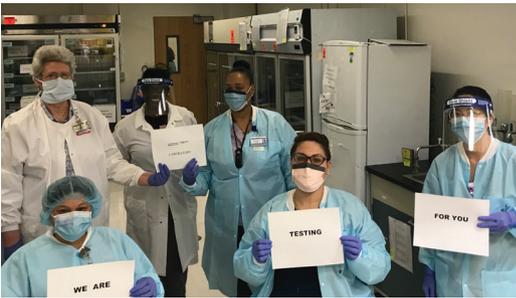


A Publication of
SAINT BARNABAS MEDICAL CENTER

COVID-19 SPECIAL ISSUE

healthy *together*



**HEROES
WORK HERE**

**NOW YOUR
DOCTOR IS JUST A
CLICK AWAY**

**A LIFESAVING
FRIENDSHIP**



**WELCOME
BACK!**

**WE'RE READY
FOR YOU**

Staying Healthy Together

For all of us who call New Jersey home, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a sobering reality. Every one of us has been affected in some way, and some have lost loved ones. To them, we extend our sincerest condolences.

Throughout these extraordinary months, New Jerseyans have come together to encourage each other and the hospitals that care for their communities. At RWJBarnabas Health, we truly have been inspired by the support we've received, and offer our heartfelt thanks for every donation and card, and for the countless other gestures of caring.

Most of all, of course, we wish to express our gratitude to our amazing staff—doctors and nurses caring for patients; hospital workers in the offices and on the floors; researchers seeking a cure and a vaccine; those charged with carrying out demanding new cleaning procedures; and those who have quickly adapted our facilities to care for COVID-19 patients.

Now, it's important to look ahead and begin caring for ourselves again. During the height of the pandemic, many people delayed getting healthcare—a choice that can have devastating consequences. Please rest assured that we've gone above and beyond all the measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and other national and regional experts to keep everyone in our facilities safe.

In preparation for your return, we have implemented a number of safety procedures to protect the health of our patients, employees and visitors. These include providing masks at the entrances to our facility and requiring their use by all; symptom and temperature screening upon entry; continued use of PPE by staff when treating COVID-19 positive and non-COVID patients; stringent cleaning and disinfection; continued visitation restrictions; social and physical distancing; and exemplary hand hygiene. Thank you for choosing Saint Barnabas Medical Center and being our partner in protecting the health and well-being of our community.

We look forward to supporting your good health in whatever way we can. Welcome back.

Yours in good health,



BARRY H. OSTROWSKY
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
RWJBARNABAS HEALTH




STEPHEN P. ZIENIEWICZ, FACHE
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SAINT BARNABAS MEDICAL CENTER



HEALTH NEWS



STRAIGHT "As" FOR SAFETY

With the Spring 2020 Hospital Safety Grade, Saint Barnabas Medical Center has been awarded an "A" grade from The Leapfrog Group for the 17th consecutive time. Saint Barnabas Medical Center is one of 32 hospitals and the only hospital in a seven-state area, including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island and Maryland, to have achieved straight "As" since the survey began in 2012.

"Patient safety is the priority at Saint Barnabas Medical Center. Achieving straight 'As' for the 17th time in a row is indicative of our unwavering focus on safety and quality for our patients and their families. We are extremely proud of our entire healthcare team and their commitment and dedication to being a High Reliability Organization with outstanding outcomes," says Stephen P. Zieniewicz, FACHE, President and CEO.

Saint Barnabas Medical Center | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**

94 Old Short Hills Rd., Livingston, NJ 07039
973.322.5000 | www.rwjbh.org/saintbarnabas

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-  RWJBarnabas Health
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healthy *together* contents

COVID-19 SPECIAL ISSUE



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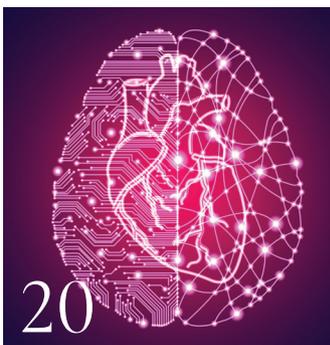
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- 2. WELCOME LETTER.** A community update from our CEOs.
- 4. HEROES WORK HERE.** We're beyond grateful for the incredible work of our teams on the COVID-19 front lines.
- 6. DONORS ARE HEROES, TOO.** A sampling of the valuable—and much appreciated—support we've received during the pandemic.

- 9. STAYING STRONG WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING.** Simple steps can help you regain a feeling of control.
- 10. 6 QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEMEDICINE, ANSWERED.** You don't have to be a technology whiz to have a video visit with your doctor.
- 12. CLINICAL TRIALS: WHAT EVERY CANCER PATIENT SHOULD KNOW.** A trial offers patients a chance to benefit from the latest treatment.

14. NEW WAYS TO LEAD IN CANCER TREATMENT. Collaboration and innovation are driving a new era in oncology.

15. ADVANCED OPTIONS FOR TREATING AUTISM. Telehealth services and intensive treatments offer new help.

16. POWER PARTNERSHIPS. Working together to help make New Jersey healthier.

17. YOUR SUPPORT SUSTAINS US. Communities have stepped up for their local hospitals—and you can still help.

18. COMPASSION IN ACTION. We don't have the space to tell all our stories of care and courage. Here are just a few.

20. SAFE AND SOUND IN THE E.D. Rigorous procedures ensure the safety of Emergency Department patients and staff.

22. WELCOME BACK! COVID-19 testing of staff and patients, extreme cleaning and many other measures make our facilities safe for care.



1



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3

HEROES WORK HERE

Our providers and staff have risen to—and well above—the unprecedented challenges of caring for patients with COVID-19. Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC) is proud and grateful beyond words for the indomitable spirit and incredible work done by our teams on the front lines.



4



5



6



7



1 MOBILE HEALTH: During the pandemic, the first responders of RWJBarnabas Health Mobile Health Services have stood ready to provide care in any emergency.

2 FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC: Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurses at the medical center brave the front lines, tackling the crisis one patient at a time.

3 CREATIVE INSPIRATION: Uplifting art appears all around the medical center, courtesy of our amazing Child Life and Creative Arts Department.

4 AFTER CLAPPING OUT THE 500TH PATIENT, team members including physicians, nurses and members from Environmental Services gather to celebrate the moment.

5 CARING FOR MOMS-TO-BE: Members of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the ICU provide coordinated maternity care to our patients affected by COVID-19.

6 ARTISTIC SUPPORT: The Child Life and Creative Arts Department decorated white boards with messages of support.

7 MISSION CONTROL: Team members staffing the COVID-19 Command Center distribute personal protective equipment and monitor supply inventory.

8 SUITED UP AND READY: The ED staff has been working hard to triage and treat patients.

9 HEROES PARADE: SBMC was honored with a Salute to Healthcare Heroes parade, organized by Livingston Township.

10 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: Dedicated staff and providers from RWJBarnabas Health Behavioral Health Center and Network have been available 24/7 to meet critical mental and emotional health needs during the pandemic.

11 IT TAKES A TEAM: The heroes at the medical center work tirelessly to care for patients and their families.

12 PEER RECOVERY: Certified Peer Recovery Specialists from the RWJBarnabas Health Institute for Prevention and Recovery offer support to patients with substance use disorders.

13 EXCELLENT CARE: Thank you to all SBMC nurses for their compassionate care and diligence at all times.

To share your thanks or make a donation in support of our healthcare heroes, visit www.rwjbh.org/heroes.



ARE HEROES, TOO

At Saint Barnabas Medical Center, we've dedicated everything we have to fighting COVID-19. And just as we've had the community's back, you've had ours, with a steady outpouring of food, supplies, personal items, love and financial support. Please know that each and every gift has helped to keep us going. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!





2 THE GIRL SCOUTS donated cookies for SBMC heroes.

3 FLYING MEATBALLS in East Hanover donated food to hardworking nurses.

4 THE CHINESE ASSOCIATION donated personal protective equipment. Christopher Freer, DO, Clinical Chairperson of Emergency Medicine at SBMC, helped distribute the gear.

5 BONES COFFEE COMPANY helped the staff keep going with generous donations of coffee.

6 CHILDREN'S SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL: The Long Term Care team at CSH in Mountainside thanks the Front Line Appreciation Group for a breakfast sandwiches donation.

7 ROMAN GOURMET of Maplewood sent delicious pizza. Richard Pitera, MD, Chair of Anesthesiology and Stuart Geffner, MD, Surgeon-in-Chief, shared with their teams.

8 MILLBURN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS donated water bottles to the heroes at SBMC in appreciation of their courage and dedication.

1 FIRST LADY OF NEW JERSEY TAMMY MURPHY with Manraj Singh and Sunny Sandhu, national leads and co-founders of Connect for COVID-19, a program of Digital Health Connectivity Project, presented SBMC with a donation of 50 tablets. These will facilitate video calls between expecting and new mothers and their loved ones as well as support prenatal telehealth appointments.

To say thank you or to donate for our healthcare heroes, visit www.rwjbh.org/give.



I've got cancer but I also have CyberKnife®-trained experts on my side.



Saint Barnabas Medical Center is proud to offer CyberKnife, a precise, non-invasive technology that fights cancer in five treatments or fewer, with less pain,

and virtually no side effects or recovery time.

And you can expect even more, including expanded access to clinical trials, through our partnership with the state's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

Visit rwjbh.org/beatcancer
or call 844-CANCERNJ.

RUTGERS

Cancer Institute
of New Jersey

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The Cancer Center at
**Saint Barnabas
Medical Center**

RWJBarnabas
HEALTH

Let's beat cancer together.





STAYING STRONG WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

SIMPLE STEPS CAN HELP YOU REGAIN A FEELING OF CONTROL.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought all kinds of uncertainty—to our finances, our health and our ability to make plans.

“People have lost an important aspect of control over their activities,” says Frank Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP, Senior Vice President, Behavioral Health and Addiction, RWJBarnabas Health, and President and CEO of Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. “As a result, we’re seeing a lot of people feeling stressed—and even a little more than that, feeling *distressed*.”

“We all had a rhythm and routine for our days,” he continues, “from what time we took a shower to how we dressed for work to the kinds of things we did for fun. Now all of those old rhythms are challenged, and that makes people feel confused and off-balance.”



FRANK GHINASSI, PhD

While that’s a perfectly normal reaction, Dr.

Ghinassi says it’s important to take the next step. “Ask yourself, ‘What can I do in this new reality to help myself feel better and more in control?’” The answer lies in reintroducing predictability, to the degree possible in this unpredictable time.



• **Create a new routine.** “Establish a new set of patterns,” advises Dr. Ghinassi. “Go to bed and get up in a regular way. Eat at set intervals, not all day long just because you’re not far from the refrigerator. Work out or take a walk regularly. These new routines will become familiar and comforting.”

• **Make plans to socialize with others.** “Meaningful connection with family and friends is not going to happen automatically,” says



Dr. Ghinassi. “Create ways to communicate with people who are important to you, using FaceTime, letters, phone calls or whatever medium you do best. And keep in mind that Snapchat and Instagram are one-way communication, not true socializing.”

• **Build a new set of activities that give you pleasure.**

“A lot of things we like to do can’t happen now because they involve going to crowded places like movie theaters, restaurants, concerts and stadiums. We need to find activities that will bring us pleasure and are doable within our current limitations,” says Dr. Ghinassi. “That could involve playing or listening to music, streaming films, gardening, painting or any other enjoyable hobby.”



If social distancing has led to behaviors that could be destructive, such as overeating or drinking too much, or if the blues have crossed the line into depression, don’t hesitate to reach out for help. “There are many front doors to behavioral healthcare,” Dr. Ghinassi says. “You can ask a trusted healthcare provider to recommend a counselor. If your employer has an Employee Assistance Program, take advantage of that. Seek out your local mental health facility or call the New Jersey Hopeline at 855.654.6735. Call the RWJBarnabas Health Access Center, which is available 24/7, at 800.300.0628.”



• **And take heart.** “We’ll get through this,” says Dr. Ghinassi. “Humans are enormously adaptable. Through millennia of plagues, famines, wars and pestilence, we’ve risen to every challenge. It’s in our DNA. We’re going to learn and restructure, draw strength from each other and find solutions.”

For help accessing mental health services, call the RWJBarnabas Health Access Center at **800.300.0628**.



6 QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEMEDICINE, ANSWERED

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A TECHNOLOGY WHIZ TO HAVE A VIDEO VISIT WITH YOUR DOCTOR.

Virtual online doctor visits have been available for some time—but since the COVID-19



ANDY ANDERSON, MD

pandemic, they've soared. "During just one week in April, doctors in our medical group conducted more than 10,000 telemedicine visits," says Andy Anderson, MD, President and Chief

Executive Officer of the RWJBarnabas Health medical group.

Stay-home orders during the lockdown have played a huge role in the increase, but other causes are also speeding up telemedicine's adoption. Dr. Anderson tells how and why:

1 What factors are contributing to telemedicine's surge?

Historically, demand for telemedicine was driven by urgent issues, rather than by routine or other kinds of care. Habit has played a role, too—the expectation that

patients and physicians need to physically be together in order to get the best possible care.

Now, there's a greater openness to using technology platforms in all realms of our lives. Those platforms are increasingly sophisticated, so that patients and providers can really see each other, see the parts of the body in question and read each other's expressions.

In the RWJBarnabas Health medical group, we have an easy-to-use platform for telemedicine visits. It's as simple as a click to get into a virtual room for an appointment. It's also secure and is fully HIPAA-compliant.

2 What are some examples of conditions that can be treated in a virtual visit?

Let's say a person falls and cuts himself. A telemedicine visit can help determine whether he needs stitches and/or an antibiotic. Symptoms and treatment for a urinary tract infection can also be discussed virtually. If someone has a sore throat, he or she can show the back of the throat and tonsils to the doctor via video.

Chronic conditions, such as COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease], congestive heart failure or asthma could be managed through a video visit, as a physician is able to observe whether a person is short of breath, for example, or whether his legs are swollen.

Diabetes that is not well controlled can also be discussed, as the patient can report his blood sugar levels and medication can be adjusted accordingly.

It's important to note that in any of these cases, a visit can begin as a video visit and then become an in-person visit if the condition warrants it. If you aren't sure what the best course of action is—video, in-person office visit or Emergency Department visit—don't feel you have the burden of having to make the decision on your own. Call your physician's office and have a conversation.

3 What about well visits and checkups?

Clearly, some exams and procedures require an in-person visit. However, many aspects of a wellness visit, specifically a Medicare Annual Wellness Visit, can be conducted virtually. A physician can ask about, for example, colon cancer screenings or mammograms, home safety and more. Patients like that they can save time and don't have to travel.

In addition, we're hoping to see increased use of monitoring devices that can transmit information from patient homes to physician offices, including blood pressure monitors, blood glucose monitors, pulse oximeters and even wireless scales.

4 Am I at risk for contagion if I visit a physician's office?

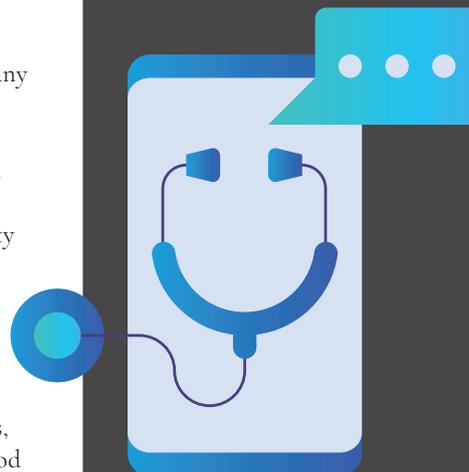
At RWJBarnabas Health medical group offices, we've taken the necessary steps to make it very safe to visit in person. We have social distancing plans, including the use of Plexiglas barriers, a distance line at checkout areas, modified waiting room seating and limitations on the number of patients scheduled during a specified time frame. We also follow rigorous cleaning regimens, offer hand sanitizer stations and more.

5 Are telemedicine visits covered by insurance?

During the early stages of the pandemic, Medicare, Medicaid and many private insurances expanded their coverage for telemedicine. The situation is evolving, so check with your insurer, but our sense is that coverage for telemedicine will continue to expand.

6 How will telemedicine change healthcare in the future?

While the COVID-19 crisis has pushed us into this world fast, I think healthcare will be sticking with telemedicine from now on. Telemedicine is not a solution for everything, but it is a solution for a lot



CHECKLIST FOR THE BEST VIRTUAL VISIT

- Be sure the device you're using (phone, tablet, computer) is fully charged.
- Make the call from a well-lit and quiet room to enhance the quality of the video and audio feeds.
- If you need an interpreter, let your physician's office know ahead of time.
- In advance, write down your symptoms, when they began and how frequent they are, and any medications you're taking.
- Keep a pen and notepad handy during the visit.

more things than we realized. It's a great tool to have in our toolkit.

The most important message we have for patients is to continue to make your health a priority. Don't put off care if you aren't feeling well, or postpone contacting your physician for help managing any chronic health conditions. Whether virtually or in person, your provider is there to help you.

To connect with an RWJBarnabas Health medical group provider, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/medicalgroup**.





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 RWJBarnabas Health,
 together 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.
 For more information, call
 844.CANCERNJ or visit
www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.

CLINICAL TRIALS: WHAT EVERY CANCER PATIENT SHOULD KNOW

**TRIALS OFFER PATIENTS A CHANCE TO
 BENEFIT FROM THE LATEST TREATMENT.**

If you or a loved one is diagnosed with cancer, you'll want to seek the highest possible level of care—and clinical trials can be a critical aspect of that care.

“Clinical trials offer tomorrow’s treatments today,” says Howard S. Hochster, MD, FACP, Director, Oncology Research for RWJBarnabas Health, and Associate Director, Clinical Research and Director, GI Oncology for Rutgers Cancer Institute. “As the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey



HOWARD S. HOCHSTER, MD

and RWJBarnabas Health provide patients access to a wide range of clinical trials, many of which are not available elsewhere. We do this at Rutgers Cancer Institute in New Brunswick and

across the state at RWJBarnabas Health hospitals.” What should patients know about clinical trials? Dr. Hochster explains:

What happens in a clinical trial?

Clinical trials are research studies that evaluate new treatment options for diseases and help doctors learn which treatments are most effective.

Generally, clinical trials evaluate the safety and effectiveness of new drugs, use current drugs in a new manner or combine drugs to evaluate their effectiveness. Every clinical trial must be approved by regulatory authorities to be sure the scientific evidence merits this kind of investigation and that it's ethically sound.

Clinical trials are undertaken only when we have evidence that the new approach is likely to be better than the standard treatment. Patients should speak with their physicians about the risks and benefits, including possible side effects, of the treatment being studied.

During a trial, patients will have many staff members paying attention to them—physicians and research staff including nurses, data managers and others—whose job is to make sure they get the treatment exactly as written in the protocol.

Who's eligible for a clinical trial?

Every patient who has a cancer diagnosis should ask whether a clinical trial might be right for him or her, and should consider a clinical trial at every step of the cancer journey. Sometimes a trial isn't appropriate at the beginning, but may be later on.

Requirements for participation vary. Criteria may include age, gender, type and stage of cancer, other existing medical conditions and treatment history.

Before patients can participate in a clinical trial, they must sign an informed consent document, which explains all aspects of the trial as well as alternative treatment options.

What are some examples of cancer research taking place in clinical trials?

For years, everyone with certain cancer diagnoses received the same type of



A CLINICAL TRIAL FOR COVID-19 TREATMENT

Rutgers Cancer Institute is spearheading a statewide clinical trial for the drug hydroxychloroquine as a potential treatment for COVID-19 patients. Though the trial is not limited to cancer patients, Rutgers Cancer Institute is well positioned to lead such a study because of its extensive experience with clinical trials as the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Hydroxychloroquine, while a subject of much public discussion, has not yet been tested in a large, controlled clinical trial to determine its effectiveness. “Until we get the results of a clinical trial, we just don't know if there's any role for hydroxychloroquine in treatment for COVID-19,” says Rutgers Cancer Institute Director Steven K. Libutti, MD, who is also Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, RWJBarnabas Health, and Vice Chancellor, Cancer Programs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences.

“Both the initial hype about the benefits of hydroxychloroquine and the stigma that followed were inappropriate. With this trial, we'll have well-analyzed data from a well-conducted study in order to make a recommendation about that agent's use.”

THREE PATHWAYS

The study consists of three “arms.” One will test hydroxychloroquine in conjunction with the antibiotic azithromycin; one will test hydroxychloroquine alone; and one will provide supportive care for six days, followed by a course of hydroxychloroquine. Patients' blood will be tested for levels of the SARS CoV-2 virus prior to treatment and at regular intervals thereafter. The study is open to people who are age 18 or over, have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and meet other eligibility requirements.



STEVEN K. LIBUTTI, MD

In addition to Rutgers Cancer Institute in New Brunswick, the trial is being offered at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick; Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch; Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston; Morristown Medical Center; Overlook Medical Center in Summit; and University Hospital in Newark.

For information on how to take part in the trial, call Rutgers Cancer Institute's Office of Human Research Services at **732.235.7356** or email statewide_research@cinj.rutgers.edu.

treatment for their cancers, but not everyone reacted the same way. Now we're able to use clinical trials to make progress in *precision medicine*, where we can specifically target, on a molecular level, the gene mutations or changes that make an individual's normal cells turn into cancer cells.

Another exciting area now is *immunotherapy*—using a person's own immune system to fight cancer. We've learned that cancer cells have ways to mask themselves from the immune system. Today, we've seen many breakthroughs in drugs that restore the body's ability

to fight off cancer cells.

CAR T-cell therapy is another promising area of research. It involves obtaining immune cells from a patient, reengineering them in a lab to make them as effective at fighting cancer as possible, then reinjecting them into the patient's body. This results in a “living” therapy with ongoing benefit.

Currently, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, in conjunction with Rutgers Cancer Institute, is one of only two certified programs in the state to offer this form of immunotherapy.

To learn more about clinical trials, visit www.cinj.org/clinical-trials. To speak with a clinical trial navigator to explore your options, call the Oncology Access Center at **844.CANCERNJ**.



NEW WAYS TO LEAD IN CANCER TREATMENT



COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION ARE DRIVING A NEW ERA IN ONCOLOGY.

Every week, up to 40 of New Jersey’s top cancer experts virtually convene as part of the new N.J. Statewide Cancer Programs Collaboration—a unique approach initiated and implemented by Steven K. Libutti, MD, Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, and Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, RWJBarnabas Health.

“As the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, we felt that it was important that we communicate with other cancer programs in New Jersey during the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Dr. Libutti. “We felt we could learn quite a bit from hearing about other experiences, and that each program shouldn’t have to go through the learning curve on its own.”

In addition to Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health, all major cancer programs in the state participate, including those at Atlantic Health System; Capital Health Cancer Center; MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper; John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center, Hackensack Meridian Health; Hunterdon Healthcare; Inspira Health Network; Regional Cancer Care Associates; Saint Peter’s Healthcare System; St. Luke’s University Health Network, Warren; Summit Medical Group; Trinitas Comprehensive Cancer Center; and Penn Medicine|Virtua Cancer Program.

MANY MINDS

Subgroups in the areas of medical oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology and operations meet throughout the week to discuss topics relevant to their programs. On Friday mornings, all participants join a call to exchange information and insights.

“We’ve come up with plans for how to safely continue and then augment surgical oncology and other care during the pandemic,” says Dr. Libutti. “What are the right testing regimens to use? How do you open up surgery facilities safely to protect patients and providers from exposure? Which treatment regimens can be delivered at home, and which can be delayed without bad consequences for patients?”



STEVEN K. LIBUTTI, MD

“Oncology itself is a very collaborative field, because so many modalities are used to treat a cancer patient in a very coordinated way,” continues Dr. Libutti. “It’s not a huge leap for us to extend collaborations beyond the borders of health systems.”

Patients in New Jersey will reap the benefits. “Our state sees 50,000 new diagnoses and 16,000 deaths from cancer every year,” says Dr. Libutti. “We’re going to leverage the strengths of each program to work together to help cancer patients.”

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VIRTUAL CARE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

The Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, in partnership with RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), had already begun a pilot program for cancer consultations via video. The pandemic accelerated the expansion of the plan to almost all of the groups’ cancer specialists.

The specialists are using a secure platform, which is private and simple for patients to access. In addition to convenience, telemedicine has a number of benefits for cancer patients:

- The elimination of potential exposure for patients with compromised immune systems
- The ability to have several specialists virtually present at the meeting
- The capacity to have geographically distant family members at the meeting
- The means to effectively share information with patients. “As I’m talking to a patient, I can show a picture of, for example, lymph nodes, and also type out instructions on the screen and then email these to the patient,” says Andrew M. Evens, DO, MSc, Associate Director for Clinical Services and Director, Lymphoma Program, Rutgers Cancer Institute, and Medical Director, Oncology Service Line, RWJBH.

“As we always say, ‘Cancer doesn’t travel well,’” explains Dr. Evens. “Telemedicine



ANDREW M. EVENS, DO

doesn’t replace in-person care, but we knew there was an appetite for this service. Who wants to drive an hour or more on the parkway or turnpike for a consult when you don’t have to?”



ADVANCED OPTIONS FOR TREATING AUTISM



Children's Specialized Hospital®

An RWJBarnabas Health facility

TELEHEALTH SERVICES AND INTENSIVE TREATMENTS OFFER NEW HELP.

Stay-at-home orders during the pandemic have posed particular challenges for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Deprived of face-to-face services, they have been lacking the stimulation and training they need, and have spent much less time interacting with others than usual.

"It's a situation where problem behavior is more likely to occur," says Wayne Fisher, a professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Director of the Rutgers Center for Autism Research, Education and Service (RUCARES). "We wanted to provide support for kids and families to help them manage the situation more effectively."

The result was the development of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) Short-Term Telehealth Services provided by Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH). The services begin with a quick-start evaluation. For children with severe problems whose behavior may be dangerous to themselves, a behavior stabilization and safety program is developed in two 90-minute appointments. For children with mild to

moderate ASD, a quick-start behavior management program and behavior management group are available over the course of eight appointments via a simple-to-access, private telehealth platform.

Though telehealth services for people with autism have been available in other states, it was not an option in New Jersey until an executive order as part of the COVID-19 response allowed it. Fisher hopes the trend continues.

"This method has many benefits. It really helps families, many of whom travel quite a distance for in-person specialized care, in terms of convenience," he says. "For specialists, there's therapeutic value in seeing the child and family at home, under naturalistic conditions."

EXPANDED SERVICES

The ABA short-term telehealth program is part of an expansion of autism services that CSH now offers through a collaboration with RUCARES. This summer will see the opening of CSH RUCARES, the first center of its kind in New Jersey dedicated to innovative research, education and service to support children and adults with ASD.

CSH RUCARES will accept patients for a new Severe Behavior Disorders Program, which will provide specialized

services to children and adolescents with autism and other developmental disabilities who display dangerous behavior such as self-injury and aggression. Patients will undergo intensive outpatient treatment from a team of board-certified behavior analysts and registered behavior technicians. "Our program has a data-based approach based on empirical research, and all of our staff and faculty are highly trained," explains Fisher, who is the Director of CSH RUCARES.

CSH is also expanding its Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program with a new program for children who have not progressed through traditional feeding programs. "It's a data-based, intensive, goal-driven day program. We see patients for about eight weeks, then transition to outpatient follow-up services once or twice a week," says Cathleen Piazza, Director of the Pediatric Feeding Disorders Program at CSH and a professor in the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. "We also find telehealth services very valuable because we can work with and see the patient where he or she eats, in real time."

To learn more about Children's Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit **www.childrens-specialized.org**.

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. Our locations in Bayonne, Clifton, East Brunswick, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Jersey City, Mountainside, New Brunswick, Newark, Toms River and Warren treat everything from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries to developmental and behavioral issues like autism and mental health.



Rutgers Men's Basketball co-captain Akwasi Yeboah shared important safety information and the need to fight the virus together with fans via social media.



For the Somerset Patriots' Virtual Opening Day, Michael Rodricks, MD, threw the ceremonial first pitch to Brittany Roper, RN. Both work in the Critical Care Unit at RWJUH Somerset.



The Lakewood BlueClaws held a remote game of "Horse" (renamed "Claws") to support RWJBH healthcare heroes. The winning hospital gets a private field day at FirstEnergy Park.



Seton Hall Men's Basketball Coach Kevin Willard sent a video recognizing and thanking our healthcare heroes.



NJ Devils Hall of Fame goaltender Martin Brodeur provided video messages of strength and support to our team on the front lines.



NJ Devils star Travis Zajac led a stick tap at 7 p.m. nightly across social media platforms to celebrate and support all frontline workers.



Special Olympics New Jersey athletes offered video recognition for doctors, nurses and hospital workers saving lives and treating patients at RWJBH facilities.



POWER PARTNERSHIPS

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP MAKE NEW JERSEY HEALTHIER

At RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), we have always been committed to meaningful partnerships with organizations that share our vision to create healthier communities. Their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, have taken their support to a whole new level. "We asked our partners to help us in several ways—through donations, through disseminating educational information and through support for our frontline healthcare heroes," says Justin Edelman, Senior Vice President, Corporate Partnerships, RWJBH. "The response was beyond what we ever could have imagined."

Our corporate partners had our back. **New Jersey Devils/Prudential Center** provided a significant and impactful monetary donation in addition to protective equipment and more than 10,000 tickets to future events for our healthcare heroes. **Rutgers University Athletics** donated protective equipment and used its reach on social media to educate our communities on important safety tips, while the **Somerset Patriots** raised funds through online memorabilia auctions, merchandise sales and a pop-up food truck event. Too numerous to mention, the supportive efforts from so many of RWJBH's partners (see list at right) have been crucial to our mission.

On behalf of RWJBH and all of our partner organizations, we wish you good health and good fortune at all times. Together, we'll be there for you.

To learn more about corporate partnerships at RWJBarnabas Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/partnerships.



FRIENDS IN NEED

Warmest thanks to these partners:

- Cedar Stars Academy
- Cure Insurance Arena
- George Street Playhouse
- Lakewood BlueClaws
- Mets Radio Network
- Monmouth University Athletics
- MSG Networks
- New Jersey Devils/Prudential Center
- New Jersey Golf Foundation
- NJPAC
- New Jersey Youth Soccer Association
- Novo Nordisk New Jersey Marathon & Half Marathon
- Princeton University Athletics
- Pure Basketball
- Rutgers University Athletics
- RWJBarnabas Health Arena
- Seton Hall University Athletics
- Somerset Patriots
- Special Olympics New Jersey
- Trenton Thunder
- Yankees Radio Network



COMMUNITIES HAVE STEPPED UP FOR THEIR LOCAL HOSPITALS IN A BIG WAY—AND YOU CAN STILL HELP.

The offers from the public began as soon as the crisis did. People emailed, texted and called hospitals, some in tears, wanting to know how they could help local healthcare providers.

They sent money. They donated dinners. They sent cards. Someone had a friend who had a friend whose company could provide personal protective equipment (PPE). A small painting business had 20 face masks to donate. A hardware store provided gloves. The contributions came in a steady stream.

“The donations were from longtime loyal donors as well as those who had never made a gift to one of our hospitals before,” says Glenn Miller, Executive Vice President and

Chief Development Officer at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH). “People wanted to make sure that our doctors, nurses and staff had what they needed to stay healthy and do their jobs.

“The word ‘heroes’ gets used a lot, and admiration for the dedication of our caregivers was driving this outpouring of support,” he continues. “Supporters saw our caregivers getting up to go to work every day under incredibly difficult circumstances, fighting to save lives.”

As of mid-May, the RWJBH system as a whole had received nearly \$11 million in support. Of that amount, \$6.7 million came in checks and online gifts, large and small;

\$3.2 million in donated PPE and other supplies; and \$870,000 in food donations.

“RWJBH hospitals have always enjoyed wonderfully generous support from the communities they serve,” Miller says. “In recent months, I think our doctors and nurses were certainly reminded about how much people value them and the work they do.”

ONGOING NEED

The money raised goes into the RWJBH system’s Emergency Response Fund, where it’s used to purchase much-needed equipment and supplies.

The fund also is used to support frontline hospital workers. “When employees need to be quarantined away from their families, we’ve been able to help make that happen,” Miller says. “Other colleagues needed childcare so they could come to work. And sadly, we’ve lost colleagues, and we’re working to develop resources to address the repercussions of such terrible losses.”

Beyond tangible support, the outpouring from the community provided an invaluable morale boost. “For healthcare workers going through this experience, to take a break and find a hot meal or a card or a note—it’s meant the world to them,” Miller says. “When you feed someone, you’re enriching their body, obviously, and also their soul.”

The Emergency Response Fund remains open. “We’re in an ongoing crisis, and philanthropy will continue to play an important role in helping us prepare for any surges or future outbreaks,” Miller says.

In addition, capital projects, new programs and equipment upgrades will still need to be funded for each medical center.

“We’re incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support, and the tremendous positive impact it has on our work and our commitment to keeping communities healthy,” Miller says. “We cannot thank people enough.”

The gifts also have a benefit for the giver. “We’ve heard that people in the community want to feel that they have the ability to bring hope,” says Miller, “and that they’re empowered to make a difference.”

To donate to Saint Barnabas Medical Center or to RWJBarnabas Health, visit the Emergency Response Fund at www.rwjbh.org/give.



COMPASSION IN ACTION

WE DON'T HAVE THE SPACE TO TELL ALL OF THE STORIES OF CARE AND COURAGE WE'VE SEEN IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES. HERE ARE JUST A FEW.



Dr. Pitera and Danny Radice took a selfie in his room on the day of Danny's discharge.

BONDED FOREVER

Five years ago, Richard Pitera, MD, an anesthesiologist at Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC), suffered a massive heart attack. He needed months of cardiac rehabilitation throughout a difficult recovery.

During this time, Danny Radice, an exercise specialist in the medical center's cardiac rehab unit, was one of a team of four who were by his side, motivating, supporting and encouraging him. "Danny and the cardiac rehabilitation team gave me my life back," says Dr. Pitera.

This spring, as the coronavirus pandemic raged, Dr. Pitera was deployed to care for the many COVID-19 patients who required intubation on a ventilator. One day, as he reviewed his patient census for the day, he spotted a familiar name: Danny Radice.

Danny, diagnosed with COVID, had passed out at his home and was taken by ambulance to the Emergency Department. His condition had deteriorated until he was transferred to intensive care and placed on a ventilator.

As Dr. Pitera checked on Danny, his patient gestured for a pen and paper to write a note. In shaky handwriting, Danny wrote, "Am I going to die tonight?"

Dr. Pitera grabbed Danny's hand. "Not on my watch," he vowed.

A HARD BATTLE

Later, Dr. Pitera called Danny's wife, Christine, and told her he had her husband's back. "Danny saved my life, so I'm going to save his," he said.

Danny's condition was serious. Dr. Pitera sat by the side of his bed with an iPhone and facilitated FaceTime sessions with Christine. While intubated, Danny couldn't speak, so Christine did the talking, citing a famous phrase from the movie *Finding Nemo*: "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming." Danny rolled his eyes, but gave her two thumbs up.

Not long afterward, Danny's blood pressure plunged and his condition became critical. Every time there was an emergency in the unit where Danny was staying, Dr. Pitera feared that this time it was Danny.

"I was nervous, yeah," the doctor says. "Let me tell you, when they're that sick, you can do everything right and they could still do poorly. This virus is so savage. You try to do the best you can."

Danny was one of the lucky ones. He made it off the ventilator. On the morning of April 2, he woke up and saw Dr. Pitera in his room.

When Dr. Pitera saw his friend's eyes open, he joyfully yelled, "Hey! You still here?"

"Right then, I knew I was going to be okay," says Danny.

Staff at SBMC told Danny he was their inspiration. "People here need to see someone getting better," says Dr. Pitera. "It's even better when it's someone everyone knows."

After six days on a ventilator and 23 in the hospital, Danny was clapped out of the hospital on April 17. Employees from all over the hospital gathered in the hall to cheer as Danny was wheeled to the elevator, then when he emerged on the ground floor, and again when he was finally outside and hugging Christine.

Dr. Pitera was too busy with patients to watch that emotional moment, but he was satisfied. His friend had helped save his life, and he had returned the favor.



A BRAVE YOUNG MAN COMES HOME

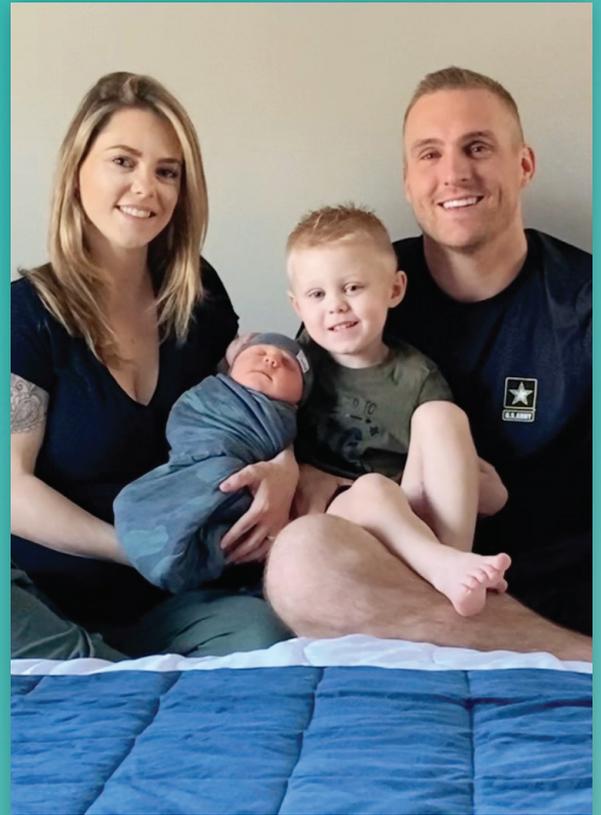
In early April, Dale Bridge, 18, had back pain and difficulty breathing. On April 6, the senior at Seton Hall Preparatory School and volunteer member of the Florham Park Memorial First Aid Squad was admitted to SBMC to be treated for COVID-19. He had begun to cough up blood. A CT scan

confirmed that there was fluid in his lungs.

Dale spent several days in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit with a chest tube to drain the fluid and oxygen to help him breathe. “Dale got worse before he got better,” says his mother, Kathy.

After 18 days in the hospital, Dale was discharged and escorted home by the Florham Park first aid squad and Florham Park Police Department. To his surprise, friends, family and neighbors lined his street in their cars, waiting to cheer and welcome him home.

“We are truly blessed,” says Kathy. “The welcome home reception by the Florham Park first aid squad, Florham Park Police Department and friends swept us off our feet.”



A SAFE DELIVERY DURING A PANDEMIC

Kassie Brikowski had a difficult labor and unplanned cesarean section while giving birth to her first child a few years ago. When it came time to give birth to her second son, she found herself with a new challenge. On April 14, Kassie brought a new life into the world at SBMC, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“While some may think that being at a hospital during this global pandemic would be nerve-racking, everyone I came into contact with made me feel safe, calm and comfortable,” Kassie recalls.

During Kassie’s cesarean section, anesthesiologist Mohan H. Kulkarni, MD, calmed her nerves, both literally and figuratively, while the doctors and nurses ensured that the birth went smoothly. Kassie’s husband stayed with her for the entire 36 hours that she was in the hospital.

Back at home, Kassie and her husband are taking every precaution to keep their newborn safe from the virus.

“I don’t mind not being able to have visitors,” Kassie says. “It gives our family more time to bond during one of the most critical times in our child’s life.”



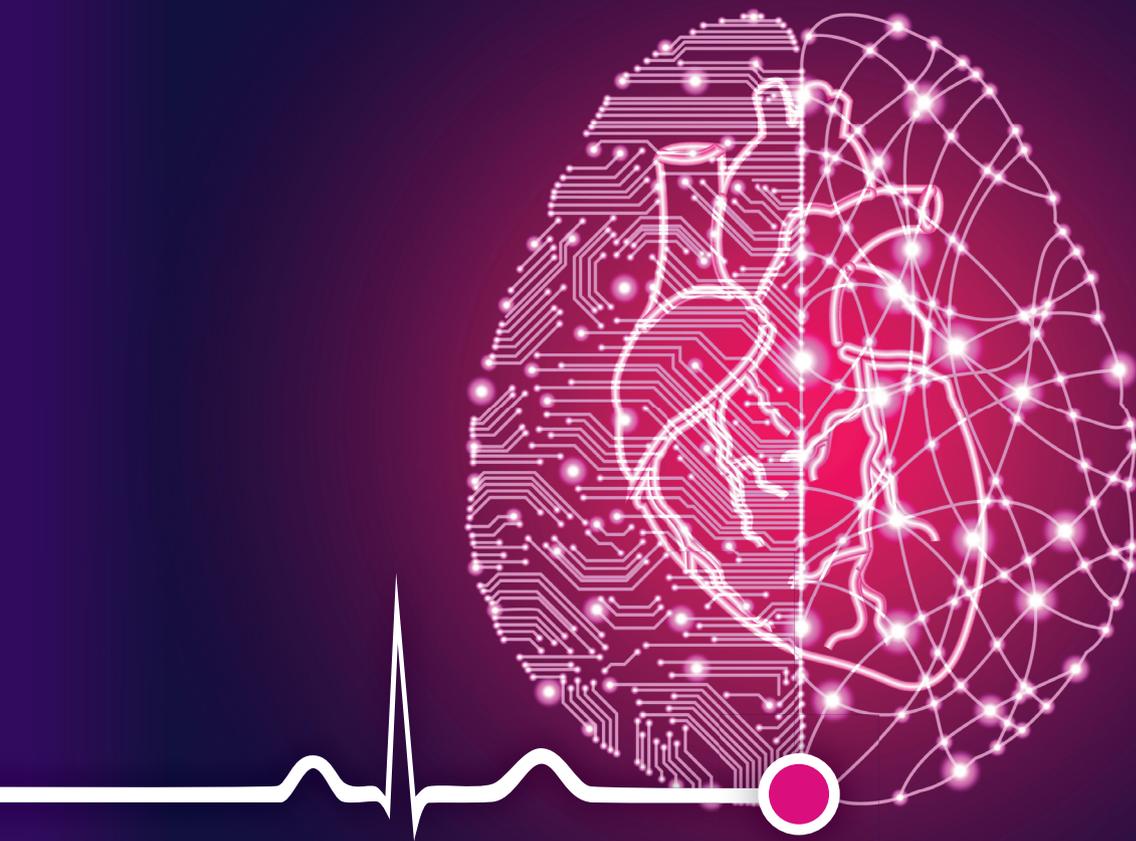
IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

Andrea Dello Russo, a physician assistant in the busy Emergency Department at SBMC, and her fiancé, Robert Tretola, already had a lot in common. Now they can add COVID-19 to that list. With less than 100 days until their wedding, the couple was sidelined in late March with COVID-19.

Andrea tested positive for the virus. Robert, a firefighter/EMT with the Maplewood Fire Department, had symptoms but tested negative. While they were focused on getting better, Andrea was also worried about whether lockdown conditions would allow them to hold a gathering for their wedding at all.

Today, these lovebirds and healthcare heroes are both healthy and back at work. They are counting down the days until they say “I do,” and they’re staying safe.

Andrea posted this photo of herself and her fiancé, dressed in PPE in the halls of the hospital. She titled it “A Modern-Day Kiss.”



SAFE AND SOUND IN THE E.D.

RIGOROUS PROCEDURES ENSURE THE SAFETY OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENTS AND STAFF.

Emergency Department (ED) visits fell sharply during the height of the coronavirus crisis, in New Jersey and nationally as well—and that has doctors worried.

“In the RWJBarnabas Health system, we’ve seen our ED volume decline by 50 percent overall, and by up to 85 percent for pediatric EDs,” says Christopher Freer, DO, Clinical Chairperson of Emergency Medicine at Saint Barnabas Medical Center

(SBMC) and System Director of Emergency Medicine at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH).

“The problem is that disease prevalence doesn’t change,” he explains. “Heart attacks, strokes, asthma, intra-abdominal diseases such as appendicitis and diverticulitis—COVID-19 didn’t make them go away, but we’ve been seeing these

patients in the ED less and less.”

The probable reason: fear. “The likelihood is that people have been putting off care because they’re afraid to go into the hospitals and be exposed to COVID-19,” says Dr. Freer. “That concerns us because delaying care for many conditions can lead to disability and even death, and those risks are not necessary.

“The main message we want people to hear is, ‘It’s safe to come to the ED, so don’t put it off,’” he continues. “We’ve put many layers of protection in place for our patients and for our staff.”



CHRISTOPHER FREER, DO



GARY ROGAL, MD



DANIELLE HASKINS, MD



WELCOME BACK!

EXTENSIVE COVID-19 TESTING OF STAFF AND PATIENTS, EXTREME CLEANING AND MANY OTHER MEASURES MAKE OUR FACILITIES SAFE FOR CARE.

The safety and health of our patients and team members have always been top priorities at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH). Now we've taken everything the medical profession has learned about COVID-19 and implemented best practices at Saint Barnabas Medical Center and all of our facilities.

"At RWJBarnabas Health, we've been on a safety journey to becoming a High

Reliability Organization for three years," says John Bonamo, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Quality Officer and Chief Medical Officer for RWJBH. "The high safety standards we had before the pandemic are making it possible for us to come back confident."

Safety is an all-encompassing effort. "Every little thing we do is a building block aimed at making our facilities COVID-free," says Dr. Bonamo.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Testing is a major way RWJBH hospitals are keeping COVID-19 from spreading. Every admitted patient, every surgical patient and every Emergency Department patient with flu-like symptoms is tested. In addition, team members—whether they work directly with patients or not—are tested, many of them multiple times.

Hospital administrators and staff also have taken a hard look at all relevant processes, including how rooms are cleaned, how personal protective equipment (PPE) is used—even how air in the hospitals is circulated.

“As we discharge COVID-19 patients, the rooms in which they were cared for get a special deep-cleaning,” says Dr. Bonamo. “We clean everything in the room to the nth degree, from top to bottom—including changing all the air filters and cleaning all the vents.”



JOHN BONAMO, MD

In addition, RWJBH has taken the enormous step of retooling all of its heating and cooling systems to pull in fresh air from outside, rather than continuously

recirculating the air inside a building. “It’s a big expense for the small number of infections it’s likely to prevent,” says Dr. Bonamo, “but each small yield of prevented cases adds up and is very important because of how quickly this disease spreads.”

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Although healthcare is an essential service, many people have avoided going to the doctor or hospital to limit their risk of exposure to COVID-19. That fear is unfounded when visiting RWJBH facilities—and it could be dangerous. Putting off urgent medical care or physician visits for chronic disease management, childhood immunizations and other health services can have devastating effects.

“You don’t want the virus, but you also don’t want a heart attack or a stroke, or for your child to get a different infectious disease,” says Dr. Bonamo. “You’re not protecting your health by staying away, you’re jeopardizing it.”

“We take public health and safety extraordinarily seriously,” Dr. Bonamo continues. “We understand why people might want to avoid coming to the hospital, but it’s important for everyone to know that we can keep them safe and help them get healthy.”



NO EFFORT SPARED

Preventing the spread of COVID-19

We’re going beyond the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the New Jersey Department of Health and other trusted organizations to implement best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

- Stringent cleaning and disinfection of all rooms, including all equipment, surfaces and air vents
- COVID-19 testing for all surgical patients, all admitted patients and all patients with flu-like symptoms in the Emergency Department
- COVID-19 testing for doctors, nurses and other staff. Those who have a negative test will be retested to guard against false negatives
- Continued restriction of visitors based on directives from the state of New Jersey
- Active screening of team members, patients and visitors (when permitted), as they enter a facility
- Requirement for everyone who enters a facility to wear a mask or face covering
- Strict requirements for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) with both COVID-19 positive and non-COVID patients
- Social and physical distancing measures for all people in our facilities—in all employee and patient areas.
- Strict hand hygiene rules, with hand sanitizer in all employee and patient areas
- Retooling of the heating and cooling systems in our facilities to bring fresh air in from outside rather than recirculating inside air
- Continued preparation and readiness for potential future surges.

NEW PROCESSES AT SAINT BARNABAS MEDICAL CENTER



Stephen P. Zieniewicz, FACHE, President and CEO, would like you to know that for your health and safety, you will see the following changes when you enter our facilities:

- Every individual entering the facility will be asked a series of health screening questions and receive a temperature check.
- Every person will be required to wear a mask while in the facility. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided.
- Appointments for outpatient services have been staggered to avoid patient congregation in waiting rooms.
- Maternity and surgical patients will receive COVID-19 testing prior to their delivery/procedures.
- There will be a phone screening of patients prior to coming in for outpatient appointments.
- Acrylic barriers have been installed for protection.
- Social distancing is enforced with furniture spacing and floor markings.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is readily available in all areas.

You've taken every precaution. So have we. Welcome back.

If you've put off any medical care due to COVID-19, please don't delay it any longer. As a high reliability organization, we've taken every precaution and continue to provide health care services. We have initiated a resumption of services in adherence to all public health guidance and regulatory policies. Learn more at rwjbh.org/WelcomeBack