

FEATURING "IN GOOD HEALTH" FROM MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

Monmouth

HEALTH & LIFE

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SUMMER
FUN
in
Belmar

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

FEATHERS & PHOTOS WHERE BIRDERS FLOCK
A SHORE THING 6 BEACHES TO ENJOY THIS SUMMER
GET OUT! PARKS, LAKES, TRAILS GALORE

A Breath of Fresh Air

The annual Shore Issue of *Monmouth Health & Life* focuses on life here at the Monmouth County shore, and as summer approaches, the unmistakable signs that the vaccines are rapidly and dramatically reducing risk for all and the lifting of some COVID-19 restrictions are fostering a renewed sense of optimism in our communities.

Monmouth County's beaches are a part of the backbone of our state's economy and our home at Monmouth Medical Center, located just two blocks from the beautiful Long Branch beachfront. While some physical distancing and mask guidelines will remain in place, New Jersey has moved to reopen much of the state. For all of us, this brings hope that we are on a path that returns to wellness, and an undoubtedly sunny outlook on the upcoming summer season at the shore.

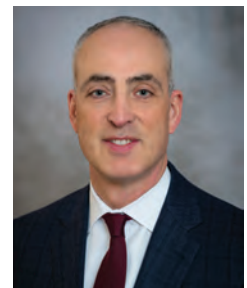
The introduction of the vaccine marked a major milestone in our collective recovery from COVID-19, bringing us hope that our community can emerge from this pandemic, enjoying good health and the ability to gather and celebrate life as we have in summers prior to the quarantine. As we celebrate these victories in our fight against COVID-19, I am so incredibly thankful for the role our community has played in helping slow the spread of the virus by following public health guidelines to protect themselves and others. And as we embrace this semblance of normalcy, we are also mindful of those in our community who continue to suffer from long-lasting, lingering effects of the virus.

To help survivors of COVID-19 who have experienced persistent weakness and respiratory symptoms, Monmouth Medical Center has introduced a post-COVID recovery program. On page 28, we introduce you to Matawan's Pat Guadagno, who was one of the many COVID-19 patients who saw a rapid progression of respiratory failure that required hospitalization. Through our accredited pulmonary rehabilitation program, we are helping patients like Pat improve breathing and lung function to maximize complete recovery.

As we welcome long days of abundant warmth and sunshine at the shore, I would like to wish all of you a safe and healthy summer.



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





Diagnosed at the age of 31 with high-grade ductal carcinoma on June 30, 2017, Shawna Dempsey notes that from the day she was diagnosed to the day she was cancer free, she could not have asked for a better outcome and treatment than what she received at Monmouth Medical Center. She is pictured in this photo from October 2017 in Monmouth Medical Center's Cheryl Diamond Cancer Care Pavilion with her breast surgeon Manpreet Kohli, M.D., and reconstructive plastic surgeon Gregory Greco, D.O. On the next page, you will briefly meet Shawna and two other cancer patients, each of whom was successfully treated at MMC and has generously shared their stories.

THE POWER OF PINK

The strength of the community supports Monmouth Medical Center's oncology services and the hospital's cancer patients.

The coronavirus put a hold on many events and social gatherings over the past year, but the power of pink has proven stronger than the pandemic. Monmouth Medical Center's Leon Hess Cancer Center Council (LHCCC) in particular has shown its mettle, continuing its popular Pink fundraising events in both virtual and socially distant, in-person formats.

"One of the many things we've learned over the last year as a community is that we are flexible and resilient, just like our incredible patients," says Terry Ingram, who serves as Pink co-chair, LHCC council member and Monmouth Medical Center Foundation (MMCF) advisory board member. She is also the founder of the Swing Pink golf and tennis event.

Pink returns on Sept. 20 with a full-day program featuring Swing Pink in the morning and the Power of Pink luncheon in the afternoon. All proceeds will benefit the cancer center and the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at MMC.

Over the past 20 years, the council has raised more than \$6 million to advance the hospital's oncology services. The financial support funded the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment and helps run programming for thousands of patients and families who face a cancer diagnosis.

"These patients deserve the very best quality care as they fight for their lives and their futures," says Claire Knopf, Pink co-chair, LHCC council member and chair of the MMCF board of trustees.

Here, you'll briefly meet three cancer patients, each of whom was successfully treated at MMC and has been profoundly impacted by Pink.

Shawna Dempsey, breast cancer survivor

"I was diagnosed in 2017 at the age of 31 years old with high-grade ductal carcinoma. The cancer journey doesn't just stop when you have the mastectomy or when you stop your treatments, whether it's radiation or chemo. It's with you for the rest of your life. But to be able to rise above it and move on and your doctors and their team help you to do that is the most important part of the journey. Because of the cancer treatment that I received at The Leon Hess Cancer Center, I was still able to have children, and I have a baby girl who's 20 months old today.

"Pink is important to me because I think it represents unity and strength in numbers, and I think it's a

force to be reckoned with. It's not going anywhere."

Crystal Morgan, pancreatic and duodenal cancer survivor

"When I received my initial diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, I felt like someone punched me in the stomach. Everything seemed muffled and almost surreal. I was grateful for the support I received from not only the doctors, but the nurses, specifically Tanya Hubbard, who wrapped her arms around my daughter when I couldn't. I was so frozen in disbelief, and this nurse who came out of nowhere comforted my child—and that made all the difference in the world. From that moment on, I knew that I could fight.

"Pink is important to me because it's everything to patients like us—those who don't know what tomorrow brings. Those donors help bring a level of comfort and peace and hope."

Brad Smith, brain cancer survivor

"I had recently turned 52 and had some memory loss problems where I couldn't tell you my address or where my kids were going to school. It was very scary. I went to get an MRI, and this is where they talked to me about needing surgery. You've got a brain tumor, they said. And Dr. Jonathan Lustgarten (chief of MMC's neurosurgery department) had a team ready to go to work on my brain, and it made me feel very confident. I went through surgery and came out in good condition. I've come back and have gone to work. I can go for walks, I can paddleboard on the river. My life is back on track.

"Because of the care and support shown for the Leon Hess Cancer Center, the care I've received changed my life. I look forward to seeing everyone this year at Pink."

JOIN US FOR PINK:

- The fundraiser features tennis, golf, luncheon and boutique. Proceeds from the 2021 Pink Luncheon will help provide evidence-based mind, body and spiritual programs and services to cancer patients and their families through RWJBarnabas Health Family Care & Wellness in Eatontown.

- Monday, Sept. 20 at the Navesink Country Club, Red Bank; call 732.923.6886 for details.



Shawna Dempsey



Crystal Morgan



Brad Smith



Claire Knopf



Terry Ingram



For more information about the Leon Hess Cancer Center Council events, call the Monmouth Medical Center Foundation office at 732.923.6886 or visit mmcevents.org.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

New Jersey rock singer Pat Guadagno is back on tour — thanks to Monmouth Medical Center's post-COVID pulmonary rehab program.

The summer of 2021 will be business as usual for Matawan's Pat Guadagno, a beloved musician and singer who's made a lifelong career rocking out on New Jersey's local music circuit. He's back to performing in-person shows, with regular gigs already booked during the next two months up and down the Shore, from Highlands and Monmouth Beach to Sea Bright and Wall. It's an exciting life, for sure, but with long road trips, late nights and stuffy venues, it's an exhausting one too.

And it's also a lifestyle that Guadagno, a father of three and grandfather of two, nearly had to give up after he contracted the coronavirus in early January. His initial symptoms included shortness of breath and a slight fever, but his health got progressively worse. Just two days after learning he was positive for the virus, he developed pneumonia and was admitted to Monmouth Medical Center (MMC). Guadagno, 67, a diabetic, recalls thinking the worst.

"I remember thinking that I might never get out of here," he says. But despite his serious condition, Guadagno was determined to do "whatever it takes to fight this disease" — and he had help every step of the way.

"The entire floor was COVID patients, and each had his or her own room," he says. "But nurses came in to take vitals and give medication in full haz-mat regalia, and another two remained outside the room to record the stats. They were all positive and encouraging yet completely honest."

Some nurses even went out of their way to provide comforts. "I managed to find ways to get extra ice cream," Guadagno admits.

Just 10 days after he was admitted, Guadagno's oxygen levels slowly improved, his fear of being on a ventilator subsided and he was well enough to be discharged with portable oxygen. And two weeks later, he began recovery at MMC, as survivors of severe COVID-19 cases often experience persistent weakness and respiratory symptoms. The hospital's comprehensive Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program offers a post-COVID recovery program that is safe and effective. The dedicated rehab care is part of The Joel Opatut Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center at MMC, the first program in Monmouth County certified for both cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation.

"For many patients, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a rapid progression of respiratory failure that often required hospitalization or intensive care unit treatment, and survivors of COVID-19 often experience persistent weakness and respiratory symptoms," says Chandler Patton, M.D., Pulmonary and Critical Care Section Chief

and Medical Director for Critical Care, Pulmonary Rehabilitation and the Healthy Lives Program at Monmouth Medical Center. "The goal of our program is to provide care to post-COVID patients to assist their recovery by improving breathing and lung function to maximize complete recovery."



Chandler Patton, M.D.

Through exercise and education, program participants can become more active and independent. The highly specialized staff works closely with post-COVID patients in developing exercise programs to meet their needs. Exercise regimes are conducted under the supervision of a registered nurse, respiratory therapist and an exercise physiologist. Each participant's heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation are monitored to measure the body's response to exercise.

"Once again, I was amazed and encouraged by the commitment and dedication of these workers," Guadagno says. "I cannot say enough about the program and the staff."

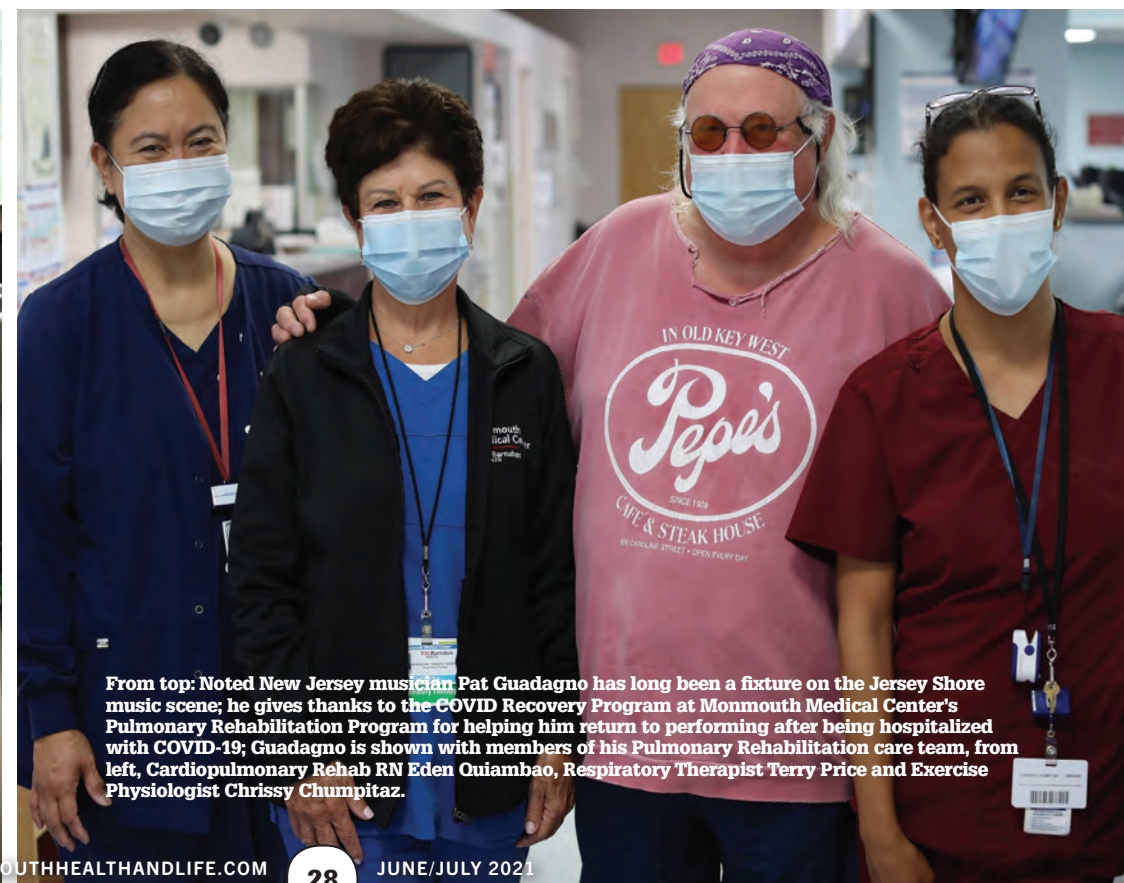
Just 90 days after he was admitted to MMC, Guadagno received his first COVID vaccination. And today, he no longer requires the portable oxygen to conduct his regular routine, which includes "playing bad golf once a week."

"I was prepared by my doctors for a long road back," he says. "My breathing isn't 100 percent yet, but I will be singing. I give a huge heartfelt and still somewhat wheezy 'thank you' to the nurses and staff at Monmouth Medical Center."

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

Matawan resident Pat Guadagno used Facebook to document his stay as a COVID-19 patient at Monmouth Medical Center earlier this year. Here's a sampling of what he wrote:

"Getting amazing care, over-the-top treatment by the Monmouth Medical staff. Extremely caring staff; every one of whom seems to have their own personal COVID stories. I continue to be amazed, humbled and fortunate to be in their presence and under their watch. I learned so much in here. I learned a little about what makes people fearlessly walk into highly dangerous situations to do everything they can to save their brothers and sisters. I am always inspired by the mettle and courage of the care worker. Thanks again to this incredible group of very special people."



From top: Noted New Jersey musician Pat Guadagno has long been a fixture on the Jersey Shore music scene; he gives thanks to the COVID Recovery Program at Monmouth Medical Center's Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program for helping him return to performing after being hospitalized with COVID-19; Guadagno is shown with members of his Pulmonary Rehabilitation care team, from left, Cardiopulmonary Rehab RN Eden Quiambao, Respiratory Therapist Terry Price and Exercise Physiologist Chrissy Chumpitaz.



For more information or to schedule an appointment at the Joel Opatut Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center at Monmouth Medical Center, call 732.923.7454.



Monmouth Medical Center spine surgeons Marc Menkowitz, M.D., (left) and Steve Paragioudakis, M.D., with nurse practitioner Courtney Ellenberger (center).

SPINE SURGEONS HAVE YOUR BACK

Working as a team, Drs. Menkowitz and Paragioudakis lead the way for state-of-the-art spine surgery.

Reaching 100 of anything is usually a significant milestone, but it is always an extraordinary achievement in medicine, particularly when it's the number of patients who receive a life-changing procedure. On May 17, two Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) spine surgeons, Marc Menkowitz, M.D., and Steve Paragioudakis, M.D., reached the century mark of patient cases that used the cutting-edge Globus Medical ExcelsiusGPS robot for minimally invasive spine surgery.

MMC was the second hospital in New Jersey to use the technology, and while dozens of surgeons use the system, few can match Drs. Menkowitz and Paragioudakis' expertise and experience with it. They perform the majority of their cases together, using the robot to treat patients who suffer from debilitating conditions like degenerative disc disease and spinal stenosis, as well as damaged discs, scoliosis and other back problems.

The ExcelsiusGPS system combines a robotic arm with computer-assisted navigation. CT scan and X-ray images of the spine are taken prior to a procedure. These images are used to create a surgical plan, which helps the physician guide the robotic arm to a specific area of the spine.

The surgeon is able to view the procedure on a monitor, which provides real-time feedback. With this technology, the procedure is more accurate and less invasive than traditional surgery, according to Dr. Menkowitz. "We can be precise to the millimeter," he says. "Once we navigate to where we want to be in the spine, the system locks us into the surgical pathway."

Patients benefit from this high-tech surgical system in several ways. Because the procedure is so precise and involves small incisions, there's less blood loss, tissue damage and scar tissue. Patients recover more quickly and with less pain than with traditional spine surgery, says Dr. Menkowitz. As a result, hospital stays tend to decrease by about a day, on average. Another advantage: The patient is exposed to less radiation during the surgery because fewer X-rays need to be taken to guide the procedures.

Since MMC introduced the ExcelsiusGPS in October 2019, the system has been used in more than 100 spine surgeries performed by Drs. Menkowitz and Paragioudakis—and they are seeing positive results.

"This is the wave of the future," says Dr. Paragioudakis. "I think all spine surgeries will be done this way eventually."



To learn more about robotic surgery at Monmouth Medical Center, call 888.724.7123.