

A Publication of
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER

Summer 2022

healthy *together*

**STATE-OF-THE-ART
CANCER CARE**

**LIVING WITH
DIABETES:
ONE TEEN'S
STORY**

**LOVE YOUR SKIN
THIS SUMMER**

**HEALING HEARTS:
IT TAKES A TEAM**



MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP



“The newly opened RWJBarnabas Health Field of Dreams in Toms River, a recreational complex for people of all ages and abilities, is emblematic of our mission: to help the people who live in our communities feel healthier and enjoy their lives to the fullest.”

BARRY H. OSTROWSKY | Chief Executive Officer, RWJBarnabas Health



“I am deeply moved by the commitment my outstanding RWJBarnabas Health colleagues have to our mission and to serving everyone in our communities with inclusiveness for all, regardless of race, age, gender, background and ability.”

MARK E. MANIGAN | President, RWJBarnabas Health



“Our new Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center in Eatontown is helping us ensure that those in our communities have the means and ability to live healthier, more fulfilling lives by, for example, our supporting people on their healthy eating journeys through the innovative WForum Demonstration Kitchen.”

ERIC CARNEY | President and Chief Executive Officer, Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus

Monmouth Medical Center | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**

300 Second Avenue, Long Branch, NJ 07740
732.222.5200

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HEALTH NEWS



RECEIVING A 15TH STRAIGHT 'A' RATING

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has been awarded an “A” Hospital Safety Score rating by the Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit. Updated twice a year, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital rating focused exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harms to patients through measures such as infection prevention and strong safety protocols and standards. MMC is the only hospital in the region to receive an “A” Hospital Safety Score from the Leapfrog Group for 15 consecutive rating periods.

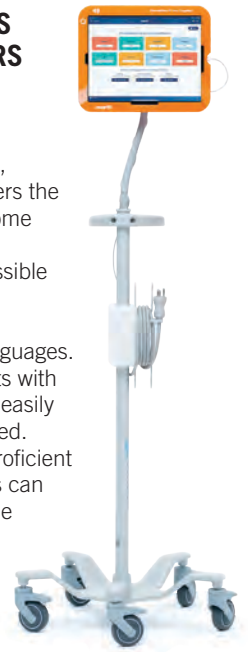
“Our 15 consecutive ‘A’ grades demonstrate the commitment and intentional focus on safety and quality by all of our caregivers, and recognizes the high-quality care we deliver to our patients and their families every day,” says Eric Carney, President and Chief Executive Officer of MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

MMC also was recently named to *Newsweek*’s global list of Best Hospitals and was recognized for a third time as a Leapfrog Top Teaching Hospital.

NEW TECHNOLOGY BREAKS DOWN LANGUAGE BARRIERS

A new technology introduced at RWJBarnabas Health breaks down language barriers, eases communication between patients, families and providers, and furthers the health system’s mission to overcome health disparities.

Known as MARTTI (My Accessible Real-Time Trusted Interpreter), it provides 24/7 access to medical interpreters in more than 250 languages. MARTTI devices resemble IV carts with 12-inch tablets attached and are easily wheeled anywhere they are needed. Using MARTTI, limited English-proficient (LEP) patients or family members can point out a country of origin on the MARTTI screen and choose from a list of languages, helping to ensure they will understand key information about conditions, treatments or medical needs.



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After being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, Siena Branch channeled a scary hospitalization into advocacy, including proudly displaying her insulin pump as Miss Ramapo Valley's Outstanding Teen.

CALLING ATTENTION TO TYPE 1 DIABETES

EXPERT PEDIATRIC CARE HELPS INSPIRE A TEEN TO ADVOCATE FOR AWARENESS.

Everyone expects changes when puberty hits. But the changes Siena Branch of Marlboro experienced when she turned 12 seemed bewildering. First she put on 30 pounds. Then she mysteriously lost the weight in the span of a month.

She was also tired all the time and couldn't drink enough water to quench her thirst. "I was going through several gallon jugs a day," says Siena, now 17 and a high school junior.



FRANK BARROWS, DO

At a routine doctor's visit, she finally found out what was wrong. Her pediatrician discovered Siena had Type 1 diabetes, sometimes called juvenile diabetes. She also had a potentially life-threatening

complication called diabetic ketoacidosis, in which the body lacks enough of the hormone insulin to allow energy-providing blood glucose into cells.

Siena was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), where she received insulin to bring her glucose levels to normal as she and her shaken mother, Tricia, tried to process her diagnosis.

"I thought, 'My life will never be the same,'" Siena remembers. "I was scared and also angry. Why was this happening to me?"

They began to feel more at ease when they spoke with Frank Barrows, DO, Chief of Pediatric Endocrinology at MMC's Unterberg Children's Hospital, and certified diabetes care and education specialist Lisa Ball-O'Brien, LSW, CDCES, who provided a backpack filled with information and a teddy bear named Rufus—the mascot of the Juvenile Diabetes

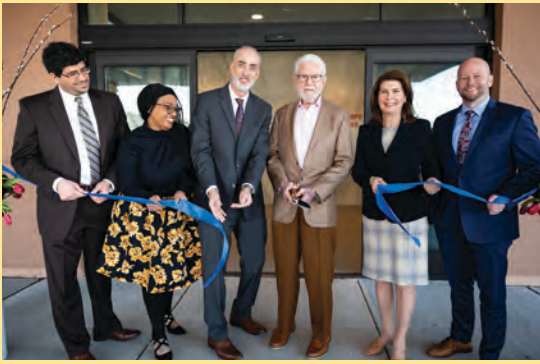
Research Foundation (JDRF).

They helped reassure Siena and Tricia that the disease can successfully be managed. With Type 1 diabetes, the body stops making insulin, and daily injections or an insulin pump are required to survive. Getting the right amount is a balancing act.

"I didn't really know what diabetes was," Siena says. "Lisa explained what I had to do, about finger pricks [to monitor blood levels of glucose], insulin shots and counting carbs."

Siena and her family, which also includes her father, Dave, and 14-year-old brother, Andrew, have had ups and downs, but have fared well with help from the MMC diabetes team.

"Without their support, I don't know what we would have done—truly amazing people, and we are so thankful for them and all the hospital staff we've interacted with over these past 17 years," says Tricia,



OPENING DOORS AT THE ANNE VOGEL FAMILY CARE AND WELLNESS CENTER

Philanthropist Sheldon Vogel cuts the ceremonial ribbon dedicating the Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center with (from left) Anthony Talerico Jr., Eatontown Mayor; Danielle M. Jones, Councilwoman; Eric Carney, President and CEO, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus; Claire Knopf, Foundation Board Chair, MMC; and Matthew B. McDonald III, MD, President and CEO, Children's Specialized Hospital.

who notes that both her children were born at MMC.

Siena now uses a continuous glucose monitoring system and an insulin pump to keep her blood glucose levels in range. "We couldn't be happier with her excellent glycemic control, positive outlook and diabetes advocacy," says Dr. Barrows.

A WEALTH OF SUBSPECIALTIES

Dr. Barrows is among a number of pediatric subspecialists available at the new Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center in Eatontown. Other subspecialty services for children at the center include cardiology, gastroenterology, pulmonology and infectious diseases.

The facility also includes the LiveWell Center, which incorporates the WEForum Demonstration Kitchen featuring Dorothea and Jon Bon Jovi Nutrition Education Programs, where patients, families and members of the community can learn wellness practices such as preparing healthier foods or eating with chronic conditions like diabetes.

The combination of services makes the Vogel Center ideally positioned to care for complex needs of patients like Siena. "Having all this under one roof is very beneficial to our patients," says Dr. Barrows.

A multidisciplinary approach allows pediatric care at the Vogel Center to

be well coordinated and convenient for families while drawing on deep levels of expertise in a range of subspecialties, says Jonathan Teitelbaum, MD, Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology and interim Chair of Pediatrics. "We manage patients more effectively when we can all get together and discuss cases in person," Dr. Teitelbaum says.

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

Siena has made it her mission to help other children dealing with Type 1 diabetes. She helped start an organization called Team Diabeasties to support kids like herself. And as a youth ambassador for JDRE, she visits school groups to read stories about mascot Rufus.

She recently was crowned Miss Ramapo Valley's Outstanding Teen with diabetes awareness as her social impact initiative, proudly exposing the insulin pump on her upper arm during the competition—a signal that diabetes is nothing to be shy about. "Maybe others will think, 'Wow, she's really confident about that—I should be confident, too,'" she says.

"Siena is truly inspiring," says Dr. Barrows.

"We always talk about how, when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade," Tricia says. "Siena is using her experience for good."

SPECIALIZED GASTROENTEROLOGY CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Among the highly specialized pediatric services at the Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center is the pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition program, part of the Children's Health Network at RWJBarnabas Health, which focuses on diagnosis and treatment of conditions affecting the stomach, intestinal tract, colon, liver and pancreas.

Dedicated pediatric gastroenterologists care for newborns through adolescents suffering from common and complex digestive problems, such as colic, esophageal disorders and reflux, celiac disease, diarrhea, chronic constipation, vomiting, recurrent abdominal pain and ulcers.

Pediatric gastroenterologists with the program include:



JONATHAN TEITELBAUM, MD

Areas of interest:

allergic disease; inflammatory bowel disease; abdominal pain; celiac disease; constipation; gastroesophageal reflux

disease (GERD). Dr. Teitelbaum is the first pediatric physician in New Jersey to perform an Endoflip procedure, in which catheter-based, balloon-mounted sensors help doctors better diagnose and treat esophageal disorders.



ALEXANDER SCHOSHEIM, MD

Areas of interest:

functional abdominal pain disorders; GERD; constipation; celiac disease; inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's

and ulcerative colitis).



RAMI ARROUK, MD

Areas of interest:

abdominal pain; constipation; celiac disease; eosinophilic esophagitis; inflammatory bowel disease; irritable bowel

syndrome; GERD; liver disease.

To learn more about the Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center, visit www.rwjbh.org/loveyourfuture.



Monmouth Medical Center Best in the U.S. for the 15th time in a row



Monmouth Medical Center remains the only hospital in Monmouth and Ocean counties to earn 15 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
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**RWJBarnabas
HEALTH**

Let's be healthy together.

rwjbh.org/monmouth

You just ran a 10K.

You still need a mammogram.

At RWJBarnabas Health, together with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, we offer the latest in comprehensive breast health services including mammograms, 3D mammograms, breast MRI, genetic testing, breast surgery and more — like peace of mind. And with breast health centers conveniently located throughout New Jersey, finding us is simple, too.

Schedule your mammogram at rwjbh.org/mammo

RUTGERS
Cancer Institute
of New Jersey
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HEALTH**

Let's beat breast cancer together.



The new WEForum Demonstration Kitchen's audio-visual equipment enhances both live and remote presentations.

COOKING UP HEALTHY PROGRAMS

THE NEW WEFORUM DEMONSTRATION KITCHEN LIES AT THE HEART OF THE ANNE VOGEL FAMILY CARE AND WELLNESS CENTER.

Within the newly opened, 82,000-square-foot Anne Vogel Family Care and Wellness Center in Eatontown lies a space that some liken to the heart of a home: a large and exquisitely equipped demonstration kitchen.

"It's a key to expansion of our community health programs and education for the entire area," says Jean McKinney, Regional Director, Community Health and Social Impact and Community Investment at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus (MMSC).

The state-of-the-art kitchen is part of the LiveWell Center, a 5,600-square-foot portion of the Vogel outpatient facility located at the Monmouth Mall. LiveWell Center programs—all free—help community members prevent disease and live healthier lives through multiple pathways including nutrition education. The programs supplement and reinforce a wide range of services now available for adults, families and children at the Vogel Center.

"We're very excited to be tailoring

programs to different age groups and populations," says Abigail Thompson, Program Director, LiveWell Center. "Working closely with our clinical experts and collaborating with a variety of community partners, we're able to help people prevent or manage chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and weight- or obesity-related issues."

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Thanks to a generous naming gift, the demonstration kitchen has been named for WEForum, an organization led by women in the community whose mission is to build a culture of healthy living. "We know that a healthy diet is among the keys to good health, and are proud to help educate our community that leading a healthy lifestyle is a life choice—and that the benefits are immeasurable," says Carolyn DeSena, WEForum founder and MMC Foundation Trustee.

Kitchen programming has been named for Dorothea and Jon Bon Jovi, who also made a generous gift. The LiveWell Center's efforts align with the couple's nonprofit work to

SWEET, HEALTHY AND PERFECT FOR SUMMER

Nutrition education at the new WEForum Demonstration Kitchen includes simple, healthy recipes like this.



Red, White and Blue Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup diced strawberries
- 2 cups vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup blueberries
- ¼ cup granola (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Layer strawberries, yogurt and blueberries inside a parfait cup or glass jar. Sprinkle with granola (if using) and serve.

address issues such as food insecurity, nutrition education, mental health and homelessness. "We're happy to be part of such an innovative, forward-thinking program," says Dorothea.

The kitchen features commercial-grade amenities such as induction stovetops and stainless appliances. "We're also equipped with great audiovisual equipment that provides different views during cooking classes and demonstrations," says Jennifer Klein, MS, RDN, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, LiveWell Center. "The kitchen is built like a studio so we can provide high-quality virtual content as well as enhanced experiences for people attending in person."

Ideas for new initiatives could include family cook-alongs; cooking classes for kids; nutrition or cooking programs to supplement other services in the building such as the Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Center; and workshops on topics such as heart-healthy nutrition or plant-based diets.

"We want to help people put nutrition into practice and not just tell them what to eat," Klein says. "Our beautiful new facility is a hub for community health education and nutrition programming.

By embedding ourselves in the community and moving beyond hospital walls, we can reach our entire local population and improve health outcomes."

To learn more about WEForum, visit www.weforumgroup.org. To learn more about programs in the WEForum Demonstration Kitchen, visit www.rwjbh.org/avfamilycare.

HEALING HEARTS

A TEAM APPROACH TO CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE



Coronary artery disease (CAD)—when major arteries to the heart are damaged and blood flow is partially or totally blocked—is the most common type of heart disease in the U.S.

However, new technology, along with a team-based approach to treatment, have greatly improved patient outcomes, says interventional cardiologist Bruce Haik, MD, Chief of the Division of Cardiology and Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center (CBMC), who is also a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

“Treating CAD sometimes involves a complex decision tree requiring a Heart Team consultation,” says Dr. Haik. “When a patient and family have input from cardiac specialists with a wide array of expertise, they can feel confident in making a decision about treatment.”



BRUCE HAIK, MD

MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

CAD can be diagnosed in a variety of ways, including cardiac stress tests, which show how the heart works during physical activity; a

coronary CT scan, a specialized, ultra-fast imaging test that can provide a calcium score and also provide noninvasive information about the arteries; and an angiogram, an X-ray that can accurately detect blockages. These tests are often ordered by a **cardiologist**, a doctor trained in finding, treating and preventing cardiac disease.

The noninvasive cardiologist may refer the patient to an **interventional cardiologist**. “This is a specialist in the nonsurgical opening of arteries,” says Dr. Haik. A procedure done by an interventional cardiologist is angioplasty, also known as percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI). In this procedure, a soft, flexible guide wire and various balloon catheters and devices are inserted into a narrowed blood vessel in order to open the artery with stents. The process is sometimes aided by imaging from within the blood vessel utilizing specialized imaging systems.

The interventional cardiologist will consult with a **cardiac surgeon**, whose specialty is open heart surgery, in which an incision is made in the chest in order to perform coronary artery bypass graft surgery, sometimes combined with valve repair or replacement.

Both of those doctors will rely on the information provided by a **cardiac**

imaging specialist, who uses sophisticated technology to provide detailed images of a heart’s chambers, valves, walls and blood vessels. “It’s important to know the severity, location and extent of the narrowing, but also to understand whether the blockage is rigid and calcified, or is more consistent with soft plaque,” says Dr. Haik.

MAKING THE CALL

The Heart Team approaches each patient’s individual treatment plan by considering many clinical factors, including age, frailty and coexisting medical conditions like diabetes in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.

“The cardiology field has evolved so that we now have many effective ways of treating CAD and related conditions,” says Dr. Haik. “For example, the Shockwave balloon utilizes ultrasound waves to break up calcified plaque before placing a stent, allowing for more complete expansion.

“All of these options are weighed along with the particular patient’s risk profile,” he explains. “A major benefit of the Heart Team process is that sometimes a hybrid approach using both catheter-based procedures and surgery turns out to be the safest and most effective means of treatment.”

RWJBarnabas Health supports the largest-volume elective and emergent angioplasty program in New Jersey. To connect with a top cardiovascular specialist at RWJBarnabas Health, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.



NEW WAYS TO TREAT SKIN CANCER

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.

OUR PATIENTS HAVE THE BENEFIT OF ADVANCED TREATMENT OPTIONS, CLINICAL TRIALS AND GREATER ACCESS TO EXPERT CARE.

“Over the years, there’s been a revolution in the way we treat skin cancers, especially melanoma,” says Sarah Weiss, MD, Director, Melanoma/Cutaneous



ADAM BERGER, MD



SARAH WEISS, MD

Oncology Program at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. “The important thing to know is that with skin cancer, even if it’s advanced, there are now a number of potentially effective therapies available.”

“A diagnosis of skin cancer can be scary,” says Adam Berger, MD, FACS, Chief, Melanoma and Soft Tissue Surgical Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute, “but when you’re treated by a multidisciplinary team, the chances of a good outcome are excellent.”



MELANOMA: WHAT TO KNOW

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that develops when melanocytes (the cells that give the skin its tan or brown color) start to grow out of control. It's more likely than other skin cancers to spread to other parts of the body if not treated early.

"I advise patients to see a dermatologist for a skin check regularly, and if there's any change in a mole, to be seen right away," says Adam Berger, MD, FACS, Chief, Melanoma and Soft Tissue Surgical Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute.

The most important warning sign of melanoma is a new spot on the skin or a spot that is changing in size, shape or color. Be on the lookout for spots that have any of the following features:

A

A IS FOR ASYMMETRY:

One half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.



B

B IS FOR BORDER:

The edges are irregular, ragged, notched or blurred.



C

C IS FOR COLOR:

The color is not the same all over and may include different shades of brown or black, or sometimes patches of pink, red, white or blue.



D

D IS FOR DIAMETER:

The spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about ¼ inch—the size of a pencil eraser), although melanomas can sometimes be smaller than this.



E

E IS FOR EVOLVING:

The mole is changing in size, shape or color.



Source: American Cancer Society

ADVANCED TREATMENTS

Although melanoma accounts for only 1 percent of skin cancers, it causes the majority of skin cancer deaths. "Physicians at Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health treat all types of skin cancers, but we worry about melanoma because it has the highest chance of spreading in the body," says Dr. Weiss.

"The majority of patients we see will have surgery to remove the melanoma, and that will be the only treatment they'll need," explains Dr. Berger. However, if a lymph node biopsy reveals that the cancer has spread, systemic treatment may be given. This may include targeted therapy or immunotherapy.

"The FDA has approved many new therapies over the past 10 years, including several new ones just this year, that enable us to harness a patient's immune system to fight melanoma as well as other skin cancers," says Dr. Weiss.

Patients may be eligible for one of

a number of clinical trials available at Rutgers Cancer Institute or one of the RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) hospitals. "Our goal is to offer clinical trials in every setting of the disease, for patients who've never had treatment to patients who've had prior treatments but are in need of new therapies," says Dr. Weiss.

MANY MINDS

Multidisciplinary care means that patients at RWJBH hospitals and Rutgers Cancer Institute benefit from the expertise of a dedicated team of specialists, including surgical oncologists, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, radiologists, dermatologists, pathologists, nurses, nurse navigators and social workers.

"We meet on a weekly basis to discuss each patient's case," says Dr. Berger. "We put our heads together to create a personalized plan of care for each individual."

Physicians throughout Rutgers

Cancer Institute and RWJBH coordinate care across the state at RWJBH hospitals. Their mission, says Dr. Berger, is to make top-level cutaneous oncology (skin cancer) care available for patients close to home.

Franz O. Smith, MD, MAcM, MMM, FACS, Northern Lead, Melanoma and Soft Tissue Oncology Program, RWJBarnabas Health, and Medical Director, The Melanoma Center at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, collaborates with the cutaneous oncology team at Rutgers Cancer Institute, attends the weekly multidisciplinary tumor board meetings and offers patients access to clinical trials. He also sees patients at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville.

The cutaneous oncology team at Rutgers Cancer Institute also works closely with surgical oncologist Victor Gall, MD, who treats melanoma and skin cancer patients at Community Medical Center in Toms River, Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus in Lakewood.

To learn more about treatment for skin cancers at RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, call **844.CANCERNJ** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer**.





A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN PLAY





At the ribbon cutting for the RWJBarnabas Health Field of Dreams, opposite page, from left: Maurice Hill, Mayor, Toms River; Mitchell Little, Police Chief, Toms River; Barry Ostrowsky, CEO, RWJBarnabas Health; Christian, Gavin and Mary Kane; Michael Ritacco, Board President, Field of Dreams; Michelle Minnelli, Kane family friend; and Todd Frazier, former Major League Baseball All-Star and supporter of Children's Specialized Hospital.

THE RWJBARNABAS HEALTH FIELD OF DREAMS IS OPEN TO KIDS OF ALL ABILITIES.

“Gavin has no place to go. He used to have places to go, but a beer truck changed all that. And that can happen to you or someone you love in the blink of an eye.”

That's how Christian Kane explained the need for a recreational complex for people with disabilities to potential donors. In 2012, the car Christian was driving was hit by a truck, leaving his son, Gavin, just 19 months old, with a fractured skull and severe disabilities.

Since then, Kane and his wife, Mary, who also have four other children, have spared no effort to help Gavin have as normal a childhood as possible. That's how they learned that even “inclusive” playgrounds—“with some rubber flooring and a big red swing chair”—can create an environment in which disabled children feel unwelcome. And that's why they decided it was necessary to build a comprehensive recreational facility where children of all abilities, and their caretakers, would feel at home.

So Kane, a math teacher at Toms River North High School, became the chief organizer, fundraiser and salesperson for their dream. “To sell teenagers on the idea that math is cool, you have to know how to sell,” he says with a laugh.

Five years and one month from the day the couple had the idea, the RWJBarnabas Health Field of Dreams opened in Toms River. It features a basketball court, baseball field, nine-hole miniature golf course and a playground

area specially designed for wheelchairs and adaptive equipment. The complex has a “quiet corner” pavilion for children with autism, strategically placed outlets for recharging wheelchairs and more. There's nothing like it anywhere in the country.

“The Kanes' passion project aligned perfectly with RWJBarnabas Health's commitment to health equity and supporting community-based initiatives,” says Barry Ostrowsky, Chief Executive Officer of RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH).

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The Kanes already had a connection with RWJBH through Children's Specialized Hospital in Toms River, an RWJBH facility, where Gavin has been receiving physical and occupational therapy since the accident.

“Mind you, most of the doctors we were seeing early on told us to put Gavin in a home because he would amount to nothing,” says Kane. “We said, we'll take him to *our* home, and we found help for Gavin at Children's Specialized. The physical and occupational therapists there have basically treated Gavin like their own child. They're always thinking outside the box, trying new things—

anything to help him get better.”

Gavin is now in fourth grade in the Toms River public school system. “Through the use of a tablet, he's able to communicate and learn,” says Kane. “Through the use of my body and my wife's body, he's able to walk around. He's come a long way, but he's still not where we want him to be. That's our number one project.”

After that priority comes Field of Dreams, which now needs to be maintained and to grow. Adults with disabilities—who often have limited options after they age out of support provided by the public school system—will make up a large part of the staff. Sports leagues are being formed. Since the complex is a private entity and doesn't get state funding, fundraising will be a constant need.

“This project is immensely important to individuals with special healthcare needs,” says Matthew McDonald III, MD, Chief Executive Officer of Children's Specialized Hospital. “It gives folks an opportunity to socialize and exercise. We are so looking forward to packing this place.”

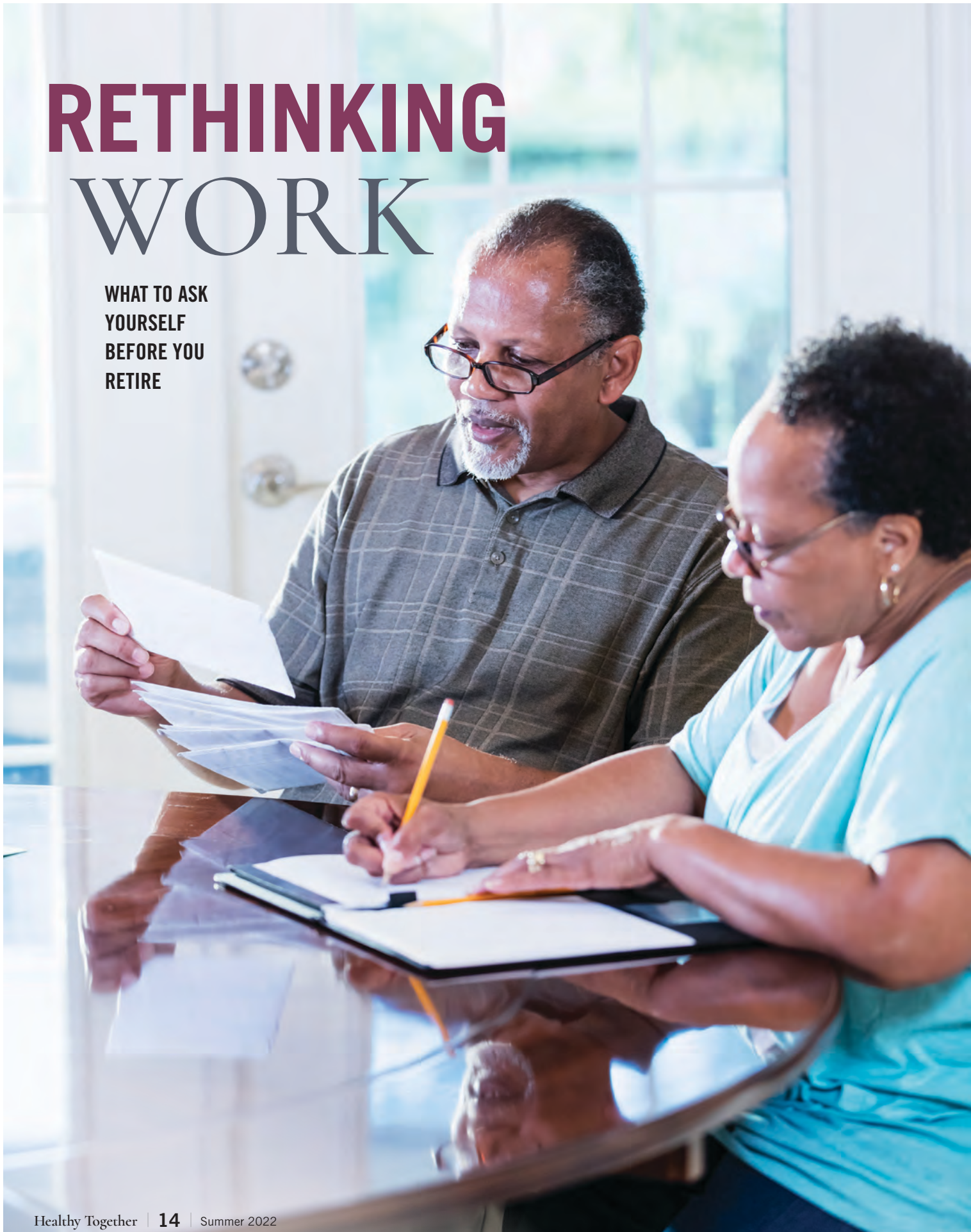
“Gavin is extremely excited,” says Kane. “Now he can play with his friends and meet new people.”

To learn more, visit
www.rwjbhfieldofdreams.com.



RETHINKING WORK

WHAT TO ASK
YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU
RETIRE



For most of the past 20 years, retirement rates in the U.S. were declining. People were staying in jobs longer, experts speculated, because of factors such as increased life expectancy, higher education levels and the rise in the minimum age to collect full Social Security benefits.

In the past two years, that trend began to reverse: Beginning with the pandemic-related economic shutdown, a significant number of U.S. adults who hadn't necessarily planned to retire did so. It's estimated that two and a half million "excess" retirements took place between March 2020 and the second quarter of 2021.

"What we've been seeing is a wave of people who have rethought the contract between themselves and the world of work," says Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health and Addictions at RWJBarnabas Health and President and CEO of Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. "The question is whether they made the choice with a complete understanding of what the consequences would be."

REASONS TO LEAVE

Fear was a motivator for many, Dr. Ghinassi says. "Early in the pandemic, before we had vaccinations and better medications, lots of people were dying," he says. "People began to ask themselves, is going into work worth my personal risk? You saw this in people who couldn't work from home, such as environmental services workers, first responders and healthcare workers.

"Also, many individuals began



FRANK A. GHINASSI, PHD

to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression. Surveys indicate that's been true for an increasing number of people in the past two years.

"Then, as the

pandemic ground on, making decisions about vaccination and risks and new variants have all begun to weigh on people," Dr. Ghinassi explains. "Older adults started thinking about how they wanted to spend the rest of their lives. A lot of employees began to examine whether they could make retirement work earlier than previously planned."

For a fortunate subset of people, personal wealth grew during this time period due to a heated housing market and booming stock market. With more money came more options.

AND THEN WHAT?

"Some people have a good plan for retirement and have really thought out the budget and what they'll do," says Dr. Ghinassi. "But often, people have a fantasy of retirement life that's based on their vacations: You don't have the stress of work, you go somewhere nice and spend more money than you usually do. The reality of retirement is that you have to create a lifestyle that can fit your budget, 52 weeks a year for the next 25 to 30 years."

Retirees also need to be prepared to find new ways of being with their families, he says. "Americans tend to be very hardworking. That means you were away from your family 45, 55, sometimes more hours a week," he says.

"When you retire, your family members are going to see you infinitely more than they have before and that's a big change, even in happy, well-adjusted families," he says. "Now you have to find structured ways not only to be together, but to be apart. People deal with issues like, how do you get your alone time when your spouse is always around?"

Selling a house and downsizing to a smaller space can present challenges as well. "You're not only spending way more time together, but now you're doing it in a smaller space," Dr. Ghinassi says. "That's not necessarily good or bad, but it does require renegotiation. Ideally, retirement is based on a realistic plan."

If it turns out that full-time retirement doesn't suit, the current

8 QUESTIONS TO ASK

"It's important to walk through the actual realities of retirement as thoroughly as you can before you take that step," says behavioral health specialist Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD.



- How are you going to cover medical costs?



- What is your debt situation? How much of your nest egg is tied to the stock market? Finances can be a source of significant stress.



- Are your friends retired and if not, how will that affect your social life?



- How will you structure a typical day, from the time you get up until the time you go to bed? What will a typical week look like? A month?



- What are your hobbies, and how will they help provide structure for your time?



- Have you talked to people you know well and asked them what retirement has meant for them?



- If you've decided to move away from where you've lived, how will you make new friends?



- If your partner is also retired or not working, how will you negotiate daily life now that you're together for a greater part of the day?

shortage of employees in the U.S. offers opportunities to return to the workforce. "Some people," says Dr. Ghinassi, "decide to rejoin the workforce in a totally different profession and become reinvigorated about work."

To learn about mental health services at RWJBarnabas Health, call the Behavioral Health Access Center, which is open 24 hours a day, at **800.300.0628**.





Opportunity Project now provides a combination of hybrid and virtual support to adults with brain injuries.

THE VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE

A UNIQUE PROGRAM INNOVATES TO HELP ADULTS RECOVER FROM BRAIN INJURY.

When lockdowns created by the pandemic began, the staff at Opportunity Project, a program for adults with brain injury, knew they had to pivot quickly. Members of the Opportunity Project Clubhouse were relying on them as they worked to rebuild their life skills—and they were used to meeting in person at the Millburn-based facility.

“People were in a panic,” says Jacqueline Marino Rizzi, Cognitive and Community Integration Skills Counselor. “We had to think fast. Right away, we created a Facebook private group for members. But we knew our members varied greatly in technology know-how and access.”

The staff learned how to create meetings that members could join by either video or phone. They helped those without an internet connection get one. Members left their iPads out on their porches so a staffer could download the apps needed for virtual meetings. Soon, just about everyone had the appropriate technology to participate in video calls.

“Then we made sure to keep our programs very consistent, because our members are routine-oriented,” Marino Rizzi says. “We held the groups at the same times and we provided reminders to make sure people would stay engaged.”

A NEW MODEL

Now there’s a range of new services, including Mental Health Mondays, Grief Counseling Tuesdays, Wellness Wednesdays, Team-Building Fridays and an Adjustment Counseling Group on Saturdays. There’s virtual cognitive retraining, adaptive chair yoga, music therapy, team building, stress relief and more. The OP Resilience Squad, where members provide peer-to-peer support, was launched, as was the OP Caregiver Support Group.



Similarly, Melissa Moyer, Nutrition Counselor, adapted her wellness groups to the virtual world. Fitness classes became videos that groups watched together, following along at home. Opportunity Project teamed with the SPIRIT Club to connect with its online database of inclusive fitness classes. Healthy cooking classes were livestreamed from the Clubhouse.

In individual and group sessions, members discussed ways to overcome limitations related to their brain injury that hinder them from meeting their health and wellness goals.

Now, as COVID-19 health protocols permit, the Opportunity Project Clubhouse has transitioned to a hybrid model, with limited in-person activities. Counselors say, however, that a virtual component is here to stay.

“Sometimes members had transportation barriers to coming to our in-person programs,” Moyer says. “Others struggled with the amount of preparation it takes to get out of the house. The fact that they can participate from their living rooms has been a great thing for them.”

“We’ve evolved and been able to keep providing positive support,” says Marino Rizzi. “Our members are continuing to make progress!”

Children’s Specialized Hospital partners with Opportunity Project to ensure that children in its brain injury programs can continue to have the support they need throughout adulthood. To learn more, visit www.opportunityproject.org. For more information about Children’s Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized.

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

HOW A TEEN OVERCAME COVID



EXPERT CARE TREATS THE CHILDREN'S COMPLICATION KNOWN AS MIS-C.

George Zaidan felt relieved when the COVID-19 vaccine became available to children ages 12 to 15 in May 2021. He quickly scheduled his 14-year-old son, Kat, for inoculation against the virus, which, though most prominent in adults, strikes children as well. The family continued masking and avoiding crowds to stay safe.

But despite these efforts, Kat developed a breakthrough infection, contracting COVID in December 2021 as



JACQUELINE BRUNETTO, MD

cases nationwide soared. He spent about five days overcoming fever, fatigue and congestion. Then three weeks later, he experienced a new concerning symptom:

shortness of breath. "The most basic things would get him tired," George says—"going up steps too quickly or even changing clothes."

It was the continuation of a long family nightmare in which Kat, with help from a team of medical specialists at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), fought off multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a rare but serious condition mostly affecting school-aged children two to six weeks after COVID infection.

Within days, Kat was sent home from school with stomach pain, a headache, fatigue and continuing shortness of breath. "His temperature shot up to 103 degrees," George says.

TEAM CARE

George and his wife, Norah, brought Kat to the emergency room at MMC,

where chest X-ray, EKG, blood test and urinalysis results looked good enough for Kat to go home and monitor his symptoms closely.

But in the days that followed, Kat's temperature stayed high and his symptoms worsened. He was admitted at MMC, where follow-up tests found spikes across all measures, indicating MIS-C.

"MIS-C occurs when the body develops an abnormal immune response to infection with COVID-19," says Jacqueline Brunetto, MD, a pediatrician at The Unterberg Children's Hospital at MMC, part of the Children's Health Network at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH). "As the name implies, multiple organ systems are involved, and children may require varying levels and types of care."

Kat's care drew on a team of specialists in fields including infectious disease, hematology, cardiology and gastroenterology. "We received high attention, great communication and lots of empathy," George says. "The nursing staff was so attentive and really listened to Kat."

During a five-day stay, Kat received an array of treatments, including intravenous immunoglobulin and steroids to help control inflammation and acetaminophen to reduce discomfort from fever. He also was treated with aspirin to help guard against potential blood clots, notes Dr. Brunetto. Daily tests tracked his condition.

Kat finally became well enough to be discharged and gradually lower his medication doses. Virtual follow-ups with doctors affirmed that Kat was recovering well. "I'm feeling much better now," he says. "My stamina stayed low for a while, but I improved every day."

"It was the scariest thing we've ever gone through as parents," George says. "We really weren't sure at one point what the outcome would be. But the care Kat received at MMC gave me confidence because I knew all the right decisions were being made."

To learn more about The Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, part of the Children's Health Network at RWJBH, call **732.923.7250** or visit www.rwjbh.org/unterberg-childrens-hospital-at-monmouth-medical.



Richard Lazzaro, MD (above), used minimally invasive robotic surgery technology to remove a tumor and speed up recovery for Susan Krieger Rosen (opposite).

PROVIDING A CANCER ANSWER

**WHEN A TUMOR HAD TO BE REMOVED, ROBOTIC SURGERY
ALLOWED A WOMAN TO BOUNCE BACK QUICKLY.**

Was it cancer? That question hung over the discovery that Susan Krieger Rosen, 71, of Belle Harbor, NY, had a large mass in her right lung.

A biopsy typically would provide an answer. But Krieger Rosen's doctor, Richard Lazzaro, MD, a board-certified thoracic surgeon at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) and Chief of Thoracic

Surgery for RWJBarnabas Health's Southern Region, which also includes Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus and Community Medical Center, felt the lesion was too big for a biopsy to produce a reliable result.

"My mass was about 2 by 3 cm," says Krieger Rosen. "Dr. Lazzaro explained that with a mass that large, a biopsy could sample one spot that doesn't reveal

cancer, yet there could still be cancer next to it. I would not be comfortable doing that."

Krieger Rosen feared the worst as a former smoker who already had developed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and emphysema. "We felt that this thing should come out regardless," she says. She opted for surgery and felt reassured



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.



“DR. LAZZARO EXERCISED EXTRA CAUTION SO I WOULD NOT SUFFER ANY UNNECESSARY WORRY OR COMPLICATIONS AFTER TRAVELING HOME. HE WAS ACTING IN MY BEST INTEREST AND TREATED ME WITH THE SAME CARE HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN A FAMILY MEMBER.”

Susan Krieger Rosen

knowing that Dr. Lazzaro is a nationally recognized leader in minimally invasive thoracic procedures performed using robotic technology.

ROBOTIC ADVANTAGES

Robotic surgery offered Krieger Rosen significant advantages, Dr. Lazzaro says. Instead of a large incision that would have been necessary with traditional surgery, she needed only a few smaller incisions on her chest and a few on her back to allow proper placement of advanced robotic instruments.

“The robot enables you to see things with 10 times magnification,” Dr. Lazzaro says. “That allows four surgeon-controlled arms holding a camera and instruments to operate with a clear view from a vantage point close to critical structures.”

Robotic surgery can reduce complications, infections, bleeding and blood transfusions, and its smaller incisions reduce scarring and allow patients to heal faster with less pain, Dr. Lazzaro says. Patients often spend less time in the hospital and recover more quickly after going home than with traditional surgeries.

Dr. Lazzaro uses a robot to perform most of his surgeries, including operations for lung tumors, esophageal disease, tracheal conditions and hiatal hernias. MMC offers robotic surgery in a range of other disciplines as well, including general, gynecologic and urologic surgeries.

“Robotic surgery has been around for 21 years, and MMC was an early adopter of the technology,” Dr. Lazzaro says. “Our team has trained other surgeons at major medical centers across the country, and we’re bringing world-class surgical care to the region.”

A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Krieger Rosen turned out not to have cancer but rather a mass called a granuloma—an area of inflammation typically seen in the lungs that can result from an infection or other inflammatory condition. In a two-and-a-half-hour robotic procedure performed on February 22, Dr. Lazzaro was able to remove the mass more precisely than with traditional open surgery while conserving healthy lung tissue.

“I stayed 12 nights in the hospital, not because of how the surgery went—it went perfectly—but because of the far distance I came for it,” Krieger Rosen says. “Dr. Lazzaro exercised extra caution so I would not suffer any unnecessary worry or complications after traveling home. He was acting in my best interest and treated me with the same care he would have given a family member. That’s another reason he is so incredibly special and why anyone would be fortunate to have him as their surgeon.”



BRINGING TOP EXPERTISE IN ROBOTIC SURGERY

Richard Lazzaro, MD, a board-certified thoracic surgeon and Chief of Thoracic Surgery for RWJBarnabas Health’s Southern Region, joined RWJBH in early 2022, bringing world-class expertise and a background that includes:

- Having more than 30 years of specialized experience in thoracic surgery
- Building a New York City hospital program with top lung cancer outcomes
- Pioneering a number of groundbreaking minimally invasive surgical procedures
- Presenting at international conferences on robotic techniques and outcomes
- Training surgeons from throughout the country in robotic surgery

She credits the robotic surgery with speeding her recovery. “I was walking 7,300 steps in the hospital just a few days after surgery, and everybody was astounded by how well I was doing,” she says. “I feel I only did this well because of the minimally invasive surgery that I had by Dr. Lazzaro. It was really amazing.”

Krieger Rosen also has high praise for MMC staff who cared for her during her surgery and hospital stay. “I couldn’t have received better care if I were the Queen of England,” she says. “Every single person I dealt with was truly wonderful. The floor nurses and staff were terrific. I felt they all cared about me, and I was happy to see them. They all were so cheerful and cooperative. I just can’t rave enough about everybody.”

To learn more or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Lazzaro, visit www.rwjbh.org/doctors/richard-lazzaro-md.





TWO CANCERS, ONE PATIENT

**HOW ROBOTIC SURGERY TREATED A
MAN FOR CANCER—TWICE.**

The words “you have cancer” can change a person’s outlook in an instant. Amadi Oguagha, 68, a father of five from Brick, received this



PIERRE MENDOZA, MD

message twice at different times in his life.

The two tumors were located in different parts of his body and were treated nine years apart but shared

similarities. Both were treated using state-of-the-art robotic technology at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) by the same doctor, Pierre Mendoza, MD, a urologist and Director of Robotic Surgery. And both successful treatments entailed minimal pain and a speedy return to normal life.

A PROBLEMATIC PROSTATE

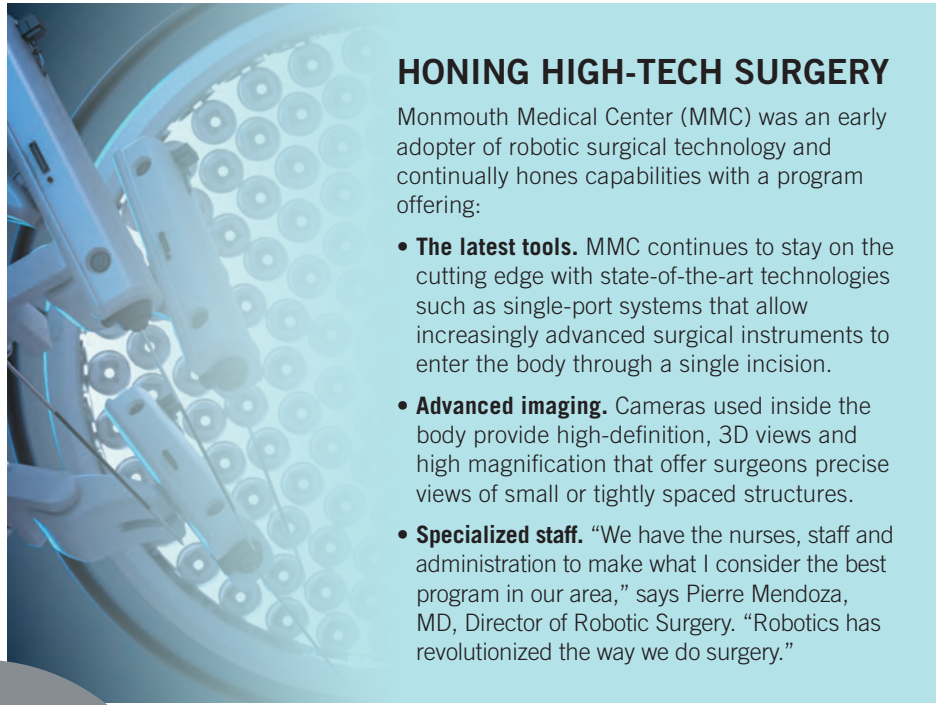
Oguagha's first brush with cancer came in early 2012. "I was feeling uncomfortable down in my lower region, which brought me to get checked out," Oguagha says. "I just felt that something was wrong."

He scheduled an appointment to see Dr. Mendoza and was immediately screened with a PSA test, which measures a substance in blood called prostate-specific antigen. When the test came back with an elevated level, Oguagha underwent a biopsy that revealed he had prostate cancer.

After reviewing treatment options with Dr. Mendoza, Oguagha elected to have a robotic prostatectomy to remove the cancerous gland. The advanced procedure was performed through four small, laparoscopic incisions rather than the long incisions used during a traditional open surgery.

"Robotic surgery translates to faster recovery, less pain, shorter hospital stays and faster return to regular activity," says Dr. Mendoza. "The technology also features specialized instrumentation that offers advantages such as a more accurate and precise dissection, which often leads to less blood loss and sparing of delicate structures such as nerves and blood vessels."


Oguagha recovered quickly. In follow-up visits, Dr. Mendoza kept watch for any signs of cancer returning. Oguagha's cancer-free progress seemed steady: Visits every three months for the first year were lessened to every six months the following year and once a year after that as he continued to be clear of disease.



HONING HIGH-TECH SURGERY

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) was an early adopter of robotic surgical technology and continually hones capabilities with a program offering:

- **The latest tools.** MMC continues to stay on the cutting edge with state-of-the-art technologies such as single-port systems that allow increasingly advanced surgical instruments to enter the body through a single incision.
- **Advanced imaging.** Cameras used inside the body provide high-definition, 3D views and high magnification that offer surgeons precise views of small or tightly spaced structures.
- **Specialized staff.** "We have the nurses, staff and administration to make what I consider the best program in our area," says Pierre Mendoza, MD, Director of Robotic Surgery. "Robotics has revolutionized the way we do surgery."


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and Monmouth Medical
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KIDNEY CONCERNS

Then in 2018, Dr. Mendoza made a suspicious discovery. Though Oguagha felt few symptoms aside from slight pain toward the right side of his back, he had microscopic blood in his urine, which can indicate kidney cancer.

An MRI revealed that Oguagha had a lesion on his kidney. The lesion was small—so small and relatively harmless-looking in images that Dr. Mendoza advised monitoring it with follow-up radiography without treatment unless something changed.

Over the next three years, however, the abnormal mass began to look more threatening. "It didn't grow much, but its appearance changed in ways that increased the likelihood of malignancy, or cancer," Dr. Mendoza says.

In August 2021, Oguagha decided to have a robotic-assisted right partial nephrectomy, a surgery that would

remove the section of the kidney where the troubling lesion was located.

During the procedure, four small incisions allowed Dr. Mendoza to insert robotic surgical equipment and a camera. Inflating the body cavity with carbon dioxide gas provided extra room to manipulate instruments that removed the tumor while sparing the rest of the kidney.

Oguagha was released the following day and returned home to his family. "I felt no pain after the first few days, and the nurses were on the phone with me regularly to track how I was doing, so it was an incredibly smooth recovery," Oguagha says. "The scars were so small that they are now blending with my body."

Oguagha is now clear of both types of cancer and has a very good prognosis, according to Dr. Mendoza: "Having undergone two successful treatments at MMC using the latest advancements in surgery and robotic technology, Amadi is a very well-cared-for individual, and as a result, he's had very positive outcomes."

To learn if you're a candidate for robotic surgery at Monmouth Medical Center, call **732.923.6070**.





Holding a poster promoting Monmouth Medical Center's recognition on *Newsweek's* World's Best Hospitals list are (left) William Downs, DO, President of the MMC Medical Staff and Interim Chair of Emergency Medicine, and (right) Eric Carney, President and Chief Executive Officer, MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus, with team members from throughout MMC.

AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST

MMC IS NAMED A TOP HOSPITAL INTERNATIONALLY IN A NEWSWEEK LIST COVERING 27 COUNTRIES.

Adding to a number of awards recognizing quality care, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) has been named to the 2022 *Newsweek* list of World's Best Hospitals—an honor given to just 414 of the more than 6,000 hospitals in the United States.

The recognition identifies high-performing hospitals and provides a guide for patients and families using a complex methodology to ensure quality and validity. Presented by *Newsweek* and Statista Inc., the world-leading statistics portal and industry ranking provider, the recognition was developed using data including:

- Recommendations from an international online survey sent to more than 80,000 doctors, hospital managers and healthcare professionals
- Patient satisfaction surveys
- Indicators such as patient safety, hygiene measures and treatment quality

“We are so proud to be listed among the world's best hospitals and hope this designation is helpful to patients and families seeking the best care for themselves and loved ones,” says Eric Carney, President and Chief Executive Officer, MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus. “This recognition comes on the heels of our recognition for a third time as a Top Teaching Hospital by The Leapfrog Group, which is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive honors American hospitals can receive.”

The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit, also recently awarded MMC its 15th straight “A” Hospital Safety Score—a milestone that no other hospital in the region has achieved.

The World's Best Hospitals 2022 recognizes the best medical institutions across 27 countries. In addition to the United States, these include Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom,

WHAT MAKES THE BEST HOSPITALS DIFFERENT

Newsweek reports that hospitals on its World's Best Hospitals list have set themselves apart with a continued ability to deliver the highest-quality patient care and conduct critical medical research even as they've focused on battling COVID-19. Hospitals faring best throughout the pandemic learned to work faster by communicating better, breaking down internal silos and innovating.

Switzerland, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Israel, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Thailand, Italy, Brazil, India, Spain, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Colombia, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands.

To view the *Newsweek* awards list, visit www.newsweek.com/worlds-best-hospitals-2022.
To learn more about Monmouth Medical Center, visit www.rwjbh.org/Monmouth.



LOVE YOUR SKIN THIS SUMMER



SANG SIM, MD

SIMPLE HABITS CAN DRASTICALLY REDUCE YOUR SKIN CANCER RISK.

How can you protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays? As warm summer weather invites you to head outdoors, Sang Sim, MD, radiation oncologist, Monmouth Medical Center, and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, shares his best advice.



SLATHER ON SUNSCREEN.

Use it even on slightly cloudy or cool days, regardless of skin color. It contains chemicals that scatter sunlight's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Apply 30 minutes before you go outside. A sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 is sufficient as long as the sunscreen is reapplied every two hours.



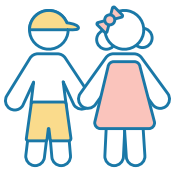
DRESS FOR SUCCESS.

That includes wearing a hat with a brim that shades your face, ears and the back of your neck, and loose-fitting, long-sleeved, tightly woven shirts and long pants. Wear a T-shirt on the beach whenever you aren't in the water. Look for fabrics that have an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) to guard against UV rays.



CHECK IT OUT.

Regularly examine your skin for changes in moles during showers and in the mirror. Ask someone to check your back and neck, and if your hair is thinning, be sure to check your scalp as well.



WATCH THE KIDS.

The vast majority of sun exposure occurs before age 18, so help your children take the necessary sun protection steps and let them see you doing the same.



KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR EYES.

Wraparound sunglasses are a great choice to protect eyes and skin around the eyes from UV rays.




SHUN THE BRIGHTEST SUN.

When you're outside between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., reduce your risk of skin damage by seeking shade under an umbrella, a tree or other shelter.

5 KEY FACTS ABOUT BRACHYTHERAPY

Certain skin cancers can readily be treated with a radiation therapy known as brachytherapy. "It obliterates skin cancer cells," says Sang Sim, MD, radiation oncologist, Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. "Success rates are very high." Here's what you need to know.

- 1. IT'S NONINVASIVE.** Brachytherapy uses a computer-driven device with a special applicator to deliver a small pellet of radiation right to the skin's surface. "A tiny opening at the tip of the applicator treats as small an area as possible directly at the site of the cancer," Dr. Sim says.
- 2. THERAPY IS FAST.** "Each session typically takes three to five minutes," Dr. Sim says. Patients usually undergo therapy twice a week for three weeks—a total of six treatments.
- 3. IT TREATS MULTIPLE SKIN CANCERS.** Brachytherapy radiation penetrates only a few millimeters into skin, making it both safe and highly effective against shallow skin cancers such as squamous cell and basal cell carcinomas. (Melanomas, which often lie deeper in skin and are likelier to spread, are treated with other methods.)
- 4. SKIN LOOKS NATURAL.** "Most brachytherapy patients have excellent cosmetic results, with normal color, consistency and appearance," Dr. Sim says. Brachytherapy is often preferred for highly visible areas like the face.
- 5. FEW CENTERS OFFER IT.** "Patients often tell me they've never heard of this procedure," Dr. Sim says. "RWJBarnabas Health cancer centers including MMC and Community Medical Center are among the few in the area that offer brachytherapy."


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Proud to be named one of the World's Best Hospitals

Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), an RWJBarnabas Health facility, is among just 414 of the more than 6,000 hospitals in the United States named to Newsweek's Global Best Hospitals list. This prestigious award is presented by Newsweek and Statista Inc., the world-leading statistics portal and industry ranking provider.

The Newsweek list is meant to identify quality care and provide a guide for patients and their families. We are proud to be counted among the world's leading hospitals recognized for their continued ability to deliver the highest-quality patient care and conduct critical medical research.