiences an increased heart rate at some point. You exercise, and your heart rate increases. You become frightened or stressed, and your heart beats faster. You might experience the increased heart rate as a skipped beat, a flutter or a pounding in your chest.

“A temporary increase in heart rate has many causes,” says David Dobesh, MD, Chief of Cardiac Electrophysiology at Jersey City Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group with offices in Jersey City and West Orange. “Emotional stress, physical stress, psychological stress, even things like caffeine, nicotine, too much alcohol or fever. Your body is performing a complex balancing act with your pulse.”



DAVID DOBESH, MD

A lesser-known but common source of increased heart rate is medication, including some kinds of over-the-counter medicines and certain prescriptions. “People should be aware that some medicines do

briefly increase your heart rate,” says Dr. Dobesh, “and usually those episodes are not something you should be concerned about.”

POSSIBLE CAUSES

Common medications that may increase heart rate for a short period of time include:

- Decongestants, specifically those that contain pseudoephedrine, a stimulant. “If the decongestant has a capital ‘D’ at the end of its name, it contains this ingredient,” says Dr. Dobesh.
 - Some inhalers for asthma, emphysema or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).
 - Theophylline, an oral asthma medication.
 - Medications for ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).
 - Diuretic medications (used to help prevent fluid retention) could result in dehydration, says Dr. Dobesh.
 - Some blood pressure medications may inadvertently lower blood pressure too much.
- “If your pressure is very low from either dehydration or overmedication, the body will respond by increasing the heart rate to compensate,” he explains.



WHAT IS TACHYCARDIA?

For most people, a heart rate between 60 and 100 beats per minute (bpm) is normal.

When your heart beats more than 100 bpm for reasons unrelated to physiological stress, that’s known as tachycardia, from the Greek words for “swift” and “heart.”

If increased heart rate is a concern, basic testing, such as an electrocardiogram or blood work, can be done to determine whether you should be referred to an electrophysiologist—a cardiologist who specializes in heart rhythms. The electrophysiologist will look for possible types of tachycardia that are caused by an abnormality of the heart itself and can affect how well the heart pumps blood.

Examples include atrial fibrillation (AFib), atrial flutter and supraventricular tachycardia (SVT). A wide range of treatments may be considered, including lifestyle changes, medications and medical and surgical procedures.

“Some medications carry warning labels about increased heart rate but in practice this side effect is unusual,” Dr. Dobesh says. “These include certain antidepressants and also thyroid medications, which will not usually increase heart rate if they’re taken at the recommended dose.”

Similarly, herbal supplements such as ginseng, valerian root and orange bitters should not increase heart rate when taken in normal doses, he says.

While a short-term increase in heart rate from medication or emotional or physical stress is normal, increased heart rate that lasts for a long time is not. “If you’re repeatedly feeling symptoms of a racing heartbeat that make you uncomfortable, tell your doctor,” advises Dr. Dobesh. “Further testing may be appropriate.”

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with one of NJ’s top cardiovascular specialists, call 888.724.7123 or visit www.rwjbh.org/heart.



EXPECT OUTSTANDING CANCER CARE

THE NCI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER DESIGNATION CARRIES
A WORLD OF MEANING FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) Comprehensive Cancer Center designation is the highest credential a U.S. cancer center can attain. But what does it mean for a patient?

“For a cancer patient, the question of where to be treated can be terribly confusing. The NCI designation tells a layperson that the institution is among the top centers in the country for delivering cancer care and performing research,” says Steven K. Libutti, MD, Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, for RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) and Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.



STEVEN K. LIBUTTI, MD

Though Rutgers Cancer Institute is located in New Brunswick, the beneficial effects of its research, clinical trials and advanced treatments are felt throughout New Jersey thanks to its

unique partnership with RWJBH.

“The beauty of our partnership is that Rutgers Cancer Institute is fully integrated with each of the healthcare system’s 11 hospitals,” Dr. Libutti explains. “When a patient is being treated at any RWJBarnabas facility, he or she has an entryway to an NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center and will get the same level of care and access to advanced treatments and clinical trials.”

PERSONALIZED CARE

For all their mastery of technology and treatments, the healthcare providers at RWJBH and Rutgers Cancer Institute never lose sight of the human element. “Our whole goal is to provide personalized care not only for the type of cancer you have, but for you as a

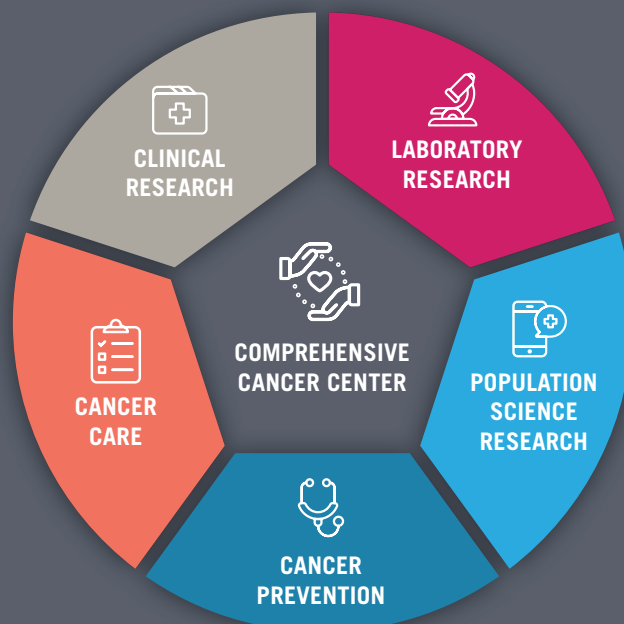
patient,” says Dr. Libutti.

Nurse navigators “reduce the burden of diagnosis,” he explains, by working with the patient throughout treatment, coordinating appointments and ensuring that specialists involved have the information they need. “We wrap the patient in a plan of care created just for him or her,” Dr. Libutti says.

Patients who want to know more about their treatment options through RWJBH and Rutgers Cancer Institute can call the Oncology Access Center at 844.CANCERNJ (844.226.2376), where oncology specialists stand ready to help determine the next steps. “That number is our ‘Easy Button,’ our way to put you on the first step to a successful outcome,” says Dr. Libutti. “We’re only a phone call away.”

ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

The designation requires the highest level of achievement in five areas:



NCI Comprehensive
Cancer Center

A Cancer Center Designated by the
National Cancer Institute

BADGE OF HONOR

A Comprehensive Cancer Center designation from the National Cancer Institute places an organization among the top tier of cancer institutions in the country. Rutgers Cancer Institute, together with RWJBarnabas Health, is the only Comprehensive Cancer Center in the state of New Jersey.

THE DESIGNATION MADE A DIFFERENCE

These survivors are among many who have had the benefit of cutting-edge research, clinical trials and care through the RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute partnership.



A RARE T-CELL LYMPHOMA

Ling Jin needed treatment for a rare and aggressive form of T-cell lymphoma, requiring high-dose chemotherapy and radiation treatments in preparation for an allogeneic stem cell transplantation, sometimes referred to as a bone marrow transplant. As she underwent chemotherapy, a lymphoma was discovered behind her eye, which was resolved through brief and highly targeted proton beam therapy.

After an extensive database search, an appropriate donor for bone marrow cells was found, and last June, Ling had a successful stem cell transplant at Rutgers Cancer Institute.



BREAST CANCER WHILE PREGNANT

Breast cancer survivor Liz Tague found out she was pregnant—and soon after, learned that her breast cancer had recurred. After consulting with an oncologist in New York, Liz opted to have her treatment closer to home, guided by Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health.

Following a lumpectomy and chemotherapy, Liz gave birth to a healthy son. Now it was time to consider radiation therapy to prevent further recurrence. Her doctors proposed proton beam therapy, which can be precisely targeted to spare previously irradiated tissues. Three years later, Liz is back to work as a teacher and enjoying family time with her toddler.



STAGE 4 KIDNEY CANCER

Jim Gritschke was fit and active, but weight loss and sharp pains in his right leg led him to an orthopedic surgeon. The diagnosis: a large tumor on his kidney from metastatic renal cell carcinoma, which had spread to his pelvis.

Jim required major robotic surgery to remove the kidney and tumor, followed by radiation and systemic therapy. He had the benefit of the latest technology and a multi-specialty team at a high-volume center, as well as the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial for immunotherapy. Jim has now returned to his favorite activities.

“THE BEAUTY OF OUR PARTNERSHIP IS THAT RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE IS FULLY INTEGRATED WITH EACH OF THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM’S 11 HOSPITALS.” *—Steven K. Libutti, MD*

THE PATH TO A PRESTIGIOUS DESIGNATION

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Cancer Act, which established the NCI Cancer Centers program. Out of the thousands of U.S. facilities that have cancer programs, just 51 are NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers. The NCI designation is a grant that brings significant dollars to the Rutgers Cancer Institute and has a positive economic impact on the state of New Jersey.



Submission of a written application between 1,200 and 1,500 pages long

1



A site visit from a variety of national cancer experts, who examine infrastructure, basic research, clinical care, clinical trials and more

2



Scoring to determine rankings

3



After five years, institutions must reapply for the designation.

4



A PARTNERSHIP FOR PATIENTS

RWJBarnabas Health, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provides close-to-home access to the latest treatment options. To learn more, call **844.CANCERNJ** or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.



BRAIN ANEURYSMS: WHAT TO KNOW

**BEING AWARE OF
THE SYMPTOMS
CAN KEEP YOU OR A
LOVED ONE SAFE.**

About one in 50 people in the U.S. has a brain aneurysm—a “balloon” of blood protruding from an artery. The majority of these will never burst or even require treatment.

For those whose aneurysms do burst, however—approximately 30,000 people each year—the consequences can be devastating, leading to brain damage, stroke or death.



ANIL NANDA, MD

“We want to raise awareness about aneurysms because some studies have shown that almost a quarter of people who have a ruptured aneurysm die because

of misdiagnosis,” says neurosurgeon Anil Nanda, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President of Neurological Services for RWJBarnabas Health and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery, for Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

“We have seen an increase in ruptured aneurysms during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be because people have been less active during this period, perhaps gaining weight or not controlling high blood pressure,” he says.

People who may have warning signs of an aneurysm often neglect them, assuming they’ll simply go away, he says. In addition, many people have avoided seeking care because of fear of going to a hospital during the pandemic.

“The classic symptom is a severe

headache—one that feels like the worst headache of your life,” Dr. Nanda explains. “Not every headache is an aneurysm, of course, and most of the time it’s not anything serious. But if you have this terrible headache along with neck stiffness, and bright light bothers you, you should go to the Emergency Department to have it investigated.”

ADVANCED TREATMENTS

Aneurysms can be diagnosed by a CT (computed tomography) scan, which uses X-rays to determine whether blood has leaked into the brain. Doctors may also order an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), which uses computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of the brain.

Other diagnostic tests include

a cerebral angiography, which is performed by passing a catheter (a long, flexible tube) from the groin artery to inject a small amount of contrast dye into the neck and brain arteries, and a cerebrospinal fluid analysis, which measures chemicals that indicate bleeding in the brain.

“If we do determine there is an aneurysm, whether it’s ruptured or in danger of bursting, we look at the risk factors and determine the appropriate course of action. If surgery is indicated, we’ll get our team together and perform it within 12 to 24 hours,” says Dr. Nanda.

“For years, a procedure called clipping was the only way to fix an aneurysm,” he explains. In this procedure, a craniotomy is performed to create an opening in the skull and then a small metal clip is placed on the aneurysm to stop the blood flow.

“Clipping is still the best solution for some cases,” Dr. Nanda says. “Today, however, the mainstay of treatment is coiling. We can thread the catheter through a groin artery to place a coil on the aneurysm, and there is no need to open the skull.”



WHAT IS A BRAIN ANEURYSM?

A cerebral (brain) aneurysm is a weak spot on a brain artery that balloons or bulges out and fills with blood. If it bursts, it spills blood into the surrounding tissue, an event that’s called a hemorrhage. Brain cells, deprived of oxygen, begin to die, and the patient may have a stroke.

TEAM OF EXPERTS

Decisions about treatment are made on a case-by-case basis. “We have a multidisciplinary team at RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers,” says Dr. Nanda. “We have neurologists, neurosurgeons, a neuropsychologist, a neuroradiology team and endovascular specialists, all providing input about what will be most effective for the patient. We’re like a special forces team, able to come together quickly. The patient gets 10 experts for a problem immediately, which is a huge advantage.” Nurse

practitioners, neurology nurses and neurophysiology technologists round out the care team.

“Another benefit of being part of a large system is that we have the advantage of research, clinical trials and education,” Dr. Nanda says. “We can do what we call translational research, meaning we take basic research that’s being done on stroke and translate it into the clinical realm. It’s a bench-to-bedside approach where we can really improve the condition of patients.”



RISK FACTORS

- Uncontrolled blood pressure.
- Smoking.
- Family history of aneurysms.
- Older age.
- Head injury.
- Substance abuse, particularly cocaine.
- Heavy alcohol consumption.
- Conditions present at birth, including polycystic kidney disease and cerebral arteriovenous malformation, an abnormal connection between arteries and vessels in the brain.



POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A RUPTURED ANEURYSM

If you experience these symptoms, call 911:

- Sudden, severe headache.
- Double vision.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Stiff neck.
- Sensitivity to light.
- Seizures.
- Loss of consciousness, even if brief.
- Cardiac arrest.



POSSIBLE SIGNS OF AN UNRUPTURED ANEURYSM

If you experience any of the following, consult your doctor right away:

- Drooping eyelid.
- Dilated pupil in one eye.
- Pain above and behind the eye.
- Changes in vision or double vision.
- Confusion.
- Weakness and/or numbness on one side of the body.

For more information about neurosurgical services available at RWJBarnabas Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/neurosurgery.





WHY CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS CAN'T WAIT

DON'T DELAY ROUTINE VACCINATIONS THAT WILL KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE FROM PREVENTABLE DISEASES.

The rate of routine childhood vaccinations—for diseases like measles, mumps, pertussis and more—has declined significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and pediatricians are worried.

“This decrease in vaccinations is a huge concern to us,” says Uzma Hasan, MD, Division Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Saint Barnabas Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.



UZMA HASAN, MD



PATRICIA WHITLEY-WILLIAMS, MD

“We don’t want to experience a resurgence of vaccine-preventable illnesses that we have previously had very good control over. We don’t want to see our patients develop life-threatening issues like encephalitis from measles or meningitis from *Haemophilus influenzae* type B, which are prevented by safe, routine childhood vaccinations.”

“Parents have been hesitant to bring their children to doctors’ offices or clinics for fear of exposing them to COVID-19,” explains Patricia Whitley-Williams, MD, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children’s Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Division Chief of Allergy, Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

“However, these offices are following all the recommended guidelines from

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” Dr. Whitley-Williams says. “Offices are sanitized in between patient appointments, plastic barriers are up, patients and visitors are checked for fever and masks are worn.” (For children, wearing a mask is recommended over the age of two years.)

“Pediatricians’ offices have protocols in place to keep well children and sick children apart,” adds Dr. Hasan. “Some set aside special time periods just for vaccinations. Many places require that people check in over the phone and wait outside in their cars. Patients and families then are brought straight into the office, so there’s no exposure to other people in a waiting room.”

Parents who have safety concerns should contact their pediatrician’s office to ensure that proper safety measures are in place, the doctors advise.

FOLLOW THE SCHEDULE

Timing is important when it comes to childhood vaccinations, Dr. Hasan says. “Please don’t put off having your child vaccinated because you think it’s better to space the shots out,” she says. “The schedule of vaccines has been carefully determined to minimize risk and get the best response for each age.” The recommended schedule for routine childhood vaccinations can be found at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

Expectant mothers should get the Tdap vaccine to protect the baby against pertussis, sometime between the 27th and 36th weeks of pregnancy, the CDC recommends. “That vaccine has been a game changer for protecting vulnerable newborns,” Dr. Hasan says.

One vaccine many parents are eager to explore for their children is the one for COVID-19, Dr. Hasan says. “I can’t tell you how many calls we get about that,” she says. “We’re eagerly awaiting the results of trials so we have safety data for the younger age groups, particularly for vulnerable populations such as those with kidney, heart or lung disease.”

In the meantime, routine childhood vaccinations should proceed as advised by your pediatrician. “Parents and guardians should be assured that these vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective,” says Dr. Whitley-Williams, “and they save lives.”

To find a pediatrician at RWJBarnabas Health, call **888.724.7123** or visit www.rwjbh.org/doctors.





Hard work at the Inpatient Chronic Pain Management Program enabled Olivia to compete in triathlons again.

A RACE AGAINST PAIN

**A COMPETITIVE ATHLETE
ACHIEVES HER DREAMS THANKS
TO AN INNOVATIVE PAIN
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.**



Olivia Christmann, 19, had been in pain for months when she came to Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) in New Brunswick.

A competitive athlete, Olivia had been training for the Age Group Triathlon World Championships in August 2015 when she crashed her bike while riding at 27 miles per hour. The impact of the crash left Olivia suffering from a broken nose, a torn gluteus maximus and several strains in her legs.

Though her injuries healed with time, her pain continued and got progressively worse. Finally, Olivia was diagnosed with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a form of chronic pain that develops after an injury but gets worse over time. While CRPS is not well understood, it's thought that high levels of nerve impulses are sent to the affected site.

Olivia tried several outpatient therapies, but her pain persisted, leaving

her unable to do most social or physical activities. Even walking to the car after a therapy session was an ordeal.

After researching other avenues for treatment, Olivia learned about the four-week Inpatient Chronic Pain Management Program at CSH.

"I was searching for a way to get my life back to normal," says Olivia. "During the initial evaluation, they asked me what my goals for the program were, and the first thing that I said was that I wanted to race again." She entered the program in January 2016.

WILL TO WIN

During her time at CSH, Olivia learned techniques for moving in a way that would help her manage the pain. Her natural competitiveness came out during timed activities like learning how to step in and out of a tub, or going for a walk

outside. "I always strived to beat my time from the day before," she recalls. Swimming, aquatic therapy and group and individual psychotherapy helped her learn to desensitize herself to pain and function normally.

After four weeks, Olivia was feeling more in control of her CRPS—and ready to get back to her senior year of high school. By the end of that year, she had been accepted into a prestigious university and was back to competitive sports.

In 2019, nearly four years after her accident, Olivia competed in the Age Group Triathlon World Championships, the same competition she'd been training for when she crashed her bike.

Olivia recalls the moments before the competition began: "I remember thinking, 'I can't believe I'm actually here!' And that's when it all hit me: There's no way I would have been able to do it if it weren't for my time at Children's Specialized Hospital. The treatment I got there gave me the chance to live out my dreams."

For more information about Children's Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized.

At Children's Specialized Hospital, we provide world-class care for children and young adults who face special health challenges across the state of New Jersey and beyond. We treat everything from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities, like brain and spinal cord injuries, to a full scope of developmental, behavioral and mental health concerns. We have convenient locations throughout the state: Bayonne, Clifton, East Brunswick, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Jersey City, Mountainside, New Brunswick, Newark, Somerset, Toms River and Warren.



THERE'S NOTHING MINOR ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN RWJBARNABAS HEALTH AND THE SOMERSET PATRIOTS.

When two powerhouse organizations combine forces, the result is a big win for the community. Fans and friends of the Somerset Patriots not only get to see great baseball—the team was recently selected as a Double-A affiliate for the 27-time world champion New York Yankees—they also learn new ways to stay healthy.

“Baseball players work at their craft every day to be the best that they can be. Their exercise routines and nutritional habits are rooted in the principles of living healthy. Like our community, they rely on experts to help guide them along the way. That’s why our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health is so important and works so well,” says Steve Kalafer, Somerset Patriots Chairman Emeritus and RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) trustee.

Over the 22-year history of the partnership, RWJBH has hosted regular health fairs, blood drives and food drives, and has provided information on how

community members can get access to key health services and screenings. Somerset Patriots players have benefited, too: RWJBH provides sports medicine services to keep players on the field of play.

For kids, the Somerset Patriots, in partnership with the health system, created the Hit a Home Run Program. Featuring former pitcher Nate Roe, the education program for schools (delivered virtually this school year) is designed to teach young children how to eat healthier, make smarter lifestyle choices, be a good teammate and friend and understand the importance of exercise.

FRIENDS IN NEED

The Somerset Patriots team has been a stalwart supporter of RWJBH. Last summer, the organization raised more than \$16,000 for the RWJBarnabas Health Emergency Response Fund to help support healthcare professionals as they served communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money was



At left, the Somerset Patriots and RWJBarnabas Health have recently enhanced their longtime partnership. Above, former pitcher Nate Roe delivers health information for area students (photo taken pre-pandemic).

raised in a variety of ways, including online auctions, merchandise sales of T-shirts and face masks, a pop-up shopping event and drive-in movies at TD Bank Ballpark.

“We are so grateful to the Somerset Patriots for their continued support of our hospital and our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, from donations of food for our staff to hosting blood drives and holding events to benefit our Emergency Response Fund,” says Tony Cava, President and CEO of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, a pillar of healthcare throughout Central New Jersey. “Their ongoing support helps ensure that our community has access to the comprehensive healthcare services they need.”

A SOURCE OF PRIDE

RWJBH employees, many of whom live locally, take great pride in the partnership, attending games and participating in group events. Players feel that spirit as well.

“We pride ourselves on being active in our community to help make a difference,” says Somerset Patriots President and General Manager Patrick McVerry. “Our fans are always there for us at the ballpark and for all of our efforts. We know that through our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health, we are able to make sure our fans and community are always in good hands where their health is concerned.”

To learn more about the Somerset Patriots and the RWJBH partnership, visit www.milb.com/somerset and www.rwjbh.org/partnerships. To donate to the RWJBH Emergency Response Fund, visit www.rwjbh.org/giving.

Creative Arts Therapist Alison Silver, MPS, ATR-BC, CFTP, encourages new moms with depression and anxiety to create artwork, then discuss it.



SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD) may develop during pregnancy or after childbirth. Signs include the following:

- persistent sadness
- anxiety
- feeling overwhelmed, hopeless or helpless
- irritability
- trouble concentrating
- having crying episodes
- panic attacks
- chronic fatigue
- loss of interest in enjoyable activities
- self-doubt
- changes in eating and/or sleeping habits

THE HEALING POWER OF ART

CREATIVE EXPRESSION CAN HELP NEW MOMS OVERCOME MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS.

Having a new baby is usually one of the happiest occasions in a person's life, but for some women, it's an especially trying time. About one in seven women experience postpartum depression, and up to 17 percent of women experience postpartum anxiety, according to the National Perinatal Association. These are known as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, or PMAD. While PMAD is the most common complication after childbirth, it often goes unrecognized and untreated. Fortunately, there's help at the Center for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC). The hospital is one of the only facilities in the area to offer an

innovative treatment: art therapy.

Alison Silver, MPS, ATR-BC, CFTP, a Creative Arts Therapist at MMC, encourages new mothers with PMAD to express themselves through drawing, Play-Doh and collages. She gives patients paper, pens, colored pencils, markers, glitter, yarn, paint pens and construction paper. "They create something, then discuss it," says Silver. "Their artwork opens the door for communication about their feelings. It allows their defenses to go down."

TAPPING INTO FEELINGS

Silver asks patients to tell her about their drawings. "I'll say, 'Walk me through this,'" she says. Once, she asked a patient to draw a picture of her

best day. The woman drew a picture of her house, yard, her kids on a swing set and herself. Silver asked, "Is anything missing from this picture?" The patient started crying because her husband was not in the picture. "She said she didn't feel that they were a team," says Silver. "They weren't communicating."

Silver, who recently wrote a chapter in a textbook called *Art Therapy and Childbearing Issues*, runs group and individual sessions via Zoom. Her patients may work with their own psychotherapist or her (she is a psychotherapist as well as an arts therapist). "The artwork is very effective because I can tap into women's feelings and help them," says Silver.

To learn more, visit www.rwjbh.org/monmouthPMAD. If you are in crisis, please call the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service at 732.923.6999.



Michael Szalay recovered from debilitating wounds thanks to expert care from nurse practitioner and wound specialist Donna Cuthill, APN.



LIFE-CHANGING HEALING

ONE FAMILY BENEFITED FROM EXPERT AND COMPASSIONATE CARE AT THE WOUND TREATMENT CENTER.

One of Michael Szalay's greatest pleasures is taking his 14-year-old son, Dylan, fishing for striped bass on Lake Takanassee near their home in Long Branch. In 2019, that became impossible because Michael experienced swelling in his legs and large, painful sores called ulcers. He had developed a condition called venous insufficiency, in which leg veins are unable to return blood to the heart efficiently. The condition causes skin ulcers. Michael's wounds leaked fluid and throbbed under pressure—even from a bandage. "I lost a lot of sleep and spent a lot of time sitting in a chair," recalls Michael, 51, who was forced to stop working. His inactivity led to a 140-pound weight gain.

EFFECTIVE TREATMENT

Michael was prescribed medication to ease the ulcer-related pain, but the sores worsened. In the meantime, he decided to seek medical attention for the weight gain, so he made an appointment at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC). He met Susan Porter, RN, BSN, BC, Clinical Director of Bariatrics, Specialty Clinics and Wound Care, who suggested that Michael see a specialist at the Wound Treatment Center.

In October 2020, Michael met with nurse practitioner and wound specialist Donna Cuthill, APN. She determined that the first order of business was to treat the infection that had arisen in the ulcers with intravenous antibiotics. Michael received this treatment during a three-day stay at the hospital. Soon afterward, the wounds stopped leaking fluid.

Next, Cuthill prescribed a time-tested treatment: compression therapy of the lower legs, which helps restore

normal blood flow and reduces swelling. Initially, Michael wore a specially treated gauze bandage called an Unna boot on each calf for a few weeks. Then, Cuthill switched him to compression stockings, which he wore for a month. "The wounds are gone," says Michael, who started exercising and has lost weight. He's planning to have bariatric surgery this spring.

ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY

Unfortunately, another member of the Szalay family also needed care at the Center. In November, Michael's wife, Kellie, suffered a fall at home that left her with a hematoma, a collection of blood under the skin, on her left thigh. The injury led to necrosis, in which tissue dies, and required surgery. The operation created a large wound on her thigh. Kellie, 51, a licensed nurse, chose to go to MMC "because of the remarkable care my husband received," she says.

Twice a week, Cuthill applied an antibiotic solution to the wound. Kellie also received vacuum-assisted therapy, which stimulates the growth of new tissue. She wore a device that applied negative pressure around the wound 24 hours a day. At press time, Kellie was planning to receive a skin graft at MMC to complete the wound healing process. She and Michael are grateful to all of their nurses, including Lenore Larson, RN, and Hannah Ababio, RN. "Everyone at the Center has been caring, compassionate and knowledgeable," says Kellie. "It's been a wonderful experience."



CUTTING-EDGE WOUND CARE

The Wound Treatment Center provides care for wounds resulting from accidents, burns and other forms of trauma. Many patients have skin ulcers related to chronic conditions, such as venous insufficiency and diabetes. The Center has a multidisciplinary team, which includes three nurses, a podiatrist, a vascular surgeon and a surgeon. The team provides cutting-edge treatments, such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, in which a patient lies in a chamber and breathes 100 percent oxygen under pressure. This therapy increases oxygen levels in the blood, which promotes wound healing. Patients with conditions like diabetic foot ulcers can benefit from hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Some patients with wounds related to vein problems and diabetes benefit from a novel treatment, which uses a bioengineered "skin substitute" called Apligraf.

To learn more about the Wound Treatment Center at Monmouth Medical Center, call **732.923.6060**.





STOPPING A STROKE IN ITS TRACKS

A PRIMARY STROKE CENTER CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke. Every four minutes, someone dies from a stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A stroke occurs when blood supply to the brain is cut off by a clot or burst vessel. When the brain is deprived of blood and oxygen, cells die.

The most common type of stroke is an ischemic stroke, in which a clot blocks blood flow to the brain. This accounts for about 87 percent of strokes. The other type of stroke, called a hemorrhagic stroke, occurs when a blood vessel ruptures. Left untreated, a stroke can lead to paralysis on one side of the body, speech and language problems, vision problems and memory loss.



JOSHUA MENDELSON, MD

A SIMPLE TREATMENT

The good news is that quick treatment can help you avoid long-term health problems and death. A drug

called tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, works by breaking up a clot and improving blood flow. To be effective, it must be administered within four-and-a-half hours. If tPA is not sufficient to break apart a large clot, a patient may need a mechanical thrombectomy, in which the clot is removed from the brain. If a patient needs this procedure, he or she is transferred to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, an RWJBarnabas Health “sister” hospital, which is a Comprehensive Stroke Center.

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has been designated as a Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission and New Jersey Department of Health. That means doctors can quickly evaluate and treat patients with signs of a stroke. At MMC, doctors aim to give tPA in 60 minutes or less, says Alicia Jones, Stroke Coordinator. “Patients don’t need to wait for the doctor to come to the hospital,” says Joshua Mendelson, MD, a neurologist at MMC. “We can evaluate stroke patients both on-site and remotely (via telemedicine) to create the best possible outcome.”

WHAT MAKES MMC A PRIMARY STROKE CENTER?

To be certified as a Primary Stroke Center, a hospital must meet the following criteria, according to the New Jersey Department of Health:

- Has a stroke team, which includes board-certified neurologists and radiologists
- Has neurology and Emergency Department personnel trained in diagnosing and treating stroke
- Neuroimaging services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Offers rehabilitation services
- Has transfer arrangements with a Comprehensive Stroke Center in New Jersey (Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick)
- Has a database or registry for tracking outcomes of stroke patients
- Educates the public about stroke

SIGNS OF A STROKE

If you have any of the following symptoms—which are represented in the “BE-FAST” acronym—seek medical treatment immediately:

- B** is for balance (loss of balance, sudden headache, dizziness)
- E** is for eyes (blurred vision)
- F** is for face (one side of the face is drooping)
- A** is for arms (weakness or numbness)
- S** is for slurred speech or trouble talking
- T** time to call **911**

If you are experiencing the symptoms of a stroke or are with someone who is, call 911. For more information about neuroscience at RWJBarnabas Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/neuroscience. To connect with a specialist, call 888.724.7123.





From left: Radiation oncologists Mitchell Weiss, MD, and Sang Sim, MD, and Stephanie Ullo, Director, Radiation Oncology, with the tomotherapy equipment.

TARGETING PROSTATE CANCER

**PATIENTS WILL SOON BENEFIT FROM FASTER,
MORE EFFECTIVE RADIATION THERAPY.**

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has long been a leader in radiation therapy in New Jersey. The hospital was one of the first in the state to have linear accelerator equipment, which delivers precise doses of radiation to a tumor without damaging normal tissue. As part of the hospital's commitment to high-quality patient care, MMC began offering "image-guided radiation therapy" (IGRT) more than a decade ago with the purchase of a tomotherapy unit. Tomotherapy combines radiation treatments with computed tomography (CT) scans. These scans

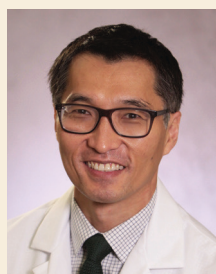
determine the exact location of the tumor during each treatment. What's more, tomotherapy allows radiation beams to be directed from nearly any angle. "It lets us 'shape' the radiation very effectively, enabling us to deliver a full dose to the cancer and a minimal dose to surrounding tissues," says Mitchell Weiss, MD, Chair of Radiation Oncology at MMC and Director of Network Integration and Quality, Radiation Oncology, RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region. He notes that MMC is the only hospital in the area that offers this technique.

A MORE PRECISE TREATMENT

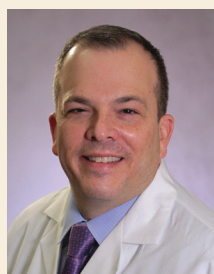
Starting this summer, patients with prostate cancer who need radiation therapy may need fewer treatment sessions and experience fewer side effects. The Institute

for Advanced Radiation Oncology (IARO) at MMC is upgrading to new equipment called the Radixact tomotherapy system. It has a significant advantage over older tomotherapy units. The new equipment allows radiation oncologists to track the malignant target in real time and modify a treatment plan in minutes during a patient's radiation therapy session. This custom treatment, which is called synchrony adaptive radiotherapy, can be altered multiple times, allowing the maximum radiation dose to be delivered to the target tissue and a minimal dose to surrounding tissues.

Since higher doses of radiation can be delivered during each treatment, fewer sessions are required. Most men need only 28 sessions, and they may finish treatment in as few as five sessions, says Sang Sim, MD, a radiation oncologist at MMC. This is exciting news for patients because "we can cure prostate cancer with minimal side effects," says Dr. Weiss.



SANG SIM, MD



MITCHELL WEISS, MD

To learn more about advanced radiation treatment options at Monmouth Medical Center, please call **844.CANCERNJ**.





CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE BENEFITING FROM THE HOSPITAL'S EFFORTS TO KEEP THEM HEALTHY.



The Community Health and Social Impact Department at Monmouth Medical Center has supplied area residents with personal protective equipment, ready-to-eat meals and free flu shots.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on people's lives, causing financial hardship and stress. Fortunately, the Community Health and Social Impact Department at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has stepped in to assist the most vulnerable members of the community. Its efforts have had a significant impact on the well-being of thousands of area residents.

Providing COVID-19 protection

The Department distributed nearly 1,500 personal protective equipment kits, which contained five masks, hand sanitizer, five gloves, a disposable thermometer and alcohol wipes. The label featured information about COVID-19 prevention (wash your hands often, wear a mask and social distance to protect yourself and others). The kits were distributed to several organizations in the community, including the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry at Christ the King Parish; senior buildings in the Long Branch Housing Authority; St. Brigid's Pantry at St. James Episcopal Church; the Long Branch Senior Center; Community Affairs Resource Center in Asbury Park; and Orthopedic and Antenatal Testing Clinics for underserved people.

The recipients were grateful. "A woman came last week without a mask," wrote Donna Cetrulo of St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in a letter to Jean McKinney, Regional Director, Community Health and Social Impact & Community Investment. "She was very flustered and embarrassed. I gave her one of your mask bags. She put on a mask and was happy to come back to the table safely for the rest of her groceries, bread, meat, etc. Two hundred families will have more effective COVID prevention, thanks to you."

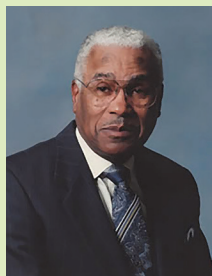
Feeding the homeless

The Department gave 3,000 people five days' worth of ready-to-eat meals, which consisted of calorie-dense foods that don't require refrigeration. The meals were distributed to organizations

that serve the homeless and people in need. MMC delivered the meals to St. Brigid's Pantry at St. James Episcopal Church in Long Branch, where they were stored for use by the Long Branch Police Department and Ezekiel's Wheels. Several hundred additional meals were given to the Jersey Shore Rescue Mission for men in Asbury Park. Some were kept at the hospital for the Emergency, Case Management and Security departments, which distribute the food to homeless people and others in need at discharge.

Offering free flu shots

In early December, MMC offered flu vaccines free of charge to vulnerable people in the community. Melissa Gonzalez, MD, an RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group family practitioner, administered nearly 40 vaccines at the Community Affairs Resource Center in



JAMES PARKER JR., MD

HONORING THE PARKER FAMILY LEGACY

The T. Thomas Fortune Cultural Center, a National Historic Landmark in Red Bank, is the former home of T. Thomas Fortune, a Black journalist, writer and civil rights activist. In 2019, it was established as a gathering place for education, community outreach and public programming. Now the Cultural Center is partnering with Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) to honor Black doctors, including the Parker family, who have improved the health of area residents. "We will be financially supporting the T. Thomas Fortune House

in Red Bank to create a center to honor the family legacy of Dr. Parker and the contributions of Black individuals in the medical field," says Eric Carney, President and CEO of MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

The Cultural Center is creating a permanent exhibit called the Parker Family Legacy Room, which will spotlight the contributions of the Parker family to Monmouth County. Parker family members included a general practitioner, dentist and pharmacist who cared for generations of Red Bank residents. James W. Parker Jr., MD, served as the first Black physician on staff at MMC. He treated patients from all backgrounds, including those who were unable to pay for their care. These doctors are the namesake of the Parker Family Health Center, which provides free healthcare to area residents without adequate income or health insurance.

The Parker Family Legacy Room will be used for book signings, lectures, discussions and film screenings. The Center is also developing a lecture series focused on disparities in medicine. It's creating an annual scholarship fund and internship endowment for the Fortune Tellers program, which consists of local students. "I'm excited about Monmouth Medical Center's involvement," says Gilda Rogers, Executive Director of the T. Thomas Fortune Cultural Center. "Together, we can advance social justice and improve the health of the community."

Asbury Park. In addition, community health nurses administered 50 vaccines in Lakewood and Long Branch. "This was one of the most gratifying experiences," says McKinney. "These vaccines went to the most vulnerable people in the community."

Addressing vaccine hesitancy

Starting in January, the Community Health and Social Impact Department held a series of virtual programs in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Department to address vaccine hesitancy, particularly among minority communities. During an event called "The Black Church and the COVID-19 Vaccine," a panel discussed the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and why it's important for the community—particularly those of color—to be vaccinated.

For a complete list of Community Health Education programs, visit www.rwjbh.org/Monmouth and click on the calendar of events.



Your family has no history of breast cancer. You still need a mammogram.

It's curious how healthy habits can become go-to excuses. But don't excuse yourself from getting a mammogram. At Monmouth Medical Center, we offer the latest in comprehensive breast health services including screening and diagnostic mammography, genetic testing, breast biopsy, breast surgery and more — like peace of mind. And with breast health centers conveniently located in Monmouth and Ocean Counties, finding us is simple, too.

Making excuses is easy. Making an appointment is easier. Schedule your visit to the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Breast Center at rwjbh.org/mammo

Monmouth Medical Center

RWJBarnabas HEALTH

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey
RUTGERS HEALTH

Let's beat cancer together.



Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Together RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute offer the most advanced cancer treatment options close to home.



**We've taken every precaution to keep you safe.
So if you've put off cancer care due to COVID-19, please don't delay it any longer.**