

A Publication of
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

Winter 2022

healthy *together*

**RELIEF FOR
DIGESTIVE
DISTRESS**

**TEAM CARE
TO CONQUER
BREAST
CANCER**

**THE DOCTOR
EVERYONE
MUST SEE**

**PROTECT YOUR HEART
THIS WINTER**

MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP



“At RWJBarnabas Health, we enter the new year with renewed strength. We’ve taken the challenges of the pandemic and used them to find ways to better serve our communities, patients and staff. Additionally, we are expanding telehealth, offering advanced genomic testing for infants and pushing toward breakthroughs in pediatric cancer research, with a focus and dedication to creating a healthier 2022 for all.”

BARRY H. OSTROWSKY

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RWJBARNABAS HEALTH



“We welcome the new year with great anticipation, as Monmouth Medical Center opens RWJBarnabas Health Family Care and Wellness at the Monmouth Mall this winter. Providing convenient access to comprehensive women’s and pediatric services, it also features a state-of-the-art wellness center to achieve disease prevention through community education. This exciting new facility is in keeping with our mission to ensure people of all ages have the means and ability to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.”

ERIC CARNEY

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER AND MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER SOUTHERN CAMPUS

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HEALTH NEWS



From left at the ribbon cutting are Stan Evanowski, Administrative Director of Behavioral Health Services; Gloria Nilson; Fireflies Council Chair Carolyn Deforte, DMD; MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus President and CEO Eric Carney; MMC Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Claire Knopf; and Caitlin Olson, Regional Vice President of Development.

DEDICATING A GARDEN FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATIENTS

The Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) Foundation recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the Gloria Nilson Garden of Reflection in a secure courtyard adjacent to the hospital’s inpatient behavioral health units.

“We are pleased to officially open and celebrate the Gloria Nilson Garden of Reflection for use by patients at our inpatient behavioral health facility,” said President and CEO Eric Carney. “The vision for this new space was to create an inviting outdoor area for patients to get a breath of fresh air in a reflective environment that encourages healing.”

MMC is the largest provider of mental health services in Monmouth County. Noting that the garden was previously not a welcoming space for these patients, Carney said it was revitalized and refreshed with the help of the Fireflies Council—an MMC Foundation group dedicated to raising funds for and awareness of behavioral health services—along with longtime MMC philanthropist Gloria Nilson and other generous donors.

To learn more about the Fireflies Council or other giving opportunities at MMC, visit www.rwjbh.org/monmouth-medical-center/giving.



A 14TH CONSECUTIVE ‘A’ RATING

Monmouth Medical Center was awarded an “A” Hospital Safety Score rating

by The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit run by employers and other large purchasers of health benefits, in results announced publicly in November. MMC is the only hospital in the region to receive an “A” Hospital Safety Score by The Leapfrog Group for 14 consecutive rating periods.

healthy *together* contents

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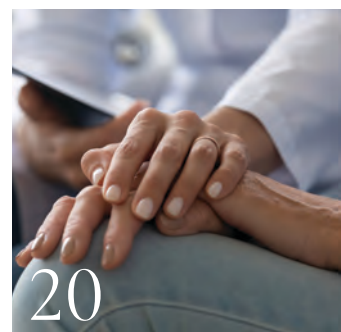
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The new facility at Monmouth Mall includes a demonstration kitchen.

‘A UNIQUE SPACE’:

NEW EATONTOWN FACILITY IS OPENING

RWJBH FAMILY CARE AND WELLNESS PROVIDES BOTH SERVICES AND EDUCATION.

Months of planning, design and construction have paid off: RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) Family Care and Wellness at the Monmouth Mall in Eatontown is opening. The new four-story, 82,000-square-foot building provides convenient access to comprehensive women’s and pediatric services



KENNETH GRANET, MD

through Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and Children’s Specialized Hospital. And it features another highlight as well: more than 5,000 square feet of facilities to provide and emphasize community education.

“We want to help the community participate in disease prevention through multiple pathways,” says Kenneth Granet, MD, Chief Medical Officer and immediate past Chairman of Medicine at MMC, and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. “This is a unique space and

a very positive outpatient wellness environment, not just for the local community but all of Monmouth and Ocean counties and beyond.”

Before the pandemic, the majority of MMC’s community health programs were offered through venues such as senior centers, churches and schools, says Jean McKinney, Regional Director, Community Health and Social Impact and Community Investment. “This facility gives us a centrally located home and a place to make our services even more accessible to many people,”

she says. “Our mission is to ensure people of all ages have the means and ability to live healthier and more fulfilling lives. That includes access to quality healthcare together with wellness and educational programs.”

STATE-OF-THE-ART SPACE

Drawing on physicians and other professionals dedicated to service lines at the new facility, educational programs will cover a wide range of topics. Examples include healthy nutrition and food preparation, childbearing and postpartum health, osteoporosis prevention, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, brain syndromes such as dementia, medication management, screenings and movement activities such as exercise and yoga.

“The space also allows us to provide a variety of support groups as well as a smoking cessation program through the Institute for Prevention and Recovery,” McKinney says. “The building was designed in part during the pandemic, so we equipped our facilities to provide virtual and hybrid programs along with in-person conferences, presentations and workshops.”

The facilities also include what McKinney likens to “the heart of a home”: a large demonstration kitchen staffed by a full-time dietitian and outfitted to provide cook-along classes and both live and virtual or livestreamed presentations. “The demonstration kitchen is very exciting,” Dr. Granet says. “Our goal is to do tremendous education on subjects like nutrition and food preparation, snacking and how to eat for different health conditions such as high cholesterol, diabetes or obesity.”

Family Care and Wellness marks an important contribution to the well-being of the entire community, Dr. Granet says. “Our hope is to make a positive impact combining educational and medical resources to address social determinants of health and provide a good community health experience for our entire population.”



Family Care and Wellness's entry.

ADVANCED CARE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Concentrating a comprehensive array of services at RWJBarnabas Health Family Care and Wellness offers many advantages for women and families. “We’re realizing a long-term goal by having multiple disciplines in one place,” says Eric Carney, President and Chief Executive Officer of Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

Located adjacent to Boscov’s Department store, the new medical office building will further MMC’s mission to become more accessible to residents across Monmouth County and extend the trusted, high-quality healthcare programs and services the hospital in Long Branch is known for. The facility is also a continuation of MMC’s commitment to develop a comprehensive care delivery system in Monmouth County that meets healthcare needs through community partnerships and access to the vast resources of the RWJBarnabas Health system.

With its focus on women’s and children’s health, the new location will provide the region with convenient access to:

- Comprehensive women’s services, including maternal/fetal medicine and a lactation center
- A wellness center providing education and resources that promote community health
- Pediatric subspecialties such as cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, surgery, urology, pulmonology and infectious diseases
- Medical and therapeutic services through Children’s Specialized Hospital, including developmental and behavioral services, psychiatry and psychology, neurology, physiatry, audiology, speech-language therapy and occupational and physical therapy
- A blood drawing station
- An Urgent Care Center
- MMC’s pioneering Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Center
- A central registration area on each floor
- Ample parking

“Healthcare continues to evolve, and RWJBarnabas Health and Monmouth Medical Center are at the forefront of this transformation in our communities,” Carney says. “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.”

Providing care at the same location can improve health, he adds. “If women and their children can receive care in one place, it improves communication across those disciplines,” he says. “That leads to better outcomes and makes it more convenient for women and families to get the care they need and want.”

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





Katherine Weiss can enjoy going out again after specialized surgery using innovative technology at MMC allowed her to eat comfortably.

GUT CHECK

A NEW DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES RELIEF FROM DIGESTIVE DISTRESS.

It felt like déjà vu for Katherine Weiss, 52, of Colts Neck. Last winter, the mother of three teenage boys started feeling familiar symptoms of hiatal hernia—difficulty swallowing, heartburn and regurgitation. “When I ate, acid would come up, making it hard to swallow,” Katherine says. “It felt like someone had poured acid down the back of my throat.”

The symptoms had previously plagued Katherine for almost a year, forcing her to take strong acid-blocking medications and eventually undergo surgery. This time, however, her condition was compounded by a scary, new symptom—choking on food that was stuck in her throat.

Fortunately, Katherine turned out to be an ideal candidate for a new technology called the EndoFLIP Impedance Planimetry System, which has resolved her problem, possibly for good.

FIGHTING THE FIRE

Katherine’s ordeal began two years ago, when she experienced the first symptoms of hiatal hernia. The condition happens when part of the stomach pushes into the chest through an opening where the esophagus and stomach meet.

To avoid aggravating her acid reflux, Katherine eliminated spicy foods and coffee, and even stopped eating out. “It changed my feelings about going out or enjoying a meal,” she says. “It got to the point that everything around food made me miserable.”

Katherine’s doctor put her on a proton pump inhibitor (PPI), a medication that reduced the stomach’s acid production and relieved her discomfort. “But it’s not good to stay on



DMITRY OLEYNIKOV, MD

those for a long time,” Katherine says. Research links PPIs to problems such as kidney disease, cardiovascular problems and vitamin deficiencies, so

they are recommended only for short-term use.

In September 2020, Katherine had surgery to move the herniated stomach back into place and tighten the opening at the bottom of her esophagus. Her recovery was challenging due to surgical complications. “I’ve had numerous other surgeries,” she says, “but this was by far the hardest recovery.”

Just a few months later, Katherine’s symptoms seemed to be back, and she returned to her doctor for tests. The verdict: “Either the surgery failed or the hernia hadn’t been repaired correctly,” she says.

Katherine’s doctor then referred her to board-certified minimally invasive general and robotic surgeon Dmitry Oleynikov, MD, who joined Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) in 2020 as Chair of the Department of Surgery. A nationally recognized expert in gastrointestinal surgery, including complex abdominal wall hernia and revisional bariatric surgery, Dr. Oleynikov offers patients access to the most advanced treatment options including the latest robotic surgical techniques.

“Her esophagus was just not working properly,” Dr. Oleynikov says. “To figure out how well the esophagus works, you need to be able to tell whether it’s squeezing food into the stomach properly. The valve at the bottom of the esophagus that connects it to the stomach has to open to let food in and then close so food doesn’t come back up. If those functions aren’t working, people have a lot of discomfort.”

PRECISE SOLUTION

Dr. Oleynikov proposed using the EndoFLIP system to diagnose Katherine’s digestive problems and guide a repair. “This technology allows us to tell what’s going on with the esophagus moment to moment,” he says. “So if someone

is having issues, you’re able to really pinpoint where the problem is and fix it.”

Using the system, the surgeon guides a balloon mounted on a thin catheter down the throat to the esophagus. Sensors on the balloon measure the organ’s pressure and size, helping physicians better diagnose and treat esophageal disorders.

“It gives us information that we just couldn’t get our hands on before, and helps us be much more precise with the work that we’re doing,” Dr. Oleynikov says. Doctors can then use a surgical robot or a conventional laparoscopic procedure to perform needed repairs.

MMC was among the first two hospitals in New Jersey to introduce EndoFLIP technology, and the Digestive Health Center is one of a handful of centers in the region with experts trained to use it. The center has performed almost 100 procedures using EndoFLIP since the hospital acquired the device. So far, “the outcomes have been uniformly excellent,” Dr. Oleynikov says.

Katherine had to think hard before agreeing to another surgery. But Dr. Oleynikov reassured her that the system allowed him to adjust the esophagus-to-stomach opening to just the right tightness so she wouldn’t choke on food or experience reflux. He also said that because her robotic repair would require fewer and smaller incisions, recovery would be easier.

“And honestly, it really was!” says Katherine, who had her procedure in May 2021. “My recovery from the two surgeries was like night and day. A week after surgery at MMC, I had a birthday party to go to—and, to my surprise, I was up for it.”

Free of her digestive symptoms, Katherine returned to the gym in the second post-op week, and says she feels like a new woman. “I’m so glad I trusted Dr. Oleynikov,” she says.



“MY RECOVERY FROM THE TWO SURGERIES WAS LIKE NIGHT AND DAY. A WEEK AFTER SURGERY AT MMC, I HAD A BIRTHDAY PARTY TO GO TO—AND, TO MY SURPRISE, I WAS UP FOR IT.”

Katherine Weiss

To learn more about the advanced EndoFLIP diagnostic procedure, call 732.923.6070 or visit www.rwjbh.org/monmouth-medical-center/treatment-care/digestive-health-center/.





Showcasing the new reception desk are (from left) Laura Siemientkowski, Manager of Volunteer Services; Front Desk Representative Rosemarie Contey; Johanna Rosario, Regional Director of Patient Satisfaction; Front Desk Volunteer Howard Margolis; and Maritza Berrios, Senior Guest Representative.

WELCOME SUPPORT

NEW RECEPTION DESK IS NAMED FOR A COUPLE WITH DEEP TIES TO MMC.

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) is now welcoming patients, visitors and staff from a modern, beautifully appointed and easily accessible new reception desk with a 360-degree design. The Frances and Donald Welcome Reception Desk—a signature element of the recent sweeping renovation of the hospital's main lobby—has been named for Long Branch area residents and career public school teachers Frances and H. Donald Welcome. “Our gift to Monmouth Medical Center is also a gift to the people of Long Branch, who gave so much to us throughout our lives,” Fran shared shortly before she passed away on October 16 (see in memoriam message at right).

The Welcomes have both celebrated their deep, lifelong ties to Long Branch and MMC. In addition to her mother serving as an RN at the hospital, Fran and her sister, along with the Welcomes' two nephews, were all born at MMC. Fran and Don graduated from Long Branch High School, where they met in 1953. They

attended Murray State University together in Kentucky and returned to Long Branch. Don served in the U.S. Army during the early part of the Vietnam War era and was stationed in Fort Gordon, GA, and Thailand as a first lieutenant. He received a master's degree from Trenton State College.

The couple devoted their careers to the education of the city's elementary school students. Fran taught for a record 51 years, primarily in third and fourth grades, and was a leader in the No Child Left Behind program. She was named Teacher of the Year a number of times at the district and county levels. Don taught physical education for 36 years, specializing in adaptive programs for students with disabilities.

MEANINGFUL GIFT

The Welcomes have maintained strong connections with the hospital, and entrusted it with their medical care. They previously named The Fran and Don Welcome Room, designed specifically for code response, in the Anne Vogel Geriatrics



REMEMBERING FRAN WELCOME

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) lost a dear friend and dedicated benefactor with the passing of Frances Welcome (shown above with her husband, Don) on October 16, 2021. The Welcomes have a long legacy of community engagement with both Long Branch and MMC. The new front desk that bears their name will honor that legacy for years to come.

Emergency Medicine (GEM) Unit.

“Monmouth Medical Center has always had a very special place in our lives,” Don says. “Fran and I were so proud to make this meaningful gift and to have our last name, Welcome, associated with the welcoming point for the hospital. This beautiful new reception desk offers a warm, safe and efficient space as patients arrive for care or to visit loved ones.”

“At MMC, we are dedicated to making the hospital experience as pleasant and efficient as possible, and that starts with the front desk,” says Eric Carney, President and CEO of MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus. “We are so thankful to Fran and Don for helping us create a space that gives comfort and confidence to our patients and visitors.”

To learn more about how you can support Monmouth Medical Center, contact the MMC Foundation at www.rwjbh.org/monmouth-medical-center/giving/.



FAST ANSWERS FOR VERY SICK BABIES

ADVANCED GENOMIC TESTING RESULTS ALLOW DOCTORS TO BEGIN TARGETED TREATMENT WITHIN DAYS.

Baby girl Frankie was born early—at 35 weeks—but all seemed well, except for some minor health complications that kept her in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center (CBMC).

However, within a few days of birth, Frankie had developed severe blisters on her feet and was losing skin.



KAMTORN VANGVANICHYAKORN, MD

Even routine screenings now posed a risk, and the baby was vulnerable to life-threatening bacteria entering her body. Her family was afraid to

hold her. A diagnosis was needed, right away.

Not long ago, genetic testing for infants could test just a few genes at a time, and results took weeks or months to come back. But thanks to a collaboration between Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine and RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), Level III and Level IV NICUs in the RWJBH system can offer rapid Whole Genome Sequencing (rWGS). For medically urgent cases, preliminary diagnoses are available in three to five days.

Using a blood sample, rWGS can scan a child's entire genetic makeup for thousands of anomalies. The test results provide vital information that leads to individualized care and fewer costly, invasive procedures.

"Rapid genome sequencing is a game changer," says Kamtorn Vangvanichyakorn, MD, Director of Neonatology at CBMC. "It allows us to provide critical answers and targeted treatment at a time when the therapeutic window is often narrow."

"A SENSE OF RELIEF"

The testing revealed that Frankie has a type of epidermolysis bullosa (EB), a rare group of diseases that are most often caused by a genetic mutation. Frankie's mother, Jeri Berinato, knew that her own mother lived with a severe form of EB, leading to constant blistering and pain, difficulty swallowing, loss of her fingernails and dental problems.

"As soon as we received the results, I felt a huge sense of relief," Jeri says. "Not knowing what was wrong with my beautiful newborn baby was the worst feeling I've ever had. Now I know that, with proper care from the beginning, Frankie will have a much better quality of life than my mom has."

In addition to CBMC, rWGS is available to critically ill infants at Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital; the Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center; Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center; and Jersey City Medical Center.

The use of rWGS at RWJBH came about through a long-standing partnership between Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, the parent organization of Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine, and Children's Specialized Hospital, an RWJBH facility.

"We're proud to be the only health system in New Jersey to partner with Rady Children's to offer rapid genetic testing," says William Faverzani, Senior Vice President of Children's Services at RWJBH. "With this test, our physicians have access to cutting-edge technology, enabling them to intervene quickly to improve the lives of our tiniest patients and their loved ones."

To learn more about rapid Whole Genome Sequencing at RWJBarnabas Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/pediatricgeneticstesting.



HOW COVID-19 IS RESHAPING HEALTHCARE

A CRISIS HAS LED TO SOME BIG CHANGES FOR THE BETTER.

COVID-19 created challenges that healthcare providers had never experienced in their careers. But the pandemic, while taking a toll on providers and patients alike, has also



ANDY ANDERSON, MD



JOHN BONAMO, MD

enabled the discovery of deep reserves of resilience and innovation. “Many of the changes we’re seeing in healthcare,” says John Bonamo, MD, Chief Medical and Quality Officer at RWJBarnabas Health, “are good things that came out of a terrible situation.” Here are six examples:

1 The rise of telehealth.

The technology for video healthcare visits has existed for decades, but providers as well as patients resisted virtual care—until the onset of

COVID-19 and social distancing.

“Before the pandemic, we were doing some virtual urgent care visits, but not routinely doing scheduled visits,” says Andy Anderson, MD, President and CEO, Combined Medical Group of RWJBarnabas Health and

Rutgers Health. “However, at the peak of the pandemic we were doing 10,000 scheduled visits weekly, and even today we continue to do thousands each week.”

The increased





2 Increased awareness of preventing the spread of disease.

In response to the pandemic, healthcare providers have redoubled their efforts to sanitize spaces and even filter the air, and the use of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes has become commonplace.

“We’ve always been committed to infection control through our system-wide journey to become a high reliability organization,” says Dr. Bonamo. “We amplified those principles to keep our facilities even safer, such as using new ventilation techniques, employing UV-C lights to clean rooms, paying continued attention to visitation policies and more.”



3 Enhanced teamwork.

“At the peak of the pandemic, the needs were so great that our people began working together much more collaboratively,” says Dr. Bonamo. “Instead of staying in their own lane and handing off a patient or a procedure to a specialist, providers worked together—respiratory therapists teamed with nurses, primary care doctors worked in intensive care units at the elbow of intensivists, and so on. We learned how professionals can be ‘skilled up’ and trained to help in a crisis, and that has broken down levels of hierarchy and increased esprit de corps.”



4 An emphasis on mental well-being.

“Mental health has become a bigger issue due to the pandemic. People are afraid of becoming ill, they may have greater financial burdens and they’re missing social interaction,” says Dr. Anderson. “Our behavioral health providers have been very busy.”

All kinds of healthcare providers are tuning in to their patients’ state of mind. “As doctors, we realize the importance of reaching out to people and asking them how they’ve been doing during the

pandemic,” he says. “Everybody has a story, and it’s important for us to take the time to listen and, if necessary, become an advocate or a resource for the patient.”

That kind of outreach is equally important for people who work in healthcare, Dr. Anderson says: “In the RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, we set aside time each week to text or call people we work with to see if they’re doing OK, and provide help or a note of encouragement as needed.”



5 A brighter spotlight on healthcare disparities.

“At RWJBarnabas Health, we’ve had an ongoing and important system-wide effort in regard to social justice and anti-racism,” says Dr. Bonamo. “However, the disparity in the rates of COVID-19 sickness and death among people of color was so blatant that it brought many things to the surface and made us, as well as the healthcare industry as a whole, take a closer look. We’ve realized that saying ‘we treat everybody the same’ isn’t enough because some populations have many more resources than others.” To learn more about RWJBarnabas Health’s Ending Racism Together initiative, visit www.rwjbh.org/endingracism.



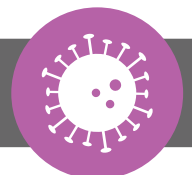
6 A new flexibility.

“Healthcare is intensely regulated, and because of that we have a tendency to be very prescriptive about what we can do and how we do it,” says Dr. Bonamo. “The COVID-19 need was so intense that we had to learn to be more flexible. For example, medical-surgical floors were turned into ICUs and we learned, OK, it may not be the ICU we would have built, but we can make this work. A lot of the old regulations were lifted during COVID-19, which enabled us to be flexible, but some of what we had been doing was just a result of old habits. Now we’ve expanded our horizons and have become much more nimble.”

demand led to technology upgrades, he says, such as making it easier to have visits that include multiple attendees—patient, family members, other providers or an interpreter if needed.

“Telemedicine has opened up access for patients, who can stay in a home environment to get the healthcare they need, whether it’s acute, chronic or preventive, and that will continue,” Dr. Anderson says. “We’re moving toward a good balance of in-person and remote appointments so patients can receive care more efficiently and effectively.”

For resources and information about COVID-19, visit www.rwjbh.org/covid19.



CHILDHOOD CANCER: FINDING THE BEST CARE

WORLD-CLASS PEDIATRIC
HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY
SERVICES ARE CLOSE TO
HOME FOR NEW JERSEYANS.

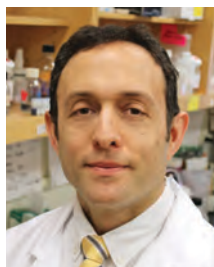


JODI CRANDELL PHOTOGRAPHY



RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, provide close-to-home access to the latest treatment options. For more information, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.

“Cancer doesn’t travel well—especially cancer in children,” says Peter Cole, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/



PETER COLE, MD

Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute, the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. “New Jersey families dealing with a

diagnosis as significant as cancer shouldn’t have to leave their neighborhood and support systems to travel to another state for treatment.”

The Pediatric Cancer Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute partners with RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) facilities throughout the state to provide the most advanced treatments for children with cancer and blood disorders.

“I tell my friends and family and anyone who asks that whenever you get an unexpected diagnosis, it’s always good to get a second opinion,” Dr. Cole says.

◀ The \$10 million in state funding was championed by Grace Eline, a 12-year-old survivor of brain cancer and a childhood cancer awareness advocate, and her mother, Aubrey Eline, in collaboration with the American Childhood Cancer Organization. Grace was treated at Rutgers Cancer Institute and Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center.

“But when you have the option to get cutting-edge care close to home, where you have access to your support system, you should do it. At Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health, your child will get the highest level of expertise and treatment, right here in New Jersey.”

The pediatric hematology/oncology team takes a multidisciplinary approach to providing the most advanced treatments for pediatric cancer and blood disorders, such as complex surgical techniques, precision medicine, immunotherapy and innovative radiation therapy procedures, including the state's only hospital-based proton therapy center. In addition, as New Jersey's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute offers access to cutting-edge clinical trials and cellular therapies that may not be available at other programs.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The specialists at Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBH know that, in addition to treating the body, it's important to pay close attention to the emotional and social challenges of the patient and family. “A diagnosis of cancer turns a family's life upside down, so we have a robust psychosocial support team to address the needs not just of the patient, but of parents and siblings as well,” says Dr. Cole. That team includes psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, nutritionists and educators.

“We're committed to keeping kids on top of their studies,” says Dr. Cole. “At Rutgers Cancer Institute, we have a full-time teacher on staff in the building on school days. I'll often sit with our patients and do math problems with them, though I suspect I may enjoy that much more than they do,” he says with a laugh.

He recalls a teenage patient who had acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common cancer in children but also one of the most curable. “He had to spend the first month of treatment in the hospital, away from his support network of friends and coaches,” says Dr. Cole. “Some of the side effects of his treatment, such as vomiting, were



CENTERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CARE

RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey partner to provide world-class care to New Jersey cancer patients. Specialists from the Pediatric Cancer Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute work with experts to provide care at the following RWJBarnabas Health facilities:

- Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, New Brunswick, under the direction of Peter Cole, MD, Chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
- The Valerie Fund Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, under the direction of Teena Bhatla, MD, Director, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
- The Valerie Fund Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at the Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch, under the direction of Richard Drachtman, MD, Section Chief, Clinical Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

Children with cancer or blood disorders are also seen for consultations at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston.

miserable, and he was embarrassed to lose his hair. He was depressed, but he received the support he needed from our psychosocial team.

“I'm happy to report that he's doing much better now. He's back in school on a modified schedule and if he needs any continued support from our team as he fully reenters his routine, we'll be there for him.”



AN INFUSION OF FUNDS FOR RESEARCH

Survival rates for children with cancer have improved significantly in the past 50 years, but pediatric cancer remains the leading cause of death from disease among children. It is among the least funded areas of cancer research.

Advocates cheered when a \$10 million appropriation to support pediatric cancer research at Rutgers Cancer Institute was included in the New Jersey 2022 state budget.

“The funding allows us to expand our ongoing efforts. One of our areas of focus is research in children that will help reduce acute side effects of treatment and the risk of it resulting in long-term organ damage,” explains Peter Cole, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and Embrace Kids Foundation Endowed Chair at Rutgers Cancer Institute, who is also Director, Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Cellular Therapies at Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Cole's laboratory is also supported by the Hugs for Brady Foundation.

“Another area of focus is bringing innovative treatment modalities to children with cancer and blood disorders,” Dr. Cole says, “including cellular therapies like CAR T-cell therapy, blood and marrow transplants and immunotherapies, which use the patient's own immune cells to fight cancer.”



HEADING OFF WINTER HEART ATTACKS

READ THIS BEFORE YOU SHOVEL SNOW.

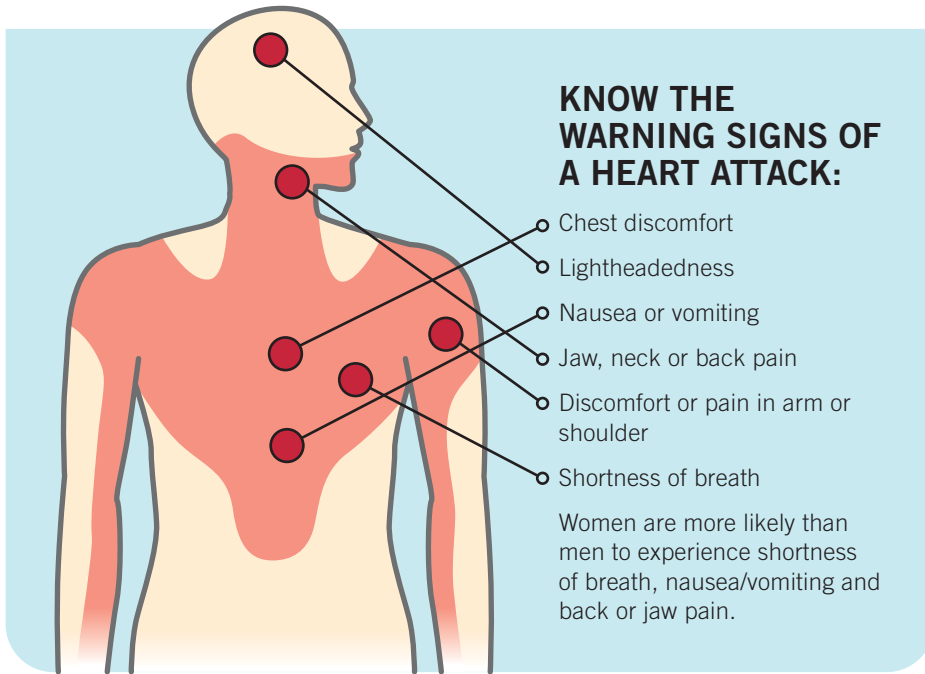
Winter is prime time for heart attacks, as research studies show and doctors know all too well. “It’s expected in the hospital community that we’ll see a bump in the number of heart attacks coming in during the winter season, especially around the holidays and during the first couple of months of the year,” says Isaac Tawfik, MD, Chief of Cardiology at Monmouth Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

“It’s been theorized that if your core temperature is lower because you’re outside and not really bundled up, the body’s natural response is for arteries to vasoconstrict, or to narrow,” Dr. Tawfik explains. “If somebody already has a narrowing or blockage in the artery, it’s going to interfere with normal blood flow, and that’s the definition of a heart attack.”



ISAAC TAWFIK, MD

Ruptured plaque is another main culprit for heart attacks in cold weather, he says. “Any exertional work that’s heavy and not gradual, like



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK:

- Chest discomfort
- Lightheadedness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Jaw, neck or back pain
- Discomfort or pain in arm or shoulder
- Shortness of breath

Women are more likely than men to experience shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

shoveling snow, puts stress on coronary arteries. If those arteries have plaque, it may crack or rupture, which can lead to a whole cascade of platelet aggregation and other inflammatory mediators that eventually lead to a heart attack.”

In winter, middle-aged patients—people in their 40s, 50s, 60s—may be more prone to heart attacks than seniors. “They feel that they’re healthy enough for shoveling snow and other types of outdoor exertion, so they don’t warm up first and may not wear warm enough clothing,” Dr. Tawfik says.

Unlike older patients, they may be unaware of their limitations, he notes, and may not understand the possible consequences of existing conditions, such as hypertension, uncontrolled diabetes or tobacco use. The risk of a heart attack increases with every additional risk factor a person has.

“All of this is not to say that shoveling snow is automatically going to give you a heart attack,” says Dr. Tawfik. “What we are saying is that if you have known heart disease, or one or more risk factors for heart disease, you should think carefully before going out to shovel snow.”

SAFEGUARD YOUR HEART

How can people protect themselves against heart attacks in cold weather? “Number one, make sure you speak to your doctor so that any risk factors you have are addressed—if you have hypertension, that your blood pressure is well controlled, if you are diabetic, that your blood sugar is under control, if you are a smoker, that you are working on a cessation plan,” says Dr. Tawfik.

Stay warm when you’re outside and take frequent breaks to go inside and assess how you feel. “If you’re breathing in cold air, it cools your chest a little bit. You don’t necessarily have the burning in the chest that can be a symptom until you go inside,” he says. “Do the work in short intervals so you’re not outside for hours at a time.”

Be aware of anything different in the way you feel. “A heart attack symptom doesn’t have to be chest pain, because not everybody gets that. If you’re nauseous, or if you’re more fatigued or breathless than you expected to be, those can be red flags,” he says.

Dr. Tawfik shows his patients images that illustrate their cardiovascular condition—an X-ray, an ultrasound, a



HOW COLD WEATHER AFFECTS THE HEART

- Low temperatures cause blood vessels and arteries to narrow.
- Blood flow is restricted and the delivery of oxygen to the heart is reduced.
- The heart must pump harder to circulate blood through the constricted blood vessels.
- As a result, blood pressure and heart rate increase.
- A sudden spike in blood pressure, especially when combined with exertion such as shoveling, can lead to heart attack or stroke.
- Narrowing of or stress on coronary arteries may lead to plaque rupture and blood clots that block blood flow to the heart.
- Hypothermia—when body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit—affects the workings of the heart, nervous system and other organs.

CT scan—as a means of helping them grasp their risks. “If I have a patient who’s 60 years old and I can tell him his risk for heart disease in the next 10 years is X versus someone who didn’t have those risk factors, they tend to be more compliant,” he says.

Dr. Tawfik advises his patients to consult their primary care physician or cardiologist before undertaking any high-effort physical activity in cold weather. “It’s like driving your car and putting a seat belt on,” he says. “It’s always best to err on the side of safety.”

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with a top cardiovascular specialist at RWJBarnabas Health, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.





SPECIAL NEEDS, SPECIAL TREATMENT

NEW LOCATIONS PROVIDE MORE WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL.

For more than a century, children or adolescents who face special health challenges—from chronic illnesses to complex physical disabilities to developmental or behavioral issues—have been able to turn to Children’s Specialized Hospital (CSH) for inpatient and outpatient care.

Since its 1892 origin as a “summer haven” in Westfield for city children, CSH continued to grow until it became the largest provider of pediatric rehabilitation services in the United States, with locations throughout New Jersey.

Now, in response to an increasing number of outpatient visits and the rising rates of emotional, developmental and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents, CSH is expanding access to the highest level of care. Four new CSH locations, each with state-of-the-art facilities and located close to major highways and bus



An RWJBarnabas Health facility

routes, have opened or soon will open:

WEST ORANGE: CSH is now managing the Pediatric Rehabilitation Services of its affiliate hospital, Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, at 375 Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

UNION: All outpatient services offered at CSH’s Mountainside and Warren locations have transitioned to this new, advanced facility at 2840 Morris Avenue.

EATONTOWN: In the spring, Monmouth Medical Center and CSH will open RWJBarnabas Health Family Care & Wellness, located at the Monmouth Mall.

TOMS RIVER: Next year, a brand-new, 80,000-square-foot facility on Route 37 will replace the current CSH Toms River locations. The clinical space will be shared with RWJBarnabas Health Children’s Services and Community Medical Center, which will provide an ambulatory surgery

Children with a wide range of needs receive individualized care at CSH locations throughout New Jersey.

center, imaging, preadmission testing, primary care and orthopedics.

All CSH facilities offer the most advanced technology and a full suite of therapy and physician services, including developmental and behavioral pediatrics, neurology, special needs primary care, physiatry, psychiatry, audiology, neuropsychology, neurorehabilitation, nutrition, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, and speech and language therapy.

“Our vision is a world where all children can reach their full potential,” says Matthew B. McDonald III, MD, President and CEO, CSH. “In order to make that vision a reality, we must continually enhance access to our innovative and individualized therapies and medical treatments. These new sites not only serve as additional access points for our current patients and families, but as an introduction to new communities of patients and families who may need our services.”

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, Eatontown, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Jersey City, New Brunswick, Newark, Somerset, Toms River, Union and West Orange.



Members of the Family Planning Clinic team at MMC are (from left) Freya PerezLoranzana, Community Outreach worker; Colby Wolk, DO, Chief OB/GYN Resident; Naneliz Ferrer, Patient Access Coordinator; CarolAnn Castelli, BSN-RNC, staff RN; Judy Polgardy, Director, Patient Financial Services; Ceyonna Fisher, PCA; Ana Pinto, MSN-RNC, Assistant Project Manager; Suzanne Magherini, MD, Medical Director; Sue Porter, BSN-BC, Director/Project Manager; and Josephine Ferrer-Rivera, Assistant Director, Patient Access Management.

THE PLUSES OF FAMILY PLANNING

Pregnancy-related services can improve health for both women and children, says Suzanne Magherini, MD, Director of Outpatient Obstetrics and Gynecology at Monmouth Medical Center. She notes that family planning:

1 Empowers women. Access to safe, voluntary family planning services is fundamental to women's autonomy, providing education on options to either prevent or initiate pregnancy, including preferred contraceptive methods and access to timely, evidence-based care.

2 Improves overall health and well-being. Family planning services can help reduce unintended pregnancies and related risks to both mother and baby. These include harm associated with risky behaviors such as tobacco and alcohol use linked to adverse effects in infants, delayed access to prenatal care and maternal risks such as depression or worsening of underlying medical conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.

3 Helps prevent sexually transmitted infections. Family planning services can educate women on preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by using supplementary barrier methods such as condoms (both external and internal), diaphragms or sponges. Family planning can also help women identify symptoms of an infection that should be treated.

4 Enhances society. Family planning services are linked to labor market opportunities for women. Economic empowerment leads to improved household income; greater opportunities for women to invest in their health, education and well-being; and fewer government-dependent families.

A PLACE FOR FAMILY PLANNING

A NEW CLINIC PROVIDES ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, EXPERT REPRODUCTIVE CARE.

The term "family planning" might bring to mind a couple looking to expand their household, be it their first or fourth pregnancy. But a family planning program and its services can have a broader impact as well. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified family planning as one of the 10 great public health achievements of the last century.


At Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), a new Family Planning Clinic has been introduced to help women plan the number and spacing of pregnancies, prevent unintended pregnancies or achieve a healthy pregnancy. The Family Planning Clinic at MMC provides access to affordable reproductive healthcare, including all contraceptive methods. Services are provided by obstetrician/gynecologists, nurse midwives and nurses, and include screenings and testing, health promotion and education on sexual health, as well as access to

emergency contraception.

"Our mission is to provide women and teens with easy access to convenient, confidential family planning services," says Suzanne Magherini, MD, Director of Outpatient Obstetrics and Gynecology at MMC. "Every woman as well as every family, community and society can gain from family planning."

The clinic is located just off the main lobby in the hospital's Cranmer Ambulatory Surgery Center and is next door to the consumer pharmacy where prescriptions can be filled following the visit. All insurances are accepted. For those without insurance, services are available at no or low cost, based on income. Hours are available every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

To learn more about the Family Planning Clinic at MMC and the benefits of family planning or to make an appointment, call **732.923.7877**.

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a bright yellow raincoat and dark blue pants, is kneeling on a lawn covered with fallen autumn leaves. She is smiling and holding a small brown dog with floppy ears. The background is a soft-focus green lawn with scattered leaves.

As a healthcare professional, Margaret Ames understood the value of having a top-notch cancer care team during her battle with breast cancer.



RWJBarnabas Health and Monmouth Medical Center, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provide close-to-home access to the most advanced treatment options. Call 844.CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.

‘COMPASSIONATE PROFESSIONALS’

AN EXCEPTIONAL SURGICAL TEAM GUIDES A WOMAN THROUGH HER BREAST CANCER JOURNEY.

Learning you have breast cancer can upend your world. That was certainly the case for Margaret Ames, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Patient Services at Jersey City Medical Center. She found out about her cancer in November 2020 after what she expected would be a routine mammogram. “I got the diagnosis the week before Thanksgiving,” she recalls.

The holidays abruptly turned somber as Margaret began exploring treatment options. But she didn’t become

overwhelmed. “I tend to emote in a very rational way, so I began my process of, ‘What’s the next step, and how do I get it taken care of?’” she says. She and her husband, Scott Ames, MD, a transplant surgeon, didn’t have to ponder where to turn for answers. As an employee at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), Margaret knew its deep expertise in breast cancer.

“I had several excellent doctors,” Margaret says. Among them were board-certified internal medicine physician and medical oncologist Seth Cohen, MD,

Regional Director of Oncology Services for the RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region; board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon Gregory A. Greco, DO, Chief of Plastic Surgery and General Surgery Residency Program Director at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC); plastic surgeon Negin Griffith, MD; and board-certified and fellowship-trained breast surgeon Manpreet K. Kohli, MD, Director of Breast Surgery at MMC. “They were a team I felt particularly connected to,” Margaret says. “They approached

everything quite scientifically, which gives a nurse like me some comfort.” Through MMC’s partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, patients have access to advanced treatment options including novel clinical trials, if needed.

She also took comfort in MMC’s achieving Magnet recognition for nursing excellence. “Magnet is a data-driven designation where a nursing team passes national benchmarks in a variety of indicators,” Margaret says. “I have complete confidence and comfort when the Monmouth nursing team, led by MMC Chief Nursing Officer Diann Johnston, is taking care of me.”

MOMENTOUS DECISION

Margaret met with Dr. Kohli shortly after her diagnosis and discussed her specific type of breast cancer. Called invasive ductal carcinoma, “it had a very high growth rate,” Dr. Kohli says. Margaret also had a troubling family history of not only breast cancer but also pancreatic and prostate cancers.

Dr. Kohli described what lay ahead, referencing Margaret’s own imaging results, making diagrams to share with her husband and going into detail about aspects such as the tumor’s characteristics and size, and tests that investigated factors such as specific hormone receptors.

The cancer was solely in Margaret’s right breast and very treatable. But Margaret didn’t have much time to decide what type of surgery to have. “I could have had a lumpectomy or a single mastectomy,” she says. “But I chose, at 56 years old, to have a double mastectomy. That was the approach I felt most comforted by.”

STRONG COMEBACK

On December 2, 2020, Dr. Kohli performed the double mastectomy at MMC to remove both of Margaret’s breasts. Dr. Greco placed expanders



ACCLAIMED BREAST HEALTH SERVICES

The Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at Monmouth Medical Center is one of just two in the state recognized as Certified Quality Breast Centers of Excellence, the highest certification awarded by the National Quality Measures for Breast Centers program.

Other honors include being named a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology’s Commission on Quality and Safety and the Commission on Breast Imaging, and becoming the first center in Ocean and Monmouth counties to receive a three-year full accreditation designation from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.

A team of board-certified surgeons, all specialists in breast surgery, is equipped to perform advanced procedures such as scar-reducing and nipple-preserving mastectomies. Patients also benefit from a range of additional services:

- Care from a multidisciplinary panel of breast cancer experts such as breast and reconstructive surgeons, oncologists and radiologists
- The latest screening and diagnostic imaging technologies
- Advanced techniques that deliver radiation to breast cancer while minimizing exposure to surrounding organs and tissues
- A Breast Cancer High Risk Program that assesses factors such as genetics
- Access to clinical trials and research
- Licensed clinical social workers who lead support groups, provide counseling and connect patients and families to community resources
- Patient navigators to guide patients and families through the healthcare system and access social services

that would save space within the remaining chest tissue for a subsequent reconstructive surgery in which the expanders would be swapped for implants.

Tumor testing indicated Margaret would benefit from chemotherapy, which she underwent over a 20-week period at MMC’s Infusion Center. She lost her hair, eyebrows and lashes, and often felt nauseated or fatigued, but received unflinching support from Dr. Cohen and the Infusion Center’s staff. “The nurses, the pharmacy team and my own reading helped me understand how to mitigate side effects,” she says.

Margaret has been impressing on

other women the importance of regular mammograms. She’s back to working full days and often heads to the gym afterwards. Exercise may lower her risk of recurrence, she says. “As much as I sometimes don’t feel like going to the gym, I’m going anyway!” she says. Her workouts recently gave her extra stamina to tour Berlin, Dresden and Prague with her husband and brother.

She credits MMC and RWJBH for helping her through her cancer journey. “I’ve already referred several patients and would have complete confidence with anybody getting care there,” she says. “They have an outstanding group of compassionate professionals.”

To make an appointment at the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at Monmouth Medical Center, call **732.923.7700**.





BOLSTERING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

GRANT HELPS EXPAND SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS.

Even before grappling with the stresses of a deadly pandemic, communities nationwide recognized the growing importance of behavioral health issues such as mental and substance use disorders. Now Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has received a \$4 million, two-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand its behavioral health services.

The grant will increase access to care among underserved populations throughout Monmouth County and establish a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) at MMC. Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics were created through

the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA), which established an initiative to expand Americans' access to—and improve the quality of—mental and substance use disorder treatment services in community-based settings.

As part of the grant, MMC will work with community partners through collaborative agreements to provide treatment and vital social support services, including 24-hour crisis care, coordination with primary care, and specialized community-based care with rapid hospital access. MMC will also leverage RWJBarnabas Health's vast network of mental health and substance use disorder treatments and services by collaborating with system partners including Rutgers University

Behavioral Health Care, RWJBarnabas Health Behavioral Health and the RWJBarnabas Health Institute for Prevention and Recovery.

SERVING THE UNDERSERVED

MMC estimates that upwards of 600 currently underserved individuals will receive comprehensive, coordinated care annually beginning in January 2022. As a CCBHC, Monmouth Medical Center will provide services to anyone needing care regardless of their ability to pay due to being uninsured, underinsured or unable to afford insurance and/or having gaps in insurance.

Patients will include people with serious mental illness or emotional disturbance, long-term chronic addiction, mild or moderate mental illness, substance use disorders and complex health profiles.

“Through this grant and our designation as a CCBHC, we'll be able to quickly expand access to a full continuum of integrated care to anyone who needs it,” says MMC President and Chief Executive Officer Eric Carney.

“CCBHCs provide an effective and safe alternative to emergency departments for mental health and substance use disorder treatments and services while still providing 24/7 access to care,” says Stephanie Petruca, LCSW, Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health for RWJBarnabas Health. “As a CCBHC, Monmouth Medical Center will eliminate barriers to accessing treatment and provide lifesaving assistance to anyone who needs it. Equally as important, we'll be able to provide ongoing care and coordination of integrated clinical and social support services to ensure each individual seeking help receives a comprehensive continuum of care.”

“Improving the quality and scope of healthcare is critical to ensuring that individuals and families struggling with mental illness or substance use disorders get the tools they need to meet those challenges,” said Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06). “I am hopeful that this project will improve health outcomes here in Monmouth County and across New Jersey.”



Gathering after the dedication ceremony for the Long Branch Police Department Resiliency Room are (from left) Long Branch Police lieutenants Robert Bell, Christopher Hazel and Stanley Mooney; Domingos A. Saldida, Public Safety Director for Long Branch; Stephanie Petrucha, LCSW, Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health for RWJBarnabas Health; Eric Carney, President and CEO at MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus; Long Branch Police Sgt. Antonia Gonzalez; Long Branch Mayor John Pallone; George Jackson, Long Branch Business Administrator; and Captain Frank Rizzuto, Officer in Charge.

PROMOTING POLICE RESILIENCE

Police officers who have responded to a critical incident can now privately and confidentially receive psychological support from the Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) outpatient behavioral health team in a new space called the Long Branch Police Department Resiliency Room.

The first of its kind in New Jersey, the Resiliency Room is a specially designed space located near the Long Branch Police Department (LBDP) to promote the mental health of police officers. The room and its resources are designed to help officers manage and cope with the daily stress of their jobs, providing a place to decompress, process emotions and share thoughts.

Hospital staff and Long Branch city and police officials announced the new partnership with MMC's Behavioral Health Services in a gathering July 13. The dedication event included remarks by John Pallone, Mayor of Long Branch; Eric Carney, President and Chief Executive Officer at MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus; Sgt. Antonia Gonzalez of the LBDP; and Domingos A. Saldida, Long Branch Public Safety Director.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Mayor Pallone noted that the stressful nature of police work makes resources for the men and women who put their lives on the line every day crucial. He thanked MMC for supporting

the Resiliency Room with the hospital's behavioral health resources. Carney expressed the hospital's commitment to working with the City of Long Branch and a variety of community partners to support the city in whatever it needs.

"Through this new partnership, we are so pleased to share the expertise of our amazing mental health professionals in support of the Long Branch Police, our courageous frontline partners," Carney said. He added that the hospital is proud to offer the largest and most comprehensive behavioral health program in Monmouth County. "Long Branch is such a fantastic host town for our hospital, and we can never thank the city enough, particularly over the last 18 months of our COVID journey together and witnessing the incredible work of all the frontline heroes," he said.

Gonzalez, founder of the program, noted that she reached out to MMC a year ago with her idea of creating a wellness program for fellow officers. Her own experience in the field and listening to fellow officers talk about their need for support led to the initiative, she said.

"Thank you, Eric Carney, for listening and wanting to help our law enforcement officers in Long Branch," said the 25-year Long Branch Police veteran and first woman promoted to the rank of sergeant in LBDP history. "I look forward to watching this program grow; I am forever grateful to you, Mr. Carney, and to Monmouth Medical Center."

To learn more about behavioral health services at Monmouth Medical Center, visit www.rwjbh.org/monmouth. If you are in crisis, call the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services hotline at **732.923.6999**.



*
 RWJBarnabas Health and MMC, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provide close-to-home access to the most advanced treatment options. Call 844.CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.

cancer through measures such as tumor profiling, in which tests determining the cancer’s genetic makeup can guide doctors to the most effective therapies.

• **Clinical trials:**

Patients have access to cutting-edge therapies that may be available only at an NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, where the necessary expertise, resources and equipment allow advanced research.

• **Immunotherapy:** Therapies enlist and strengthen the power of a patient’s immune system cells and boost their ability to attack a malignancy.

• **CAR T-cell therapy:** Immune system cells called T-cells are taken from a patient’s blood, engineered in the lab to attack a specific cancer-cell protein and infused back into the patient. CAR T-cell therapy is especially effective against certain blood cancers. Other advanced cellular therapies are also available.

• **Blood and marrow transplantation:** Procedures replace unhealthy blood or bone marrow (where blood-forming cells are found) with healthier cells from either the patient or a donor.

• **Proton beam and other sophisticated radiation therapies:** These therapies direct high-energy radiation such as X-rays against malignant cells. Proton beam therapy can precisely deliver energy to blood-related tissues such as lymph nodes while avoiding damage to healthy cells.

“I am committed to bringing exceptional care to all my patients and strive to provide the most comprehensive and up-to-date, evidence-based care,” Dr. Eltoukhy says. “I strongly believe in close collaboration with other providers and utilizing all available resources to help achieve the most optimum outcomes, all while respecting my patients’ needs and wishes.”

TEAMING UP AGAINST BLOOD DISORDERS

A NEW HEMATOLOGIST/ONCOLOGIST WITH EXPERTISE IN BENIGN AND MALIGNANT BLOOD DISORDERS ENHANCES CARE AT RWJBH SOUTHERN REGION HOSPITALS.

Blood disorders can be complex. Consider blood cancers: Although they may concentrate in sites like the lymph nodes or bone marrow, they affect or develop in cells that can circulate through the body and often involve the immune system. It’s the job of a hematologist/oncologist to understand the intricate nature of blood disorders, find out whether problems are malignant or benign (cancer or noncancer) and treat patients accordingly.

Providing such expertise is the mission of Hussam Eltoukhy, MD, who recently joined the multidisciplinary team that treats blood cancers and other blood-related disorders at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), Monmouth



HUSSAM ELTOUKHY, MD

Medical Center Southern Campus (MMCSC) and Community Medical Center (CMC). Dr.

Eltoukhy also joins the medical staff at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New

Jersey, the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Eltoukhy’s expertise is in benign and malignant blood disorders including acute and chronic leukemia, Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, myelodysplasia, myeloproliferative diseases and anemia.

“Seeing patients at MMC, MMCSC, CMC and Rutgers Cancer Institute gives me a unique opportunity to provide patients with close-to-home access to the most comprehensive and advanced care,” Dr. Eltoukhy says. The team also includes Seth Cohen, MD, Regional Director of Oncology Services for RWJBarnabas Health’s Southern Region.

ADVANCED TREATMENTS

The three hospitals’ partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute gives patients access to the full spectrum of therapeutic procedures and advanced treatment options, many of which are not available elsewhere. These include:

• **Precision medicine:** Treatments are tailored to a patient’s specific form of

RWJBarnabas HEALTH Primary Care Breast Center



LEFT: Now offering services at Aldrich Primary Care in Howell are (from left) family medicine physician Kerollos Askander, MD; internal medicine physician Mini Balaji, MD; and family medicine physician Iniobong Ukonne, MD. **BELOW:** Kerollos Askander, MD, joins Aldrich Primary Care practice manager Taisha Perez (center) and Iniobong Ukonne, MD, at Howell Day and Green Fair, an event held September 25 at Soldier Memorial Park.

8

GREAT REASONS TO SEE A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

REGULAR VISITS TO A BIG-PICTURE DOCTOR CAN HELP KEEP YOU HEALTHIER.

Research suggests the number of Americans who regularly see a primary care physician is dropping. But going to a primary care doctor has important health benefits, according to Mini Balaji, MD, internal medicine physician at Aldrich Primary Care in Howell and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

“A primary care physician typically specializes in a discipline such as family medicine or internal medicine and provides a first point of entry into the healthcare system,” says Dr. Balaji. “It’s important to have a go-to health professional in your corner who can assess and treat a broad variety of conditions.”

Dr. Balaji and her recently arrived colleagues at Aldrich Primary Care—family medicine physicians and RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group members Kerollos Askander, MD, and Iniobong Ukonne, MD—say regularly seeing a primary care doctor can improve your health for reasons like these:

1 You’ll be better off if you get ill. From your history and screening test results, your primary care physician will know what your “normal” looks like, which will help address both your acute

and chronic medical problems more effectively.

2 Medications will be managed more effectively. A primary care physician can monitor and track all your medications, helping to protect you from drug interactions and unwanted side effects.

3 You’ll receive disease-prevention advice. Your doctor can recommend tests to assess your risks of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other serious-but-common problems, then suggest healthy lifestyle changes and regular screenings to reduce those risks.

4 Remote consults may be readily available. Baseline health information that your primary care physician collects may allow your doctor to be comfortable treating certain problems over the phone.

5 You’ll have an easier time finding specialists. When you need the care of an expert in a certain

A NEW PRIMARY CARE PRACTICE

For people who live in and around Howell, it’s now easier than ever to find the perfect primary care physician, thanks to the recently opened Aldrich Primary Care at 4013 Route 9 North in Howell. Next door, patients will find the Jacqueline M. Wilentz Comprehensive Breast Center at Howell, which offers mammography, bone density testing services, genetic counseling and general X-rays. Women who have a primary care visit and need a mammogram can simply walk across the hall to the Center—no appointment is needed.

specialty, your primary care physician can help you find a provider who not only is highly qualified but meshes with your personality and preferences.

6 You’ll get help navigating the ER. Your doctor can advise whether a visit is necessary—or call ahead and provide pertinent medical details that could shorten your wait when appropriate.

7 You’ll receive better care overall. People with primary care physicians tend to receive significantly more high-value healthcare such as flu shots and cancer screenings, and often have better patient experiences as well as overall access to healthcare.

8 You might live longer. Research suggests that people who live in areas where primary care physicians are readily available on average have longer life spans.

For more information on Aldrich Primary Care, call **732.835.7914** or visit www.rwjbh.org/medicalgroup.



Monmouth Medical Center Best in the U.S. for the 14th time in a row



Monmouth Medical Center remains the only hospital in Monmouth and Ocean counties to earn 14 straight A's from the Leapfrog Group. This remarkable achievement underscores Monmouth Medical Center's commitment as a High Reliability Organization (HRO).

Through the concerted effort of Monmouth Medical Center's physicians, nurses, staff, volunteers and leadership, patients and families benefit from receiving the highest level of quality care and the safest hospital experience.

Monmouth Medical Center

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Let's be healthy together.

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