

A Publication of  
**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HAMILTON**

Summer 2021

# healthy

*together*

**THE JOY OF EATING,  
RESTORED**

**WE'RE  
TURNING 50!  
CELEBRATE WITH US**

**LIVING WELL  
WITH HEART FAILURE**

**TRANSPLANTS  
THAT  
TRANSFORM  
LIVES**



# Stronger Every Day

COVID-19 brought with it a prolonged period of uncertainty and fear, as well as the continual need to find new ways to cope.

These days, however, we're experiencing another, more welcome, feeling: optimism.

Thanks to the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines and the massive effort we and others have made to administer them, we're seeing real progress in containing the pandemic.

At RWJBH, we always strive to be proactive, positive and energetic in our response to issues and events. We acknowledge that disparities in healthcare for Black and brown communities exist, and we're making every possible effort to address this issue throughout our entire organization. We've developed a far-reaching initiative, Ending Racism Together, to ensure that our organization is anti-racist in everything we do.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton is committed to listening to the voices of our employees and community members to become an organization where racism, injustice, discrimination and violence have no place. Together, with our community, we are looking at how we work through a lens of equity, making changes to how we provide care to our patients and a workplace to our physicians and staff. At RWJUH Hamilton, we continue to focus on helping our communities overcome chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma, and renew and expand our organization's commitment to providing anti-racism and implicit-bias training for physicians, nurses and staff.

In the end, it's the resilience and strength of our healthcare providers, staff and patients that continues to inspire us. If you've been avoiding medical appointments or treatments because of the pandemic, please don't put off getting care any longer. We're here to help you stay healthy for all the good days to come.

Yours in good health,

**BARRY H. OSTROWSKY**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
RWJBARNABAS HEALTH



**RICHARD FREEMAN**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HAMILTON



## HEALTH NEWS

**Robert Wood Johnson  
University Hospital  
Hamilton**

**RWJBarnabas  
HEALTH**



### A PRESTIGIOUS HONOR FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE

The nurses of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton have been conferred nursing's most prestigious honor—Magnet® recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. Only 8 percent of hospitals nationwide have achieved this distinction. "We can officially say what we have always known: RWJUH Hamilton nurses are among the nation's best," said Richard Freeman, President and Chief Executive Officer at RWJUH Hamilton. "Our community can be assured that they are getting the highest-quality care from skilled, compassionate nurses."



### WELCOMING A NEW DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Malini Patel, MD, will be joining The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton as Director of Medical Oncology in June 2021. She is available for immediate consultation.

Several nationally recognized disease-specific cancer specialists from Rutgers Cancer Institute will also be joining the team at The Cancer Center this year. It's important to note that Firas Eladoumikdachi, MD, Michael McKenna, MD, and Rachana Singh, MD, and the incredible team of nursing and support staff all continue to provide the highest level of care and a healing culture at The Cancer Center, which our patients and families depend on.

**Robert Wood Johnson  
University Hospital  
Hamilton**

**RWJBarnabas  
HEALTH**

1 Hamilton Health Pl., Hamilton Township, NJ 08690  
609.586.7900

### CONNECT WITH US ON

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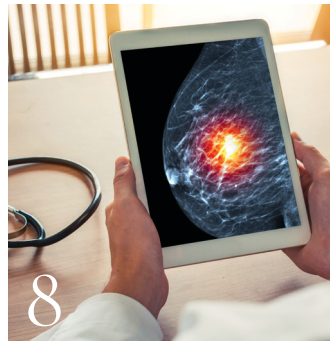
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**8. ASK THE DOCTOR: ADVANCED BREAST CARE.** A surgical oncologist explains leading technologies close to home.



**9. 'FOCUS ON THE GOOD.'** A determined young athlete battles back from partial paralysis.

**10. ENDING RACISM TOGETHER.** RWJBarnabas Health is on a journey to create true equity in healthcare.

**12. I HAVE HEART DISEASE. SHOULD I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE?** Yes, you should. Here's why.

**14. THE LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT OF A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT.** Post-transplant, people with kidney failure find their world transformed.

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**18. WE'VE TURNED 50!** Celebrating a half-century of high-quality healthcare.

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All images in this issue are in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols; some images included may predate the pandemic.

# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

All programs are IN PERSON unless otherwise noted. In-person classes will be limited in size and held at the RWJUH Hamilton Fitness & Wellness Center. Attendees will be required to bring a mask and practice social distancing to help ensure the safety of everyone present. For more information or to register, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at [www.rwjbh.org/hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamilton).



## MIND

[LIFELONG LEARNING]

### State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Trained counselors provide free, objective, confidential help on questions and issues related to Medicare. For information or for an appointment, call the Mercer County SHIP Coordinator at 609.695.6274, ext. 215.

### Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

**Tue., August 3; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition that causes pain, numbness and tingling in the hand and arm. The latest advances in diagnosis and treatment will be discussed. Dorota Gribbin, MD, Chairman, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Erika Serviolo, MS/OTR/L, occupational therapist

### Orthopedic Open House: Joint Replacement

**Tue., August 10; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Discover the latest advances in knee and hip replacement surgery, including robotic-assisted surgery. Learn how the Center for Orthopedic & Spine Health and our rehabilitation team prepares you for a successful joint replacement. John Nolan, MD, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon

### Take Control of Your Health

**Wed., August 11, 18, 25; September 1, 8, 15; 1 to 3:30 p.m.**  
This six-week interactive program designed by Stanford University teaches the skills needed for the daily management of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease and back pain. Textbook included. M. Billie O'Donnell, BSN, RN, CDE, and Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### The Impact of Loneliness and Social Isolation on Physical and Mental Health

**Wed., August 11; 11 a.m. to noon**  
The pandemic has challenged our society in many ways, including restrictions that limit social interactions and daily routines. Join Sarah Masco, MS, OTR/L, CLT-LANA, occupational therapist, as she discusses ways you can take care of your physical and mental health while isolating at home.

### Ask the Diabetes Educator

**Fri., August 13, September 10 & October 8; 10 a.m. to noon**  
Bring questions about prediabetes, type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes. M. Billie O'Donnell, BSN, RN, CDE. Registration and appointment required.

### Hearing Aids: Do They All Work the Same?

**Tue., August 17; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Join us as we work our way through a tough-to-navigate topic and understand the world of hearing aids. Learn what you need to know before buying your first or next hearing aid. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

### The Impact of Allergies on Sleep

**Tue., August 17; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Allergies can disrupt sleep and cause problems like snoring and sleep apnea. Common CPAP problems will be discussed, and there will be a review of devices and masks. Anthony J. Ricketti, MD, board-certified, fellowship-trained allergist, and Peter Ricketti, DO, specialist in Allergy, Immunology and Sleep Medicine

### COPD: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment

**Tue., August 31; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, makes breathing difficult for over 16 million Americans. Join Kevin F. Law, MD, board-certified in pulmonary, sleep and internal medicine, as he discusses symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.

### Why Do I Get Dizzy?

**Tue., September 7; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Join us as we learn the many causes of dizziness, when to seek medical advice and whether anything can be done to prevent dizziness as we age. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

### Healthy Mouth = Healthy Body

**Thu., September 9; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Learn how the state of your mouth can affect the health of your entire body and how to optimize oral health. Sean Bradley, DMD, DICOI

### "Love Your Heart" Discussion Group

**Mon., September 13; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
A cardiac diagnosis or procedure often has an effect on psychological well-being. Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD, and Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC, will discuss eight common issues and walk you through a heart-healthy recipe and tasting.

### Sugar & Blood: Regenerative Procedures to Treat Pain, Tendons and Arthritis

**Tue., September 14; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Join Adam Redlich, MD, Integrative Sports Medicine Specialist, as he explains the use of natural injections for pain control as well as tendon and cartilage repair.

### Are You SAD? Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder

**Thu., September 16; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Have you been feeling unmotivated? Sad? Fatigued? Unsociable? Twenty percent of people admit to having "winter blues." Learn about seasonal affective disorder—the causes, treatments and self-help measures to bring light back into your life. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### Let's Bingo! Give It a Shot to Win and Learn Diabetes Lingo

**Wed., September 22; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Let's have some fun and play diabetes bingo while brushing up on diabetes vocabulary and jargon. Gear up and be ready for a chance to win. Shesha Desai, PharmD, RPh, BC-ADM

### Self-Care for Women: What's That?

**Thu., September 30; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Obtain wise self-care tips on balancing the many demands of life—especially during this past year—and learn new ways of caring for oneself and taking the time to enjoy the little things in life. Anjali Bhandarkar, MD, board-certified in internal medicine

### Tinnitus Sound Therapy: How Does It Work?

**Tue., October 5; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Many people suffer from noises they

## Fall Mini-Medical School: 2021

**Tue., September 21 & 28; October 5, 12, 19, 26; November 2 & 9; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

RWJ Hamilton physicians teach this eight-week course. Each student will receive a diploma at completion. Adults, \$40; students, \$20 (includes textbook)

**Week 1: Tue., September 21**

### Opening Address and Welcome

F. Javier Villota, MD, Medical Director, Occupational Medicine, Corporate Health and Medicine, Medical Director of Mini Medical School

### Common Spine Problems: Diagnosis and Treatment

Marc J. Levine, MD, Director, Spine Surgery Program

**Week 2: Tue., September 28**

### Your Amazing Brain: An Overview

Kenneth M. Liebman, MD, FACS, FAAN, Neurosurgery

**Week 3: Tue., October 5**

### Breast Cancer: Risk Factors, Early Detection and Treatment

Firas Eladoumikhachi, BS, MD,

FACS, Breast Surgery/Oncology

**Week 4: Tue., October 12**

### Bariatric Surgery 101

Siddharth Kudav, MD, Laparoscopic/Robotic General and Bariatric Surgeon

**Week 5: Tue., October 19**

### The Cardiovascular System

Oleg Chebotarev, MD, Cardiology

**Week 6: Tue., October 26**

### Colon Cancer Update

Herve Boucard, MD, board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology and fellowship-trained in gastroenterology and hepatology

**Week 7: Tue., November 2**

### Introduction to Geriatrics and Its Current Advances

Sara Ali, MD, Internal Medicine and Gerontology

**Week 8: Tue., November 9**

### Post-COVID and Travel Medicine

F. Javier Villota, MD, Medical Director, Occupational Medicine, Corporate Health and Medicine

hear in their ears or head that no one else can hear. Join us as we demystify the problem of tinnitus and discuss whether sound therapy is for you. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

### Preventing Drug Use in Youth

**Thu., October 14; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Preventing drug abuse in the early years is crucial for reducing health risks. Learn more about steps families can take to prevent substance use in youth. EK Lalwani, PharmD, Olden Pharmacy

### One-on-One Hearing Demonstration

**Mon., October 18; Tue., October 19; Thu., October 21; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton Township  
Want to "try" a hearing aid and ask questions in a no-obligation one-on-one session with an expert? Come to one of our special events in October—sign up for this exclusive

offer. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

### Finding Happiness: Practical Strategies to Feel Happier

**Thu., October 21; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
Many people search outside themselves for ways to feel happier, such as going shopping or taking trips. However, an overview of happiness research suggests that practicing strategies and taking actions can improve our happiness. Join Michelle Zechner, PhD, LSW, CPRP, Rutgers Professor. In collaboration with NAMI Mercer

### Medicare Drug Plan: What Is Best for You?



**Tue., October 26; 2 to 3:30 p.m.**  
Learn to select for 2022. Be informed—pricing and coverage change annually. See a demonstration of the internet-based "Medicare Drug Plan Finder" and take home a workbook.



# SPIRIT

[HOLISTIC HEALTH]

## Private Reiki Sessions

  **Tue., August 17, September 21 & October 19; 3 to 7 p.m., by appointment.**


Reiki (“rei,” “universal”; “ki,” “life force”), a hands-on energy healing technique, begins to activate the natural healing processes and helps restore physical and emotional well-being. Patti McDougall, BSN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher. \$30/half hour; \$60/hour. Appointment required.

## Mindfulness Meditation for Beginners


  **Wed., August 18, September 15 & October 20; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Enjoy the relaxation and health benefits of meditation, no experience necessary. Patti McDougall, BSN, Integrative Therapies Nurse


## HealthRhythms® Drumming

 **Wed., August 18, September 15 & October 20; 7 to 8 p.m.**  
Come and drum your cares away with this evidenced-based method to help lower stress and decrease blood pressure. It's also just great fun. Fee: \$15. Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP


## Reiki Share

 **Wed., August 25, September 22 & October 27; 7 to 9 p.m.**  
For those already certified in Reiki (at any level) to share their gift of Reiki with other Reiki practitioners. Please bring a sheet and a small pillow. Fee: \$5


## Moms' Real Self-Care Workshop

 **Mon., September 20; 7 to 8:30 p.m.**  
Self-care isn't just about sprinkling essential oil in the bath. It's about giving yourself the gift of getting to know your true self and nurturing what makes you who you are! This workshop is designed to help mothers at any stage, from pregnancy through great-grandmotherhood, uncover and nurture what makes them shine. Bring a yoga mat or towel and journal. Fee: \$15. Michelle Gerdes, RYT-200, PYT, Founder of Princeton Doula Center

## Introduction to Mindfulness Coaching for Stress and Anxiety

 **Thu., September 30; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
This workshop will cover what stress does to our bodies, why we experience so much of it and how to transform our response to it to overcome stress for good. Ian Hill, Certified Mindfulness Coach

## Create Your Own Vision Board



 **Thu., October 14; 1 to 2:30 p.m.**  
What are your hopes and dreams? Create a visual representation of your goals. Bring scissors; all other supplies provided. Patti McDougall, BSN, Integrative Therapies Nurse



# YOU

## [SUPPORT GROUPS]


### Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program

  **Mon. & Wed., 1 to 5 p.m.**  
Phone or teleconferencing as well as in-person appointments for individual and group counseling. Prescriptions for smoking cessation medication (gum, patches, etc.) available upon request. To preregister or for information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, CTTs, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416 or email [quitcenter@rwjbh.org](mailto:quitcenter@rwjbh.org).

### Peripheral Neuropathy Support

Call 609.587.7215 for more information.


### Breast Cancer Support Group

 **First Tuesday of every month; 6:30 p.m.**  
Please call 609.584.2836 to confirm the program is available. The group will meet at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, 2575 Klockner Road, Hamilton.


### Bariatric Weight Loss Support Group

 **Tue., September 14; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Call 609.584.5900 to register.

### Caregiver Series: Caring for Loved Ones with Chronic Conditions


 **Mondays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.**  
**August 2:** The Difference between Medicare and Medicaid  
**August 16:** Importance of a Living Will  
**September 13:** Keeping Your Loved Ones Safe at Home  
**September 27:** Coping with Memory Loss  
**October 4:** Dementia: Ways to Communicate Effectively  
**October 18:** First Steps for Caregivers  
Caring for a chronically ill senior can take a physical and emotional toll on family members. An Oaks Integrated Care senior well-being specialist will moderate.

### Adult Children Caring for Parents


 **Mondays, 5:30 to 7 p.m.**  
• **August 2:** Coping with Memory Loss  
• **August 16:** Dementia: Ways to Communicate Effectively  
• **September 13:** Seven Stages of Dementia  
• **September 27:** First Steps for Caregivers

• **October 4:** Community Resources  
• **October 18:** Keeping Your Loved Ones Safe at Home  
An Oaks Integrated Care caregiver specialist will conduct these interactive workshops on crucial topics and facilitate a supportive group experience.


### Caregiver Support Group

 **Wed., August 4, September 1 & October 6; 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.**  
Supportive discussion group for those caring for a loved one who is aging or has a chronic illness—shared experiences can be healing. Oaks Integrated Care


### Grief & Loss Support Group

 **Thu., August 5 & 19, September 2 & 23 and October 7 & 21; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**  
If you have lost a loved one or been separated from your support system, you can find comfort and begin to cope better by interacting with others.


### Letting Go of Clutter

 **Tue., August 10, September 14 & October 12; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**  
This support group explores how our emotional ties to our “stuff” can create clutter and affect our mood. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC, and an Oaks Integrated Care specialist

### Alzheimer's Support Group

 **Wed., August 18, September 22 & October 20; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Support and information for family and friends of people with Alzheimer's disease. An Oaks Integrated Care specialist will moderate.

### Wise Women

 **Thu., August 26 & September 23, and Fri., October 29; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**  
As we age, the twists and turns of life challenge us to remain positive, stay engaged in life and find new meaning. Discussion group format. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC  
• **August 26:** Living a Well-Balanced Life  
• **September 23:** Creating Healthy Boundaries  
• **October 29:** Three Friends Every Woman Needs

# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

## HEALTH SCREENINGS

All screenings are at the RWJ Hamilton Center for Health and Wellness unless otherwise noted.

### Cholesterol Lipid Profile/Glucose/Blood Pressure & Stroke Risk Assessment

📅 **Thu., September 2; 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

Eighty percent of strokes can be prevented by controlling individual risk factors. Simple finger stick and fast 12 hours prior. Fee: \$5. Appointment and registration required. Marie Marzan, MS, RN, BC

### Hearing Screening

📅 **Tue., August 10, September 14 & October 12; 9 a.m. to noon**

2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton Township  
Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

### Fall Prevention/Balance Screening

📅 **Tue., August 10, September 14 & October 12; 9 a.m. to noon**

2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton Township  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

### Osteoporosis Screening

📅 **Tue., August 17; 10 a.m. to noon**

Ultrasound of heel and personalized information. Appointment required.

### Body Fat Screening

📅 **Tue., August 24, September 21 & October 26; 10 a.m. to noon**

Excess body fat is a preventable risk factor for heart disease. Track your diet and fitness progress and learn how much excess weight is safe to lose.

### Take-Home Colorectal Kit

📅 **Thu., September 16; 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.**

Learn about colorectal cancer, types of screening tests and how to use the screening card Hemoccult ICT—a simple take-home test to detect early colon cancer. Appointment and registration required.

Marie Marzan, MS, RN, BC

### Prostate Cancer Screening

📅 **Mon., September 27; 5 p.m.**

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Includes an exam and PSA blood test. Registration required.

Exam by Deep Trivedi, MD

Thank you to the John Paul Geijer Memorial

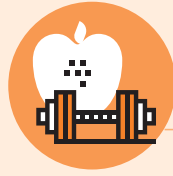
Foundation for its contribution to this screening.

### Memory Screening

📅 **Tue., September 28; 10 a.m. to noon**

Are you concerned about “senior moments”? The Mini-Mental State Exam is a quick assessment to discern normal aging versus potential problems.

Appointment and registration required. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC



## BODY

[NUTRITION, FITNESS & WELLNESS]

### 📅 1st Saturday Walks Walking in Nature: A Prescription for Better Health

Come discover the Abbott Marshlands with a knowledgeable guide. Each 1st Saturday Walk will explore a different part of this rich and diverse natural area. Guides and locations will vary so that all marshland trails will be explored during the year. For meeting times, location, trails and cancellation information, go to [abbottmarshlands.org](http://abbottmarshlands.org).

### 📅 KidsFit Program for Weight-Challenged Youth and Teens Ages 8-14 and a Parent/Caregiver

This six-week all-inclusive summer series teaches children, teens and their families how to live a healthier lifestyle. Focus is on nutrition and healthy eating, physical activity, behavior changes and self-esteem. Call 609.890.4441 to register.

### Celebrating National Farmers Market Week

📅 **Thu., August 5; 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

In the first week of August, the “Garden State” nickname starts to shine. It is also National Farmers Market Week! Learn how to optimize nutritional benefits and maximize flavor using our top 10 summer produce picks. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

### 🌐 Kids in the Kitchen ... Virtual!

Cook up some fun and sample healthy foods in new ways! For children ages 5 and older with a parent or caregiver. Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD

• **Wed., August 11; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Pack a Picnic! Get fresh and flavorful ideas for summer outings.

• **Wed., September 8;**

**6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Muffin Mania! Liven up your morning meal for Better Breakfast Month.

• **Wed., October 13; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Festive and Frightful! Discover creative concoctions for a healthier Halloween.

### What's in the Box? A Four-Week Series

📅 **Thu., August 19, September 9 & 23 and October 14; 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

To continue supporting local small businesses, this series will go through a typical “farm share” or “farmers market box” each week—and teach what to do with it! Get ready to load up on recipes, storage tips and nutritional gems. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

### Ask the Dietitian

📅 **Fri., August 20; Wed., September 29 & Fri., October 29; 9 to 11 a.m.**

Do you have a question about diet and nutrition? Join Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD, for a one-on-one Q&A and receive a body fat screening. Registration required.

### American College of Lifestyle Medicine:

#### Optimize Your Immunity

📅 **Fri., September 3; 1 to 3 p.m.**

The foundations of lifestyle

medicine are broken down into six pillars: stress, smoking, sleep, healthy eating, activity and connectivity. Learn how to use them to support your own healthy life; includes a cooking demonstration. Space is limited. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

### World Food Day at Hamilton Oktoberfest

📅 **Sun., October 17, 2021**

**Veterans Park in Hamilton**  
October 16 honors the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945. Learn more: [www.fao.org/world-food-day](http://www.fao.org/world-food-day). During Oktoberfest, come celebrate World Food Day with RWJUH Hamilton Community Education at our booth in Veterans Park in Hamilton! Explore how we can all be a part of a global effort to make healthy and sustainable diets affordable and accessible to everyone and, at the same time, start thinking about what we eat. Rain date: October 24. Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together—for a #zerohunger world. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM, and Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD

### Your Guide to Breast Care: Benign and Cancer

📅 **Wed., September 22 & 29; October 6, 13, 20; 6 to 7 p.m.**

Please join us for this five-week series, at the RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center, to learn what everyone needs to know about benign breast disease, breast cancer, treatments and survivorship. Patricia Hutman Parker, BSN, RN, OCN, Breast Health Navigator from the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, will host.

📅 **Wed., September 22 | Benign Breast Disease**

Screening guidelines and self-breast exam

📅 **Wed., September 29 | Breast Cancer**

Genetics and your surgical options

📅 **Wed., October 6 | Medical Options for Treatment**

A discussion on treatment options for benign breast disease and breast cancer, including clinical trials

📅 **Wed., October 13 | Radiation Treatment**

A discussion regarding radiation treatment related to breast cancer

📅 **Wed., October 20 | Survivorship**

Learn what breast cancer survivorship really means.



## INTRODUCING THE BETTER HEALTH PROGRAM AT RWJUH HAMILTON

There's no better time to be 65+ years old, and there's no better place to experience it than at the Better Health Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. This complimentary program will engage your mind, encourage you to move and help you reflect. Members will meet like-minded people and learn from the doctors and professionals who make your well-being a priority.

The programs listed below are exclusively for Better Health members. To learn about complimentary membership, attend the "Meet Your Better Health Program" class. For additional information, call Joyce Cantalice, Manager of the Better Health Program, at 609.584.6422. To register for a program, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at [www.rwjbh.org/Hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/Hamilton).

### Trivia Fun: Music Edition

  **Wed., August 4; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Can you name these tunes? Join the fun and see which of these classic TV theme songs you can identify! Samantha Malinger, FEMA Hope and Healing Program, hosts.

### Qualifying for Aid & Attendance Benefit

  **Tue., August 10; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Shira Yerike from Veteran Care Services educates us on the Aid and Attendance benefit available to some veterans and their spouses and widows, which can help cover the costs of independent and assisted living and home care.

### Market Discussion with David Bossio

  **Wed., August 11; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Investment specialist David Bossio provides a stock market update and answers your questions afterward.

### Joy Through the Senses

  **Wed., August 18; 2 to 3 p.m.**

How important are the senses to our happiness? Samantha Malinger, FEMA Hope and Healing Program, helps us tap into our senses and understand how they make us joyful!

### Celebrate National Just Because Day

  **Thu., August 26; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Do something just because! Surprise a friend with flowers, send a loved one a letter or buy someone a cup of coffee. Kate Moore from Brookdale Hamilton shares some inspiring ideas.

### Let's Talk Travel

  **Wed., September 1; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Got the travel bug? Let's talk about where we've been and our favorite next stops! Samantha Malinger, FEMA Hope and Healing Program, leads the conversation.

### What You Need to Know for the Second Half of Your Life

  **Tue., September 14; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Fiona Van Dyck, an estate lawyer, provides insight and inspiration on celebrating life, part two. The best is yet to come!

### Best Blooming Indoor Fall Flowers

  **Wed., September 15; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Polish your green thumb and learn the basics of in-home gardening with Kate Moore from Brookdale Hamilton.

### The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton: What Makes Us Different

  **Tue., September 21; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Amy German, BSN, RN, OCN, Director, The Cancer Center at RWJUH, joins us to discuss the exceptional people, care and technology available right here in Hamilton.

### Your Guide to Breast Care: Benign and Cancer

**Wednesdays in September and October; 6 to 7 p.m.**

See page 6 for details.

### The Soundtrack of Your Life

  **Tue., September 28; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Sheli Monacchio from Mobility Doctor returns with her beautiful voice and musical talent to help us create a soundtrack of our lives.

### Spirituality

  **Wed., September 29; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Samantha Malinger, FEMA Hope and Healing Program, will lead this discussion on spirituality and how it affects our lives.

### The 3 Cs: Climate Change & Carbon

  **Tue., October 5; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Faraz Khan, an environmental specialist, discusses the impact of carbon on the earth and our climate.

### Parkinson's Disease Overview

  **Wed., October 27; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Jill M. Giordano Farmer, DO, MPS, is back to highlight updates in medicine, treatment and more.

### Breast Cancer Awareness, Surgery & Treatment

  **Tue., October 12; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Dr. Firas Eladoumikdachi from The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton talks about the latest advances in breast cancer treatment and surgery. Bring your questions—a Q&A will follow.

### What Animals Teach Us

  **Wed., October 13; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Samantha Malinger, FEMA Hope and Healing Program, talks about what animal behavior can teach us when it comes to love, stress, perseverance and more.

### Know Your Chocolate

  **Wed., October 20; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Kate Moore from Brookdale Hamilton is back with a celebration of all things chocolate! Taste test various chocolates and interesting combinations for National Chocolate Day.

### Q&A with David Bossio, Investment Specialist



  **Tue., October 26; 10 to 11 a.m.**

David Bossio is back to answer your financial questions. Learn from the expert during this open Q&A session.



### Discussions with Sara I. Ali, MD, Geriatric and Internal Medicine

Connect with a geriatrician who can answer questions you have about your health. All Dr. Ali's programs are held Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m. and include a Q&A.



### Diabetes

  **August 5** - Get advice straight from the doctor on how to prevent and manage diabetes. Learn about current treatments, medication and food factors.



### Stroke Prevention

  **August 19** - Dr. Ali teaches us how to help prevent a stroke and talks about stroke treatment and recovery.

### Preventive Care

  **August 26** - Join us as Dr. Ali shares how to prevent some chronic illnesses, falls and more.

### How Are You Sleeping?



  **September 2** - Whether you are sleeping too little or too much, join Dr. Ali to learn how sleep affects our health and our days—and how to get better sleep.

### Top 7 Geriatric Conditions



  **September 9**

Dr. Ali will discuss the top health concerns impacting our senior population.



### Your Vision & Hearing: What to Look For

  **September 16** - We expect to experience changes in vision and hearing as we age. Learn from Dr. Ali what to look for and whether the progression of hearing and vision loss can be stopped.

### Comfort Care for Serious Illness

  **September 23** - Keeping you comfortable through a serious illness, also called palliative care, is a specialty of Dr. Ali. She works with patients to relieve the pain often associated with chronic illness.

### Let's Talk Vitamins



  **September 30** - Separating fact from fiction is a difficult task. Dr. Ali shares the facts on what works and what doesn't.

### Meet Your Better Health Program for VIPs 65+



  **October 7**

Explore the benefits of RWJUH Hamilton's no-cost Better Health Program, designed to engage the mind, body and spirit of members.



### Goals of Care: Understanding POLST Forms

  **October 14** - Some conversations are difficult, even with our doctors. Dr. Ali discusses the importance of frank talks with your physician about your desired outcomes and how to document your wishes.

### Gait Impairment & Falls

  **October 21** - Are you at risk of life-altering falls? Is there help? Where can you find it? Dr. Ali speaks on a variety of treatments and equipment available to help keep you safely on your feet.

### Living Your Best Life Symposium

  **Tue., November 9; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Be our guest at this first Living Your Best Life Symposium! RWJUH Hamilton and Mobility Doctor proudly present keynote speaker Jessica L. Israel, MD, Senior Vice President, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, and Corporate Director, The James and Sharon Maida Geriatrics Institute, RWJBarnabas Health, and a panel discussion on the future of geriatrics and independent living. Includes free health screenings and demonstrations of great gadgets to make your life easier. Lunch will be provided. This event is available to Better Health members only, and seating is limited! To register for Better Health for this free event, call 609.584.5900 or visit [rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth](http://rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth).



**FIRAS ELADOUMIKDACHI, MD**

# PROVIDING ADVANCED BREAST CARE

## A BREAST SURGICAL ONCOLOGIST EXPLAINS LEADING TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE CLOSE TO HOME.

As breast cancer care becomes more individualized than ever, each person's unique diagnosis, genetics and history become increasingly crucial guides to treatment. That's why placing the patient's needs at the center of all breast cancer treatment options and support services is a guiding principle for Firas Eladoumikdachi, MD, FACS, Breast Surgical Oncologist, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and The Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. He explains how the Institute's partnership with RWJUH Hamilton brings advanced care to the local community.

### What recent advances in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment at RWJUH Hamilton are you most excited about?

I do my own image-guided needle biopsies, a service that isn't available at a lot of other breast centers. This includes ultrasound-guided breast biopsies and stereotactic biopsies. Moreover, we do 3-D stereotactic biopsies that enable us to biopsy lesions found on 3-D mammogram images that we can't see using traditional 2-D mammography or ultrasound. Our new stereotactic biopsy equipment is more comfortable for the patient and shows us exactly how deep a suspicious lesion is in the breast so we can target it with more precision.

Doing 3-D stereotactic biopsies on-site means patients don't need to make another appointment elsewhere that could delay their diagnosis. This also decreases patient anxiety.

### How do patients benefit from the partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute?

Rutgers Cancer Institute offers numerous clinical trials studying new and novel treatments for breast cancer that are available to our patients. Patients also have access to a level of expertise they otherwise couldn't find in a smaller community cancer center. If they want a second opinion, they can consult an expert at Rutgers Cancer Institute and don't have to travel far. Patients get both world-class expertise and the convenience of care close to home.

### How does the care and innovation at RWJUH Hamilton set it apart?

We offer the full scope of breast care, including genetic testing and counseling, a high-risk clinic and all types of mastectomies, including nipple-sparing procedures. Recently, we've also acquired a new radiation therapy machine that's the most up-to-date on the market. It's less invasive, more comfortable and more convenient, and it's a more precise way to deliver radiation therapy, which decreases side effects.

**\***  
RWJBarnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, 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](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).

## MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

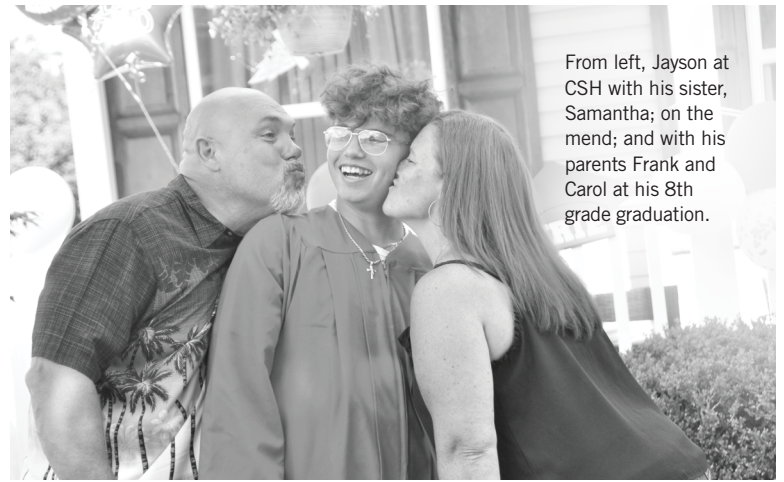
The following physicians and experts provide guidance and expertise in developing our community health education programs.

- Richard Freeman, CEO**
- Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, SVP, CMO, Infectious Disease**
- Javier F. Villota, MD, Chair, Internal & Occupational Medicine**
- Diane Grillo, MS, VP, Health Promotion**
- Sara Ali, MD, Internal Medicine / Geriatrics**
- Leslie Adelman Banks, Fitness & Wellness Center / Managing Partner**
- Hari P. Bezwada, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**
- Anjali Bhandarkar, MD, Internal Medicine**
- Gurvan Blackman, MD, Interventional Radiology**
- Sean Bradley, DMD, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery**
- Oleg Chebotarev, MD, Cardiology**
- George DiFerdinando, Jr., MD, MPH, Public Health**
- Michael Duch, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon**
- Firas Eladoumikdachi, MD, Oncology / Breast Surgery**
- Jill Giordano-Farmer, DO, MPH, Neurology**
- Jessica Felderman, Director, Public Relations & Marketing**
- David Feldstein, MD, Interventional Radiology**
- Jarad Fingerman, DO, Urology**
- Marcella M. Frank, DO, Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Disease and Sleep Medicine**
- Dorota Gribbin, MD, Physical Medicine & Rehab / Pain Management**
- Zakaria Hakma, MD, Neurosurgery**
- Joshua Hornstein, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**
- Kevin F. Law, MD, Critical Care / Pulmonary / Sleep Medicine**
- Marc Levine, MD, Orthopedic Spine Surgery**
- Kenneth M. Liebman, MD, Neurosurgery**
- Matthew Lynch, MD, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery**
- Biagio Manna, DO, Thoracic Vascular Surgery**
- Shivaprasad Marulendra, MD, Gastroenterology**
- Ronniel Nazarian, MD, Orthopedic Spine Surgery**
- John Nolan, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**
- Earl Noyan, MD, Bariatric Surgery**
- Marguerite O'Donnell, BSN, RN, Educator, Community Education**
- Rao S. Pasupuleti, MD, Neurology**
- Val Prokurat, DO, Bariatric Surgery**
- Pamela Randolph, PT, DPT, Director, Rehabilitation Services**
- Adam Redlich, MD, Sports Medicine**
- Anthony Ricketti, MD, Internal Medicine / Allergy & Pulmonology**
- Reza Shah, DO, General / Vascular Surgery**
- Robert Silverbrook, DO, Internal Medicine**
- Lauren Stabinsky, MSN, RN, Director, Community and Corporate Wellness**
- Kim Zambito, MD, Hand Surgery**

To schedule a consultation with Dr. Eladoumikdachi, call **844-CANCERNJ** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).







From left, Jayson at CSH with his sister, Samantha; on the mend; and with his parents Frank and Carol at his 8th grade graduation.

# 'FOCUS ON THE GOOD'

## A DETERMINED YOUNG ATHLETE BATTLES BACK FROM PARTIAL PARALYSIS.

In May 2019, Carol Backle of Toms River noticed drooping on the left side of her son Jayson's face. After evaluation by a doctor, the athletic, high-energy 13-year-old was diagnosed with Bell's palsy, a weakness in facial muscles that's usually temporary.

One day, however, Jayson experienced sudden weakness in his left leg and hand. At the local emergency department, tests revealed the reason: a tumor in his brain that was causing hemiparesis, a partial paralysis on the left side of his body. In July, Jayson had surgery to remove the tumor.

The family's insurance carrier, unsure of how significant the teen's recovery would be, strongly recommended that he be admitted to a long-term care facility. "I was not OK with that," Carol says. She immediately began to research other options and soon decided that an inpatient rehabilitation program at Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) in New



Brunswick offered the type of care Jayson would need.

### UP FOR THE TASK

"Hemiparesis can be very frustrating, especially for someone of Jayson's age and high activity level," says Zack Gubitosi, DPT, CSCS, a pediatric physical therapist at CSH. "I could tell this was a scary experience for him and his family, and I wanted them to be as comfortable as possible from day one."

Gubitosi incorporated elements of the sports and games Jayson loves into their sessions. "He would have me balance on one leg while we played Uno. We would play catch," says Jayson. "It was awesome!"

"Jayson was always so motivated to get better," Gubitosi says. "There were understandably some difficult days, and those were the days I would challenge him to fight harder. He was always up

for the task."

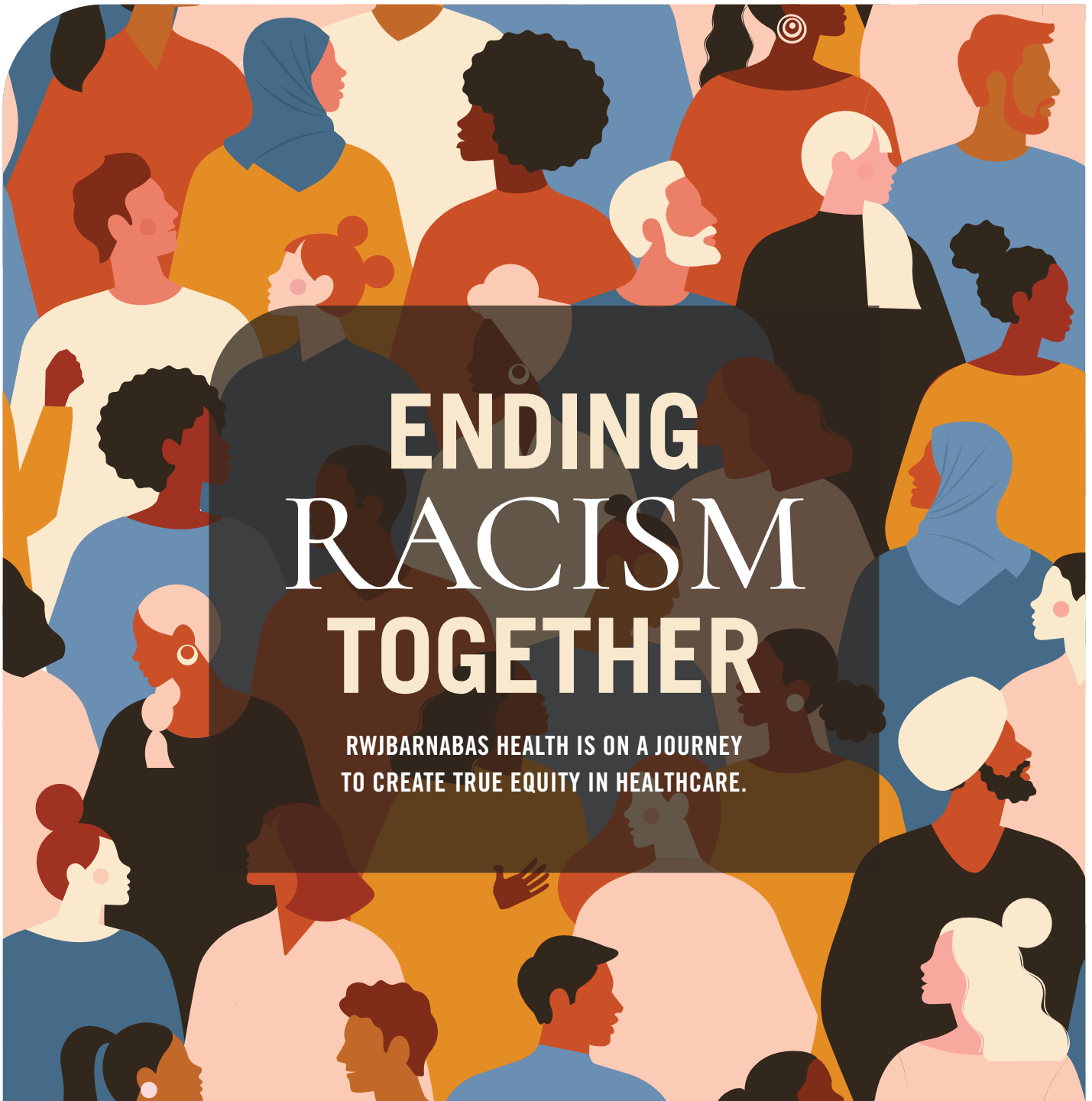
After seven weeks of inpatient care, Jayson was able to go home. He continues to receive occupational therapy as an outpatient at the CSH Toms River location, working on fine motor skills. He's able to enjoy his former activities, such as going to the gym, playing video games and hanging out with friends. He's also involved in the Youth Advisory Council at CSH, which meets once a month to discuss ways to create the best possible experience for patients.

"We're just so grateful for the care that Jayson was given," Carol says. "We know this whole experience could have been so much worse if we had not chosen to go where we did."

With the wisdom of experience, Jayson offers advice for anyone who is on their own recovery path. "Don't dwell on any of your bad thoughts," he says. "Think about all the good that is happening, even the slightest progression in recovery. Focus on that!"

For more information about Children's Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized](http://www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized).

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



# ENDING RACISM TOGETHER

RWJBARNABAS HEALTH IS ON A JOURNEY  
TO CREATE TRUE EQUITY IN HEALTHCARE.

**R**WJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), the largest academic healthcare system in New Jersey, is addressing equity and systemic racism and promoting an anti-racist culture throughout the organization and the communities it serves.

Here, Barry Ostrowsky, President and Chief Executive Officer of RWJBH, and DeAnna Minus-Vincent, Chief Social Integration and Health Equity Strategist, explain what the system's Ending Racism Together initiative entails.

**Racism has been described as a public health crisis. What does that mean?**

**[BARRY OSTROWSKY]** We start with the proposition that there is structural racism in our society. The data show that whether you're talking about food insecurity, housing, education, employment or financial and economic development, the majority of people who aren't doing well are people of color, particularly Black people. When it comes

to healthcare, disparities of outcome for people of color, and particularly Black people, are deeply harmful. That is not a political statement. It is a data-driven statement.

**[DEANNA MINUS-VINCENT]**

Research shows that 80 to 90 percent of health outcomes are a result of social determinants of health—the conditions in which a person lives, works and plays. That's important, because race itself has

been found to be a social determinant. When we look at the data, even when all other things are equal, people of color, in particular Black people, still have poor health outcomes.

### What are some examples of how racism plays out in healthcare?

[DEANNA MINUS-VINCENT]

Statistics show that even Black women with more education and more income tend to lose their babies more often than white women who have less income and less education. This is due to the chronic stressors of being Black in America and what chronic stress does to our bodies. It creates a fight-or-flight syndrome at all times. Therefore, we're more susceptible to losing our babies and to chronic diseases.

Countless research studies show that pain levels expressed by Black people are not believed, and so prescription pain medicines are not given in the same amount. Even Black children with fractures aren't given the same level of medication as white children. When a Black person goes into an emergency department, people assume we are substance abusers. I remember going to an ED with an asthma attack and the nurse saying, "Do you have any clean veins?" I work in healthcare and so I was able to navigate the system and march upstairs and talk to the CEO. But I shouldn't have to do that, and neither should anyone else.

### What is the role of a healthcare system in combating racism?

[BARRY OSTROWSKY] We realize that when we construct healthcare delivery mechanisms, we have to consider the ability of everybody to access them. It's not equitable to simply say, "Anyone can walk into our clinic between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m." Many people, particularly Black people in urban communities, can't take time off for a healthcare visit during those hours.



BARRY OSTROWSKY



DEANNA MINUS-VINCENT

From an operational standpoint, we're reviewing key policies and procedures such as the refusal of care policy. We've conducted Listening Tours to afford employees at all levels of the organization the opportunity to provide input, and we held focus groups in April and May so that employees could have a say in the strategic planning process.

[DEANNA MINUS-VINCENT] We hold monthly educational sessions for employees, called "Equitable Encounters: Real Talk About Race," where issues of racism are discussed. Training is forthcoming for all employees.

We're also thinking about how to serve people in the way they want to be served. For example, historically, if someone has a need, we send an outreach worker to their house. But if you work two jobs and only have a few hours with your kids, maybe you don't want outreach workers coming to the house. Maybe you'd prefer email or phone-based support. If you do need an outreach worker for complex problems, how do we coordinate services with our community partners so you can have just one outreach worker, instead of several?

### In addition to the practices you mention, how will a patient at an RWJBH facility become aware of the anti-racism initiative?

[BARRY OSTROWSKY] When patients come to our facilities, they'll see posters and messages on video screens, and will experience an environment of respect. When we admit patients, we'll make the point that we're an anti-racist organization and if they have any experience that's inconsistent with that, please tell us.

The journey to end racism requires everybody's effort and commitment. We know that we can't send out a memo saying, "We're anti-racist, and by the end of the year there'll be no racism." We invite patients and all our employees to speak up and engage as we make more progress toward becoming an anti-racist organization.

## WHAT IS A MICROAGGRESSION?

*As part of Ending Racism Together, RWJBarnabas Health conducts regular trainings and other educational events for its employees. A recent session focused on the topic of microaggressions.*

### What is a microaggression?

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal and nonverbal slights and indignities that members of marginalized groups experience in their day-to-day interactions. Often, individuals who engage in microaggressions are unaware that they have said something offensive or demeaning. The accumulated experience of receiving microaggressions can lead to depression, anxiety and effects on physical health.

### What are some examples?

Mispronouncing a person's name even after he or she has corrected you. Asking an Asian American where she's "really" from. Clutching your purse or wallet when a Black or Latino man approaches. Assuming a person of color is a service worker.

### How can a person avoid committing a microaggression?

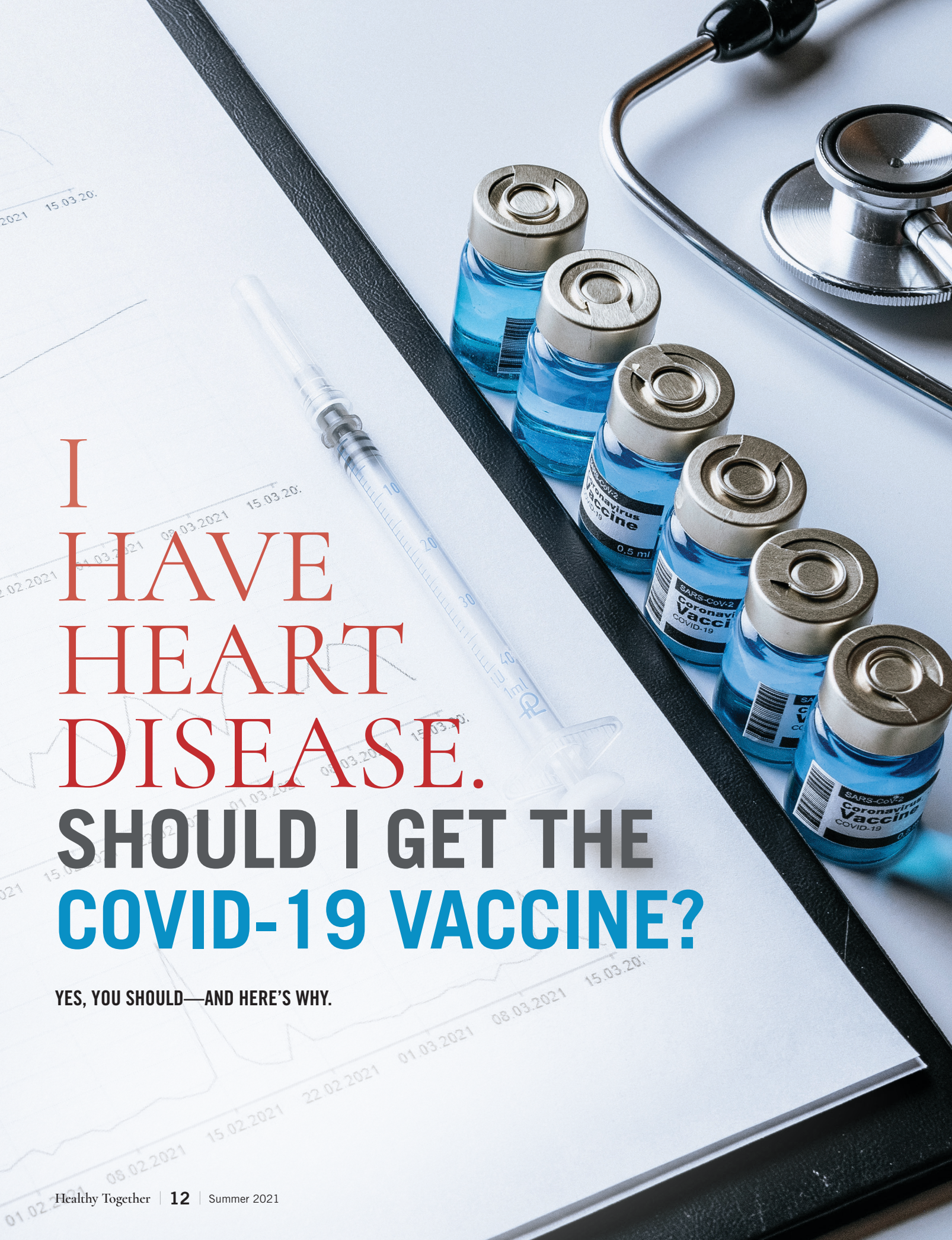
Think before you speak. Reflect on whether your brain is "stuck" on the racial or other differences between you and another person. If confronted on a microaggression, try not to be defensive and to understand the other person's point of view.

## REFUSAL OF CARE POLICY

RWJBarnabas Health will not accommodate requests for or refusal by a patient for the services of RWJBH workforce members based on a personal characteristic, such as race or ethnicity, except in the limited situation where the patient (or other individual on the patient's behalf) requests that an accommodation based on gender only is necessary to protect a patient's religious or cultural beliefs.

To learn more about RWJBarnabas Health's commitment to racial equity, visit [www.rwjbh.org/endingracism](http://www.rwjbh.org/endingracism).





I  
HAVE  
HEART  
DISEASE.  
SHOULD I GET THE  
COVID-19 VACCINE?

YES, YOU SHOULD—AND HERE'S WHY.

Not only is it safe for cardiovascular patients to get any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines—it's especially important that they do so, according to Partho Sengupta, MD, MBBS, FAAC, the newly appointed Chief of Cardiology at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

### Why is it so important for cardiovascular patients to get the vaccine?

“People with cardiovascular disease are more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19,” Dr. Sengupta explains. “That’s because it causes a state of inflammation to the inner lining of blood vessels, leading to a greater likelihood of abnormal heart rhythm, blood clots and heart attacks. Clinical studies have shown that COVID-19 patients with cardiac conditions have a higher risk of needing to be put on a ventilator. Vaccination protects people from these severe effects.”

### What kind of side effects can be expected?

“Normally, people may or may not get a tiny bruise and short-term pain at the site of the shot,” Dr. Sengupta says. “If you’re on a blood thinner, you may get a bigger bruise. Normal side effects, especially after a second dose, may include tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever or nausea. Some people have had allergic reactions to the vaccine, but those are extremely rare.”

### After a person is fully vaccinated, can he or she resume normal activities?

“Clinical trials have shown 90 to 95 percent protection, but there’s a possibility that some people may develop COVID-19 even after being vaccinated; the infection runs a milder course,” Dr. Sengupta says.



PARTHO SENGUPTA, MD



## RWJBARNABAS HEALTH: YOUR HEART-HEALTH DESTINATION

Whether you’re in need of care for high blood pressure, require heart surgery or are interested in ways to help keep your heart healthy, RWJBarnabas Health’s heart, vascular and thoracic care programs are here for you.

We offer:

- One of the top 15 largest heart transplant programs in the nation, with locations in Newark and New Brunswick.
- One of New Jersey’s highest-performing transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) programs.
- Two of the only care destinations in the state offering FFR-CT (fractional flow reserve computed tomography), located in Lakewood and in Newark.
- Leading cardiac specialists and surgeons who are at the forefront of innovation in critical care and the treatment of coronary artery and valvular diseases, heart rhythm disturbances and vascular and thoracic disorders.
- A network of cardiac rehabilitation programs and hundreds of preventive and wellness programs designed to strengthen and protect hearts.
- Access to many of the latest and most advanced clinical trials.
- More than 100 cardiologists across 30 practices with offices conveniently located throughout our communities.

“The CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] guidelines on masking are evolving. However, patients may still choose to be additionally cautious and wear a mask and practice social distancing, as we wait to see the impact and evolution of the most recent CDC guidelines.”

### What else should cardiovascular patients do to protect themselves?

“Get outdoors and exercise—walk, bike, experience nature,” says Dr. Sengupta. “The pandemic has made a lot of people very fearful of any outdoor experience. At least 50 percent of my patients have given up any form of activity. The result is that they gain weight, become deconditioned, and conditions like hypertension and blood pressure become uncontrolled.

“I advise patients to avoid crowds and clusters of people, but not to avoid being physically active. Try to get at least 30

minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most days. All of this will help you feel better and build your resilience.”

If you’ve been skipping physician visits, as many have during the pandemic, be sure to get back in a regular routine as soon as you can, Dr. Sengupta advises. “People have put off procedures and elective interventions and even allowed their symptoms to worsen for fear of going out during the pandemic,” he says. “This is your chance to resume your relationship with your doctor and get back on track.

“In fact, you may find that you can do many routine checkups remotely, thanks to all the progress taking place with telehealth and remote monitoring devices,” he says. “The pandemic has sparked a lot of innovation, which is allowing people to get care while still in their homes, and that trend is going to continue.”

For more information or to connect with one of NJ’s top cardiovascular specialists, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.



# THE LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT OF A **KIDNEY TRANSPLANT**

**POST-TRANSPLANT, PEOPLE WITH KIDNEY FAILURE FIND THEIR WORLD TRANSFORMED.**

**R**WJBarnabas Health offers the region's most experienced kidney and pancreas transplantation programs. A wide range of treatment options for both adult and pediatric patients is available at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, at Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston and at satellite locations throughout New Jersey. Here are just two examples of patients whose lives have been transformed through our world-class care and the generosity of organ donors.

## BACK IN ACTION AFTER A DOUBLE TRANSPLANT



**D**illon Devlin, 29, had Type 1 diabetes, but that didn't stop him from traveling the country with a friend between 2014 and 2018. They hit 38 states, ending up in California for a while before coming home to New Jersey.

Along the way, Dillon went to pharmacies to get his insulin prescription refilled, but his increasingly high blood pressure was never addressed. By the time he got back to his home state and

met with an endocrinologist and a nephrologist, he was shocked to learn that he was in stage 4 kidney failure and would need both a kidney transplant and a pancreas transplant.

"Kidney failure alone is an older person's disease. A kidney and pancreas transplant is more typically needed in a younger person who has Type 1 diabetes," explains Ronald Pelletier, MD, Director of Transplantation at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick. "That's because the pancreas is not making enough insulin, a hormone that controls the blood sugar level in the body."

### THE WAIT BEGINS

Dillon went from working at an auto salvage business, hoisting transmissions onto pallets, to needing three-times-weekly dialysis. For eight months, he awaited a suitable kidney and pancreas for



**RONALD PELLETIER, MD**

transplant. Six different possibilities fell through, one as he was actually being prepared for surgery. Finally, in November 2020, Dr. Pelletier successfully transplanted a new kidney and pancreas.

"All of a sudden I was waking up from surgery and my mom was saying, 'You did it!'" he recalls. "I was standing up within six hours and out of the hospital in six days." A subsequent period of rest and recovery synced up well with the pandemic-related lockdown.

Now he's back to lifting weights and going for hikes, and is actively seeking to get back into the workforce. "It's so strange to wrap my head around not having to take insulin," he says. "Modern medicine is a complete marvel."

"What I really love about kidney and pancreas transplantation is that you get to transform someone's life," Dr. Pelletier says. "Not only do they not need dialysis afterward, they're no longer diabetic! That's fantastic."

Dillon's advice to others awaiting transplant: "Don't let hopelessness consume you. It can happen anytime. The seventh time I got a call, it was a miracle match."



## LOVING LIFE WITH A NEW KIDNEY

**T**imothy Collins, 60, of Westfield, was diagnosed in 1996 with polycystic kidney disease (PKD), which causes kidneys to enlarge and lose function over time. “PKD is hereditary,” he explains. “My father had it, my grandmother had it and my brother has it.”

In 1998, Timothy got a kidney transplant from his younger sister. The kidney functioned well for almost 18 years, but in 2016 an infection caused his body to become severely dehydrated. Timothy needed to be on hemodialysis—in which blood is pumped out of the body, filtered through an artificial kidney machine and returned—three days a week for two months. After that, he had a catheter placed in his stomach so he could do at-home peritoneal dialysis, which uses the lining inside the belly as a natural filter. He did this nightly for 16 months.

“Even though you’re on dialysis, it’s not like having a kidney,” Timothy says. “There’s still poison in your body and you have a yellow look. I gained weight and my creatinine levels [a measure of kidney function] were way too high.”

### MEDICAL ADVANCES

“We’re so fortunate that in kidney failure, there’s the option of dialysis,” says Francis Weng, MD, Chief of the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division at Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC). “It keeps people alive. However, dialysis doesn’t replace the full function of the kidney. For most patients, the better option is a kidney transplant.”

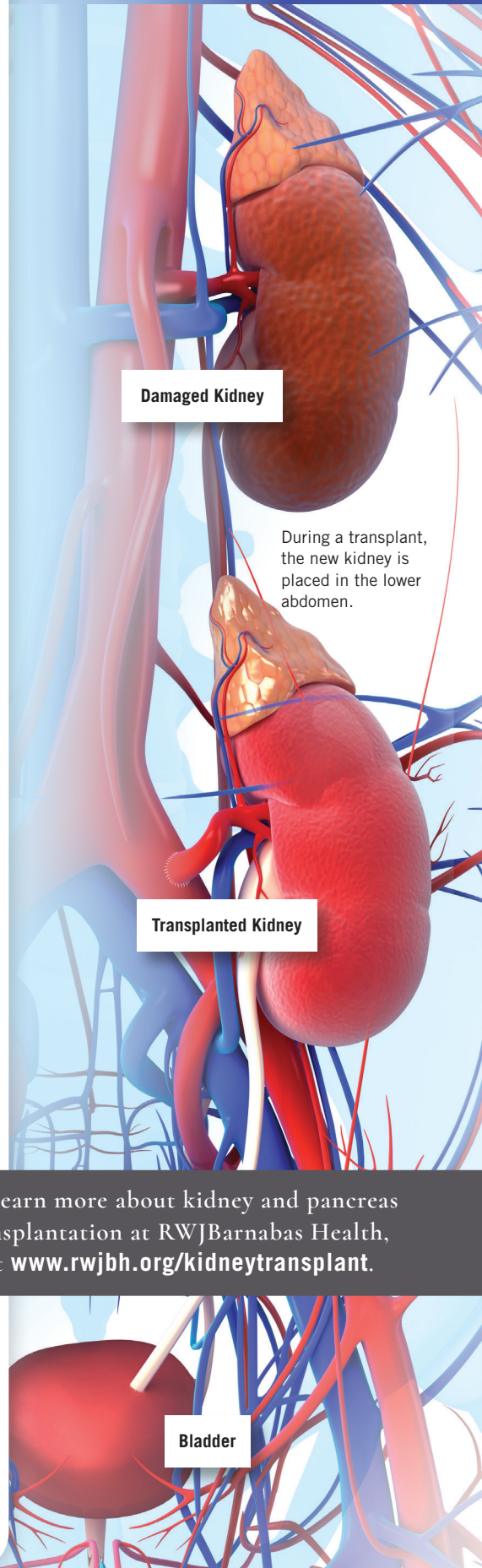
Timothy’s niece, who was 21 at the time, offered to donate a kidney to him. At Timothy’s insistence, they waited until she graduated from business school and law school, which she was attending simultaneously, in May 2018. Though her kidney wasn’t a match for Timothy, she became part of the kidney transplant chain at SBMC: She donated to someone for whom her kidney was compatible, and Timothy was given a kidney from another donor.

“Living donor programs like the one Timothy was in are one of the significant advances in kidney transplantation that we’ve seen over the past 15 years,” says Dr. Weng. “We also have many more choices in the kind of medications we use to prevent rejection of the transplant and minimize side effects. The vast majority of patients do quite well after transplantation.”

“It’s a wonderful thing,” says Timothy. “I have so much more energy now, and I have so much more time to myself since I don’t have to plan my days around getting to a machine at a certain time. I’ve been able to be the project manager on several commercial renovation projects, and that was the best therapy ever. I love life, and I’ve been very blessed.”



FRANCIS WENG, MD



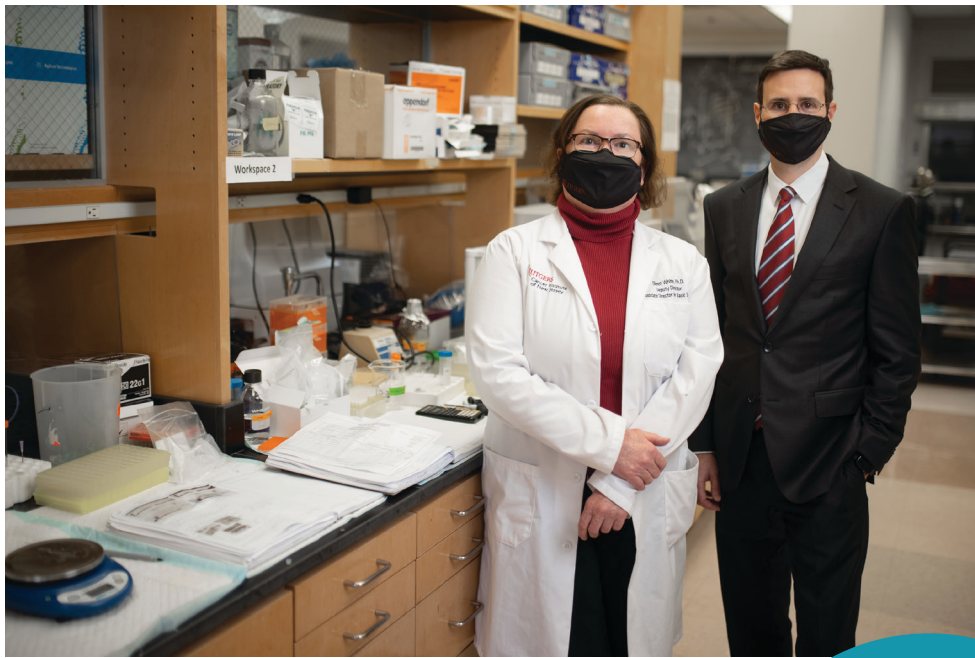
Damaged Kidney

During a transplant, the new kidney is placed in the lower abdomen.

Transplanted Kidney

Bladder

To learn more about kidney and pancreas transplantation at RWJBarnabas Health, visit [www.rwjbh.org/kidneytransplant](http://www.rwjbh.org/kidneytransplant).



Eileen White, PhD (left), and Christian Hinrichs, MD, Co-directors of the Cancer Immunology and Metabolism Center of Excellence, a groundbreaking collaboration with a mission to develop new immunotherapies

# MISSION POSSIBLE

**RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE OF NEW JERSEY LAUNCHES A NEW CENTER OF EXCELLENCE TO HARNESS THE POWER OF IMMUNOTHERAPY.**

For decades, the cornerstones of cancer treatment were surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. In recent years, immunotherapy has risen to the forefront.

“What’s remarkable about immunotherapy is the way it uses the immune system to specifically target cancer cells and not healthy cells,” explains Christian Hinrichs, MD, Chief of the Section of Cancer Immunotherapy and Co-director of the Cancer Immunology and Metabolism Center of Excellence at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Dr. Hinrichs, a world-class expert in cancer immunology and immunotherapy, was recruited from the National Institutes of Health to co-direct the center with Eileen White, PhD, Deputy Director and Chief Scientific Officer at Rutgers Cancer

Institute.

“Immunotherapy has been a real game-changer for systemic cancer therapy for two reasons,” Dr. Hinrichs says. “First, it creates a very strong attack against cancer. Second, it has remarkably few negative side effects.”

However, some cancers respond well to immunotherapies, but others don’t respond at all. Why?

To answer that question, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey established the new Center of Excellence. The \$50 million effort, fueled by an anonymous gift of \$25 million, is poised to lead the immunotherapy revolution and transform cancer treatment.

“We are putting into place key expertise and facilities for ‘first in human’ clinical trials in immunotherapy and cell therapy,” Dr. Hinrichs explains.

\*  
RWJBarnabas Health and the 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. To learn more, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).

The program is also serving a large and diverse patient population in New Jersey, Dr. Hinrichs notes. “That’s so important in cancer research,” he says.

## NEW CONNECTIONS

The Center of Excellence takes a novel approach by uniting its strengths in cancer immunology and metabolism under one umbrella. “Few, if any, institutions have this capability,” says Dr. White, Co-director of the center.

Dr. White is a globally recognized expert in the study of metabolism—the way cells grow by using energy and nutrients for sustenance—and how it contributes to cancer. “By focusing our efforts on determining how tumor metabolism drives growth and suppresses the immune response, we can begin to develop new immunotherapies and make existing immunotherapies more effective,” she says.

The center is also focusing on the development of new cellular therapies for common types of cancer, a particular area of expertise for Dr. Hinrichs. “We are focused on the discovery and development of new T cell [immune system cell] therapies, particularly gene-engineering approaches that allow T cells to specifically and powerfully target tumors,” he says.

These new therapies are made in a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) facility, which follows stringent FDA regulations to ensure the quality of the manufactured therapies. “A GMP facility is absolutely critical for what we do,” says Dr. Hinrichs. “It enables us to produce personalized cell therapy products for each patient right here. We can actually discover and develop new cancer therapies at Rutgers Cancer Institute that no one can do anywhere else.” Many of these new therapies will be available to patients at Rutgers Cancer Institute and throughout the RWJBarnabas Health system.

To learn more about the Cancer Immunology and Metabolism Center of Excellence, visit <https://cinj.org/immunology-metabolism>.





A donation from the Dr. Katherine Lynne Cannon Cancer Fund allowed firefighter Steven Holmes and his wife, Victoria, to send their sons Lucas (left) and Jacen to daycare while both parents recovered from serious illnesses.

“We had been through so much already,” Steven says. “We went into survival mode and did what we had to do.” He took a month off work to help at home. “During Victoria’s first month, she was learning to walk again,” he says. Grandparents stepped in to help with childcare when they could, but the couple was struggling when it came to daycare.

\*

RWJBarnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, together with 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. To learn more, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).

Fortunately, the family’s plight came to the attention of the RWJUH Hamilton Foundation and the Dr. Katherine Lynne Cannon Cancer Fund, which was created in 2017 to support families of cancer patients with their ancillary expenses.

The case was especially touching to Lynne Cannon, who, with the Foundation, administers the fund with her daughter, Jacqueline. The fund is a memorial to Lynne’s daughter, Katherine, a physician who died in 2017. Like Steven, Katherine had experienced acute leukemia. “My daughter was a force of nature and a beautiful person,” Lynne says. “This is exactly the kind of situation where we want to help.”

The fund donated an unusually large amount, \$2,000, for a scholarship that allowed Jacen, by then 8 months old, to enroll in the same daycare as his brother. When Steven found out about the scholarship, he didn’t know how the Foundation learned about the family’s need. “I found out it was the nurses at the infusion center,” he says. “They first saved my life and then were taking care of us even when I was no longer a patient.”

# HELPING THROUGH A CRISIS

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT ASSISTS FAMILY FACING HEALTH STRUGGLES.

Steven Holmes and his family were in a difficult spot. Over the course of several months, it seemed as if their life was spiraling through one tough challenge after another.

It started in late October 2019, when Steven, a 33-year-old firefighter, was diagnosed with acute leukemia, a form of cancer that invades the blood. He was hospitalized for 30 days and received chemotherapy treatments for eight months at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton’s Cancer Center.

At the same time, his 35-year-old wife, Victoria, a paramedic, was pregnant with their second child. Their baby boy, Jacen, came into the world to join his 4-year-old brother, Lucas, in April 2020.

But this joyful news quickly became overshadowed by events that followed.

### UNEXPECTED DIAGNOSIS

Steven’s chemotherapy regimen wrapped up in July, on Independence Day. “We were finally getting back to normal after my treatments,” he says. But several months later, on November 23, Victoria suddenly became paralyzed and lost sensation in her feet. Her diagnosis: Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare autoimmune disorder in which the immune system attacks the body’s nerves. “This syndrome can kill you because it can paralyze your diaphragm so you can’t breathe,” Steven says. “We were lucky we got to the hospital quickly.”

The diagnosis hit the family hard.

To learn more about the Dr. Katherine Lynne Cannon Cancer Fund at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltoncannoncancerfund](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltoncannoncancerfund).



# WE'VE TURNED 50!

**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HAMILTON  
CELEBRATES A HALF-CENTURY OF  
HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE.**

Just a half-century ago, Trenton had four hospitals and Hamilton Township had none. Yet Hamilton's population was almost as large as Trenton's. So, in 1971, Trenton General Hospital moved to Hamilton, and the hospital was renamed Hamilton Hospital. At the dedication ceremony, New Jersey's Commissioner of Health said, "You now have a beautiful building. Now you have to build a hospital."

Over the past five decades, staff members have done exactly that. Today, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton offers top-notch care in many specialties, including cancer, orthopedics, cardiac, stroke and rehabilitation. Here's how the hospital's major achievements unfolded over a half-century:



Trenton General Hospital moved to a 67-acre campus in Hamilton Township and was renamed Hamilton Hospital.



**1994**

Hamilton Hospital became part of the Robert Wood Johnson Network and System. The hospital changed its name to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton.



**1995**

The Outpatient Services Building opened to provide outpatient testing and treatment, including a same-day surgery center.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

November 15: RWJUH Hamilton will hold a special event for the community to celebrate 50 years together. More information to come!



**1996**

RWJUH Hamilton established The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Hamilton, an affiliate of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey.



# 2001

The North Tower opened, housing the Emergency Department and intensive and critical care areas. The Grounds for Healing, areas of the campus that feature soothing gardens, were created to promote healing of the mind, body and spirit. The Grounds were formed in partnership with the Grounds for Sculpture and The Sculpture Foundation.



# 2019

The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton was renovated to include the latest technology in the region and the bright and inspiring Syed Family Infusion Center.



# 2002

RWJUH Hamilton opened Mercer County's only stand-alone cancer center in affiliation with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.



# 2010

RWJ Fitness & Wellness Center opened at 3100 Quakerbridge Road, offering a state-of-the-art, medically focused fitness center, wellness learning hub and full-service conference center.

Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement  
**Better Health Program**  
 Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old



# 2020

RWJUH Hamilton earned its 10th Safety Grade A from The Leapfrog Group. An A rating indicates commitment of staff at every level to protect patients from preventable medical harm and error. The hospital also received a four-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; RWJUH Hamilton is the only CMS four-star-rated hospital in Mercer County. The hospital launched Better Health, a complementary program for people 65 and older that offers classes that engage the mind and encourage movement and reflection.



# 2007

Lakefront Tower opened. This addition included 64 private patient rooms and medical/surgical and orthopedic units.



# 2016

RWJUH Hamilton joined RWJBarnabas Health with the merger of Robert Wood Johnson Health System and Barnabas Health. RWJ Primary Care Express also opened in 2016 to offer walk-in care for patients.

A photograph of an elderly man, Francis Miller, smiling while fishing. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a brown baseball cap with an Air Force logo. He is holding a fishing rod in his right hand and a pink worm in his left hand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and white flowers.

# EASY TO SWALLOW

THE THERAPY HELPS MAN RESTORE THE JOY OF EATING.

Francis Miller would have had trouble eating fish before being treated for swallowing difficulty.

**F**rancis Miller loves nothing more than enjoying a fine meal with his wife, June. But two years ago, he began noticing that food often got caught in the back of his throat when he ate. “I had to drink water so I wouldn’t choke,” says Francis, 81, of Columbus. The problem worsened over time, until just about anything he ate or drank got stuck on the way down and made him cough.

June eventually began chopping her husband’s food into small pieces and softening it with gravy or chicken broth. “It was like eating baby food,” says Francis, who lost interest in favorite dishes and dropped over 20 pounds.

In November 2020, Francis finally decided to seek help for his problem and learned that difficulty with swallowing has a name: dysphagia.

## VARIETY OF CAUSES

Dysphagia is especially common among older adults in part because so many things can cause healthy swallowing to go wrong. Normally, a network of muscles moves food and liquid from the mouth into the throat and down the esophagus to the stomach. Conditions that can interfere with this process include:

- Neurological disorders such as Parkinson’s disease, which can interfere with airway coordination and cause food or liquid to be inhaled
- Stroke
- Head and neck cancers or, in some cases, their treatment
- Chronic gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD), which causes acid to wash up from the stomach into the esophagus, potentially causing tissue damage that affects swallowing
- Aging, which can weaken muscles needed to force food down the esophagus.

Dysphagia can sometimes have serious health consequences, so Francis’s first goal was to discover what the underlying problem was. Working with Zafar Zamir, MD, a gastroenterologist

at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton, Francis underwent a series of tests.

In one, Dr. Zamir used an endoscope (a thin, flexible tube with a light and video camera) to check Francis’s throat and esophagus for a narrowing of the food pipe, or stricture. Another test, called a videofluoroscopic swallowing evaluation (VSE, formerly known as a barium swallow test), entailed drinking a special liquid that helped a technician capture moving X-ray images of structures in the throat and esophagus.

From there, Francis was referred to RWJUH Hamilton speech language pathologist Inessa Levine, MS, CCC-SLP, who treats dysphagia and understands it, even beyond its health repercussions.


In some cases, difficulty swallowing leaves people feeling embarrassed to eat with others, isolating them from friends and loved ones. “The goal of therapy is to restore as much normal function as physiologically possible to improve the patient’s quality of life,” Levine says.

## STRENGTHENING MUSCLES

When Francis saw Levine for further evaluation, she viewed the VSE but also took a detailed medical history and asked Francis to describe his symptoms in detail. It became clear to Levine that Francis didn’t suffer from a serious medical condition. Instead, his dysphagia was caused by aging and weakened muscles. And like other muscles in the body, those that regulate swallowing can be strengthened.

Levine prescribed exercise to do just that. During office visits, Levine had Francis use a special resistance device to target and strengthen throat muscles that are involved with swallowing. She also instructed him on techniques for swallowing deeply, first with no food, then with ice chips and finally with food. Francis practiced the exercises during therapy but did repetitions at home as well.

Other techniques he could practice at home took the form of rules for eating



## DO YOU HAVE DYSPHAGIA?

Talk to a doctor about getting evaluated for dysphagia if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Food feels “stuck” when you try to swallow.
- Chewing and swallowing takes extra effort and time.
- You frequently cough during or right after you eat or drink.
- Your voice sounds “wet” or gurgly after you eat or drink.
- Food or liquid sometimes leaks out of your mouth.
- You have difficulty breathing after you eat.
- You’re losing weight without trying.


such as relaxing and chewing slowly, holding his head up, not looking down at his food and not talking while eating. Other options for treatment included using adaptive devices such as specially designed straws, cups and spoons, along with a painless form of electrical stimulation that helps activate nerves in throat muscles and improve swallowing.

For the Millers, Levine’s treatment has been life-changing. “She did a great job. We loved her,” says June. “We can go out to eat now and don’t have to worry about...”

...“Whether I’m going to choke!” Francis says, enthusiastically finishing his wife’s thought. “I’m very well satisfied with my treatment. I eat very slowly, but I could sit down and have a steak right now. I can eat anything.”

To learn more about treatment for swallowing difficulties at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, call **87-REHAB-RWJ** or visit [www.RWJRehab.com](http://www.RWJRehab.com).





# LIVING WITH HEART FAILURE

Renee Guest finds managing the ongoing challenges of heart failure easier thanks to education, services, care and support available through the Healthy Lives Hamilton program.

## HEALTHY LIVES HAMILTON HELPS PEOPLE WITH WEAK CARDIAC FUNCTION BE THEIR BEST SELVES.

In 2011, Renee Guest, 58, had a major heart attack that left her with congestive heart failure, a condition in which the heart can't pump enough blood and oxygen to the body's organs. For years, she was in and out of the hospital as she wrestled with problems like chest pain, irregular heartbeat and difficulty breathing. It was a pattern often seen in people with heart failure. As the weakened heart's output decreases, fluid can back up and accumulate in a variety of organs, which not only can cause shortness of breath but trigger congestion and swelling in the ankles, legs, feet or stomach.

"When I fill with fluid, it goes to my lungs, chest and stomach area," says Renee, who also battles diabetes and thyroid problems. "I get shortness of breath and palpitations, and that's when I know I'm in trouble."

But after a visit to the emergency room in 2019, Renee's doctor urged her to enroll in the Healthy Lives Hamilton program, which offers heart failure patients easy access to medical care along with education and support. The goal: to prevent a health crisis and avoid hospitalization.

Through the program, Renee learned about lifestyle measures that help control her condition, the optimal way to take her medications and how to recognize her symptoms before they get out of hand. Now she checks in at the first sign of trouble, which allows the Healthy Lives Hamilton team to adjust her treatments and get her back on track.

"They've made my heart failure much more manageable," Renee says. "It's just the best program."

### LIFE-ALTERING DIAGNOSIS

"Once people are diagnosed with heart failure, they'll always need to

be mindful of it because it affects so many aspects of their lives," says Ann Mancuso, MSN, RN, CHFNP, Program Coordinator for Healthy Lives Hamilton. People who never glanced at nutrition labels on packaged foods, for example, need to examine product contents and understand better how eating affects their health. Among the ingredients they need to focus on and control is sodium, which promotes fluid retention.

"Managing heart failure requires having the capacity to listen to your body," Mancuso says. "You need to assess yourself every day for signs and symptoms of worsening heart failure, remember to take your medications and not let yourself run out. And it requires knowing when to call for help." The program helps people meet each of these goals, she says, encouraging them to take control of their health.

People often learn about Healthy Lives Hamilton when being discharged from the hospital or the ER, Mancuso says. When meeting with a new patient, the program's team works to understand the person's specific challenges. "Every patient who comes to us is unique," Mancuso says. "What works for one does not necessarily work for another."

### TACKLING BARRIERS

One key step is to identify barriers that keep patients from taking the best care of themselves. "We not only help empower them but help them navigate the health system," says Mancuso.

For example, some people with heart failure find it challenging to pay for vital prescriptions. "Quite a few patients don't pick up new medications after their hospital discharge because

they can't afford them," Mancuso says. "We help them identify programs—whether through the community, pharmaceutical companies or the hospital—that they may benefit from."

When patients like Renee experience worrisome symptoms, they often turn first to Healthy Lives Hamilton. "I can call and say, 'Look, I'm having issues,' and they'll get me in for a checkup," Renee says. "Sometimes it requires drawing blood and looking at the labs. Other times, they talk to me and get a sense of what's going on." If necessary, the program will send patients to the ER.

Crucially, the Healthy Lives Hamilton team keeps patients' other healthcare providers informed. Nurses are in constant touch with Renee's primary care doctor and her Philadelphia-based cardiologist about her ongoing treatment. "Collaborative care gives patients a safety net and peace of mind that their needs are being met," says Mancuso.

### COMPASSIONATE CARE

Providing social support is a key ingredient in the program's success. In recent months, Renee has experienced some lows in her health, due in part to the death of her husband in February. "I've been seeing them quite often lately," she says.

Care often goes beyond medical treatment. "Renee has had an incredible amount of stress as of late in her life," says Mancuso. "We're trying to be a support for her, even if it's just to reassure her that we're going to help her with whatever she needs and she's going to be fine."

"They are very nurturing and make you feel so comfortable," says Renee. "I can't tell you what a godsend they have been."

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with a top cardiovascular specialist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.



# Top Ranked for Quality and Safety.

