

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

Winter 2022

healthy *together*



**CANCER CARE:
'I WANTED
TO FIGHT'**

**STOPPING A STROKE
IN ITS TRACKS**

**A NEW TOOL
TO MANAGE
YOUR HEALTH**

**PROTECT YOUR HEART
THIS WINTER**

MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP



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

BARRY H. OSTROWSKY

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RWJBARNABAS HEALTH



“As we turn the page on another year and you think about your annual resolutions, put your health at the top of the list. If you’ve delayed care during the COVID-19 pandemic, make it a priority to schedule your health screenings and checkups in 2022. We can help you take steps toward better health, from eating healthier and increasing physical fitness to quitting smoking and reducing stress. Let’s be healthy together!”

ANTHONY CAVA

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SOMERSET

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HEALTH NEWS



Manuel Nolasco Munoz, patient navigator for RWJUH Somerset's Hispanic Medical Program.

EXPANDING HEALTHCARE ACCESS IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset has launched a Hispanic Medical Program as part of its ongoing efforts to expand access to care for members of underserved communities.

Manuel Nolasco Munoz serves as a bilingual patient navigator for the program, assisting with translation, making medical appointments, helping patients understand discharge instructions and plans of care and assisting with filling out forms. He will also work closely with the hospital's Community Health Department to assist at community outreach events and health screenings.

“The COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affected members of the Hispanic community, underscored the importance of providing culturally and linguistically competent care to improve health outcomes,” says Tony Cava, President and Chief Executive Officer at RWJUH Somerset.

In 2020, the hospital mounted an aggressive bilingual community outreach campaign in collaboration with a variety of community partners to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Efforts included distribution of masks, sanitizers, soaps, educational materials and personal protective equipment, along with promotion of COVID-19 vaccinations and access to them among the Hispanic community.

In recognition of these efforts, the hospital was awarded the 2021 NJBIZ Healthcare Hero Award for Public Health and the 2021 New Jersey Hospital Association's Healthy New Jersey Award.

The hospital also formed a Latino Advisory Council in 2020 with about 20 representatives from local government, businesses and organizations serving the Latino community as part of its community outreach efforts. As a result of input from the group, the hospital launched a new online health education series in Spanish for members of the Latino community, including webinars on COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine.

To contact the Hispanic Medical Program at RWJUH Somerset, call 908.927.8798.

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Treatment that took 33 minutes from assessment to administration of clot-busting medication cut short Anthony Maceiko's stroke.

STRUCK BUT NOT STRICKEN

SPEEDY, RECORD-SETTING ACTION STOPS A MAN'S STROKE IN ITS TRACKS.

Anthony Maceiko of Bridgewater had two headaches to deal with when he woke up on February 1, 2021. The first was two feet of snow that the 48-year-old mechanical engineer had to clear. The second was an actual headache. He'd had it the night before, and still had it despite a night's rest.

Heading to the garage for his snow-blower, something strange happened. "I



SRINIVASA POTLURI, MD

was putting on boots and felt drool coming out the side of my mouth," he says. "In the mirror, the right side of my face was sagging." Having had first-aid training, "I knew these were

signs of a stroke," he says.

His voice slurred as he rushed inside to his wife. "Call 911 right now," he said. The ambulance that quickly arrived whisked Anthony to a hospital nationally recognized for stroke care: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, which is certified as a Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, and was recently recognized as "high-performing" in the care of stroke patients by *U.S. News & World Report*.

SWIFT RESPONSE

The hospital had been alerted that Anthony was on his way, and an expert team sprang into action as soon as he arrived.

"We have a program where if we suspect a patient with a stroke is coming in, we have them quickly assessed by the Emergency Department [ED] doctor," says neurologist Srinivasa Potluri, MD, Medical Director of RWJUH Somerset's stroke program and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. "If there are significant symptoms, we rush the patient directly to a CAT scan to look at the brain and exclude a brain hemorrhage. If possible, we also look at blood vessels leading to the brain to see if there are any blockages."

Doctors ruled out a hemorrhage, and Anthony, whose right hand had now grown weak, was quickly given tissue plasminogen activator, an intravenous medication. Known as tPA, the drug helps dissolve blood clots that cause strokes.

Such swift action is essential to limiting stroke damage. “Our approach is that ‘time is brain,’” Dr. Potluri says. “Our acute stroke treatment protocols have been incredibly effective in allowing us to reduce the amount of time to administer tPA from when the patient arrives.” Anthony would, in fact, set an RWJUH Somerset record for the year: It had taken a mere 33 minutes to assess and treat him.

Testing revealed Anthony had suffered a tear in one of two carotid arteries that supply blood to the brain. This had made his body form blood clots that in turn interfered with the flow of blood to his brain, triggering the stroke.

Anthony quickly began feeling more like himself. “I was improving by the hour,” he says. Speech took longer to recover than hand mobility, but everything was getting better. “Getting clot-busting medication helped with recovery,” he says.

STEADY IMPROVEMENT

After four days in the hospital, Anthony went home and continued improving. “In a week or so, my face stopped sagging and my speech was getting even better,” he says. “I was back to work in two weeks.” People he spoke with on the phone



SALUTES FOR STROKE CARE

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset has been recognized for outstanding stroke care even beyond being designated a Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and being recognized as “high-performing” for care of stroke patients by *U.S. News & World Report*.

In September, the hospital received the American Heart Association’s (AHA’s) Gold Plus Get with the Guidelines—Stroke Quality Achievement Award for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines.

RWJUH Somerset also received the AHA’s Target: Stroke Honor Roll award, recognizing the hospital’s quality measures to reduce time between a patient’s arrival and treatment with clot-busting medication.

In a third honor, the AHA gave the hospital its Target: Type 2 Diabetes award. To qualify, hospitals must meet quality measures developed with more than 90 percent of compliance for 12 consecutive months for the “Overall Diabetes Cardiovascular Initiative Composite Score.”

couldn’t detect any slurring, he says.

With therapy at RWJUH Somerset, Anthony’s hand strength and speech continued to improve. “We conveniently have a physical therapy gym on the neuroscience floor,” Dr. Potluri says. “The goal is to have patients seen by rehabilitation services providers such as speech therapists, physical therapists and occupational therapists, usually the same day.”

The hospital also offers services for

emotional needs, including a monthly stroke support group. “It’s helpful for patients and families to learn from each other, see what services are available and cope with any long-lasting symptoms of stroke,” Dr. Potluri says.

Anthony continues to see Dr. Potluri regularly and will never forget the outstanding care he received. “From the ED to rehab, everyone at RWJUH Somerset was very attentive,” he says. “They helped me in any way I needed.”

BE FAST TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF STROKE

Prompt treatment of a stroke is critical. The acronym BE FAST can help you remember red flags that may indicate you’re having one.

B

BALANCE

Are you having issues such as dizziness, unsteadiness or poor coordination?

E

EYESIGHT

Do you suddenly have double vision, vision loss or other visual problems?

F

FACE

Does it droop or seem uneven when you smile?

A

ARMS

Are one or both of your arms or legs suddenly numb, paralyzed or weak?

S

SPEECH

Are you slurring words, not comprehending or having other difficulty communicating?

T

TIME

—to call 911. Don’t take your own vehicle to the hospital: Ambulances can call ahead and make sure the stroke team is prepared to meet and treat you right away.

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





RWJUH Somerset orthopedic nurse Meaghan Barber-Badger, RN, BSN, tends to patient Mark Runyon of Somerville.

SCORING TOP NURSING HONORS—AGAIN

THIRD STRAIGHT MAGNET DESIGNATION MEANS QUALITY CARE FOR PATIENTS.

Nurses have been called the backbone of healthcare. At Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, they not only provide vital care at the bedside but also promote community health, improve patient care, enhance safety, support diversity and inclusion, educate staff, provide leadership and more.

As a result of such efforts, RWJUH Somerset has earned Magnet recognition for nursing excellence from the American Nurses Credentialing

Center (ANCC) for the third consecutive time. The designation is the nation's most prestigious nursing honor—one that only 9 percent of hospitals nationwide have achieved.

"The Magnet tenets are embedded in our culture and are something our nurses truly embody every day," says Michael Valendo, DNP, RN, NE-BC, CEN, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing, RWJUH Somerset. Tenets include exemplary professional practice, transformational leadership, shared decision-making and an organizational

structure that empowers nurses.

"These processes allow us to achieve exceptional patient outcomes, which are significant indicators of nursing care quality," Valendo says. Key outcomes reported by Magnet hospitals include higher scores for patient safety, fewer complications and shorter hospital stays.

PROMOTING HEALTH

RWJUH Somerset's 650 nurses achieved Magnet status even while facing an unprecedented pandemic, continuing to serve a variety of roles throughout the



Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's executive team and nursing leadership team celebrate receiving Magnet designation for nursing excellence. Seated left to right are Salvatore Moffa, MD, Chief Medical Officer; Tony Cava, President and Chief Executive Officer; Jamie Perry, Assistant Vice President of Nursing; Michael Valendo, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing; Eileen Allen, Magnet Program Coordinator; and Kathy Easter, Assistant Vice President, Nursing Excellence.

hospital. Roles include inpatient, surgical and emergency care; behavioral health; outpatient services; care management; education; clinical research; infection prevention; quality improvement; patient experience; patient navigation services; information technology services; community outreach; and administration.

“From our perspective, nursing is as much about health promotion and wellness as it is about managing disease,” says Jamie Perry, MSN, RN, NE-BC, Assistant Vice President of Nursing, RWJUH Somerset.

The ANCC gave high marks for the hospital's use of business resource groups (BRGs) such as the Asian Society for Impact and Advocacy Network (ASIAN), Advancing Women through Advocacy, Recognition and Empowerment (AWARE), the Black Professionals Network (BPN) and Service and Advocacy for Latinos United for Development (SALUD). Such groups not only support employees, foster career development and contribute to cultural

sensitivity, but also can advance public health goals.

In one example, SALUD helped the hospital reach Latino communities especially hard hit by COVID-19. “In cooperation with our Community Health and Diversity and Inclusion teams, members of the SALUD BRG participated in activities to distribute masks and hand sanitizer, and do community education about hygiene, transmission and social distancing,” Valendo says. “They gave away thousands of masks and interacted with thousands of people, and we saw a significant drop in hospitalizations among that population.”

“It's a remarkable accomplishment for our nurses to be recognized as the best in their profession—not just once, but three times in a row,” says Tony Cava, President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJUH Somerset. “We are so proud of our entire nursing team for their dedication to our patients and their commitment to providing the highest quality care.”



HOW A MAGNET HOSPITAL BENEFITS PATIENTS

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Magnet recognition for nursing excellence from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) reflects better outcomes for patients. Among them:

- Exemplary care:** Magnet hospitals score well on quality indicators such as catheter- and line-associated infections, hospital-acquired pressure injuries and patient falls. “Quality care reduces complications, hospital stays and readmissions,” says Michael Valendo, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Nursing.
- Efficient service:** RWJUH Somerset had low rates of patients leaving the Emergency Department (ED) without care thanks to multidisciplinary collaboration between physicians, nurses, the ED and radiology and inpatient units to keep patient flow high and wait times low.
- Innovative practices:** RWJUH Somerset nurses are empowered to provide ideas, solutions and leadership to improve care. For example, placing or removing an “M” on a board to indicate whether people understand a new medication has helped ensure that RWJUH Somerset patients know what drugs they take, why they take them and what side effects to watch for.
- Stable staffing:** Magnet designation helps hospitals attract and retain nurses. “Even during COVID, we've been able to attract talent,” Valendo says.

For more information about Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, including job opportunities for nurses, visit www.rwjbh.org/somerset.





PROUD SUPPORT

TD BANK GRANT HELPS ENSURE ACCESS TO CARE IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY.

Members of the LGBTQ community are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as heterosexuals, and a greater percentage are uninsured, affecting their ability to get the medical care they need, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

Now TD Bank has awarded a \$150,000 grant to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Babs Siperstein PROUD Center to improve access to medical care for members of the LGBTQ community, with a focus on HIV prevention and mental health. The grant will also provide funding to help ensure more equitable access for transgender individuals of color who face significant barriers to medical care.

About 28 percent of transgender individuals of color have no insurance compared to 8 percent of all U.S. adults. This gap in care contributes to an increased rate of HIV in Black transgender patients compared to overall transgender populations. While mental health issues are a major concern for the entire LGBTQ community, fewer LGBTQ adults of color get diagnosed and treated for mental health issues than the general LGBTQ population.

"The medical needs of an LGBTQ individual are unique, and far too many members of the community face extraordinary barriers to access basic medical care," says Michael Carbone, Regional President for Metro Pennsylvania and New Jersey

at TD Bank. "We know the support from TD will help the PROUD Center improve access to care and ultimately improve the well-being of LGBTQ New Jerseyans."

EXPANDED SERVICES

RWJUH Somerset's PROUD Center—the first in New Jersey to offer specialized primary care services for the LGBTQ community—recently expanded its HIV prevention services with the addition of a preexposure prophylactics (PrEP) counselor who provides PrEP and postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) education, along with HIV risk reduction counseling.

A therapist from the hospital's Behavioral Health Services also recently began offering mental health services for PROUD Center patients. In addition, the center's patient navigator works closely with patients to address gaps in care and connect people with hospital and community resources.

Funds from the TD Bank grant will help ensure transgender patients of color have access to HIV prevention and mental health services as well as healthcare services associated with the transitioning process, including hormone replacement therapy. The grant will also fund webinars and workshops to educate hospital employees and community members about the unique healthcare needs of the LGBTQ community.

"Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset is committed to addressing healthcare disparities, particularly in the Black and brown and LGBTQ communities," said Tony Cava, President and CEO of RWJUH Somerset. "This grant will help enhance our efforts to ensure that these underserved populations get the quality medical care that they need and deserve. We are extremely grateful to TD Bank for their investment in improving the health of the most vulnerable in our community."

For more information about the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at RWJUH Somerset or to schedule an appointment, call **855.776.8334** or visit www.rwjbh.org/somersetproud.





FAST ANSWERS FOR VERY SICK BABIES

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

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

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



KAMTORN VANGVANICHYAKORN, MD

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

hold her. A diagnosis was needed, right away.

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

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

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

“A SENSE OF RELIEF”

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

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

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

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

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

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



HOW COVID-19 IS RESHAPING HEALTHCARE

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

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



ANDY ANDERSON, MD



JOHN BONAMO, MD

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

1 The rise of telehealth.

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

COVID-19 and social distancing.

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

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

The increased





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

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



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



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

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

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

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



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

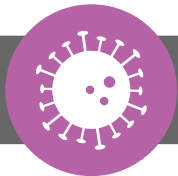


6 A new flexibility. “Healthcare is intensely regulated, and because of that we have a tendency to be very prescriptive about what we can do and how we do it,” says Dr. Bonamo. “The COVID-19 need was so intense that we had to learn to be more flexible. For example, medical-surgical floors were turned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

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

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

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



CHILDHOOD CANCER: FINDING THE BEST CARE

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

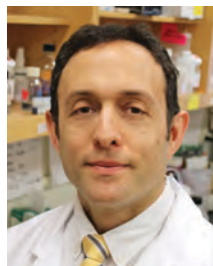


JODI CRANDELL PHOTOGRAPHY



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

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



PETER COLE, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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

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

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



CENTERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CARE

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

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

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

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

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



AN INFUSION OF FUNDS FOR RESEARCH

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

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

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

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



HEADING OFF WINTER HEART ATTACKS

READ THIS BEFORE YOU SHOVEL SNOW.

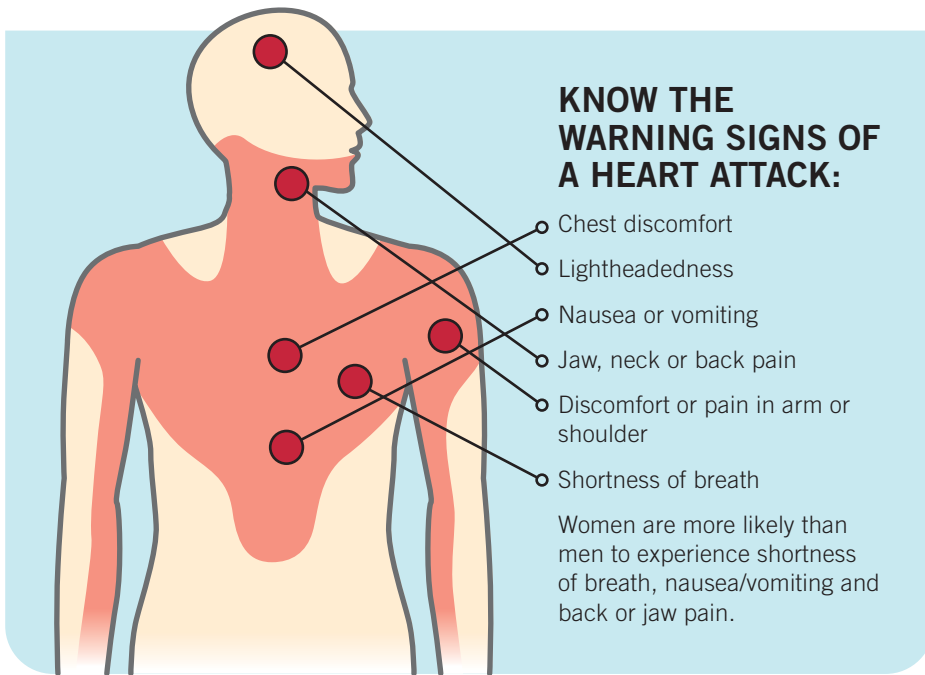
Winter is prime time for heart attacks, as research studies show and doctors know all too well. “It’s expected in the hospital community that we’ll see a bump in the number of heart attacks coming in during the winter season, especially around the holidays and during the first couple of months of the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

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



ISAAC TAWFIK, MD

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



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK:

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

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

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

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

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

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

SAFEGUARD YOUR HEART

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

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

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

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



HOW COLD WEATHER AFFECTS THE HEART

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

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

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

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





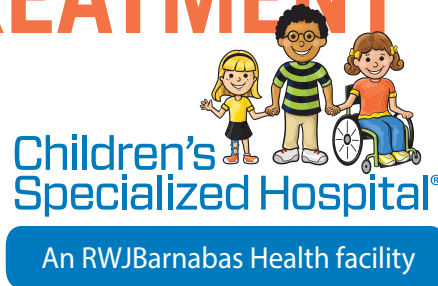
SPECIAL NEEDS, SPECIAL TREATMENT

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

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

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

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



routes, have opened or soon will open:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information about Children’s Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized.

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



ESHAN PATEL, MD

THE LATEST ON LIVER AND COLORECTAL CANCER

GREATER AWARENESS OF THESE GASTROINTESTINAL CANCERS CAN SAVE LIVES.

If you're middle-aged or older, you've likely pondered the specter of colorectal cancer far more than that of liver cancer—with good reason. Colorectal cancer is diagnosed at more than twice the rate of liver cancer in the United States each year and can be detected through widely available screening tests such as colonoscopy, says Eshan Patel, MD, a board-certified hematologist/oncologist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Steeplechase Cancer Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. What's more, colorectal cancer is becoming more common among younger adults.

But liver cancer prevalence has more than tripled since 1980, with death rates doubling in that time, according to the American Cancer Society. Both cancers deserve more awareness as fresh trends emerge, says Dr. Patel. He explains

what you need to know about these gastrointestinal malignancies and how they're detected.

Why is it important for men and women to detect colorectal cancer early?

If you're diagnosed with colorectal cancer in its early stages, you have a high chance of being cured. A colonoscopy can detect growths called polyps that usually develop into cancer but can be removed during the procedure. So by screening early, you're improving your odds of surviving cancer or avoiding it altogether.

At what age should people begin screening for colorectal cancer, and why have recommendations changed?

National recommendations suggest starting screening at age 45 for those at average risk. For those with a family history, such as a parent or sibling who had the disease, screening should start at age 40 or 10 years prior to the family member's age at diagnosis, whichever is earlier. The recommended screening age changed from 50 to 45 in recent years because data showed many patients were being diagnosed in their early 40s.

What are some symptoms of liver cancer? Are there ways to screen for it?

In its early stages, liver cancer may not cause any symptoms; nonspecific symptoms such as abdominal pain and distension usually happen in later stages. There's no screening test for the general population, but for people at high risk—including those with a history of hepatitis, alcoholic liver damage or fatty liver—blood tests and ultrasounds can look for liver cancer.

Should any ethnic groups be particularly concerned about colorectal and liver cancers?

African Americans have the highest colorectal cancer rates of all ethnic groups, though it's not clear if that's due to biological variations, different access to screening or other factors. Liver cancer is a bit more prevalent in the Asian American population, which has a higher rate of hepatitis infections overall.

What makes the Steeplechase Cancer Center at RWJUH Somerset the right choice for cancer care?

Steeplechase Cancer Center offers the best of both worlds: compassionate, community care in a friendly environment along with great academic support. Our partnership 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.

RWJBarnabas Health and the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, 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 latest treatment options. For more information, call 844.84CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.



Kalyani Gadgil hopes to continue enjoying family life and exercises like walking and yoga after a clinical trial that followed her treatment for breast cancer.

‘I WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO FIGHT THE CANCER’



A CLINICAL TRIAL MAY HELP ONE WOMAN PREVENT BREAST CANCER FROM COMING BACK.

Kalyani Gadgil of Edison was just past her 40th birthday in 2019 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer after noticing some skin discoloration and changes in the shape of her left breast. A mammogram and other tests found she had stage 2 cancer that already had spread to a lymph node in her underarm. A later biopsy revealed her cancer had reached stage 3.

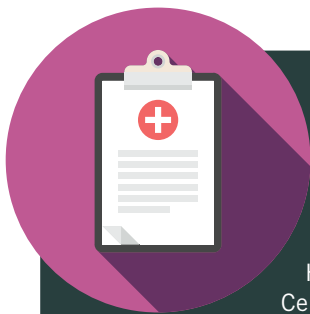
Being so young, with a husband and two children at home, Kalyani had

a lot to live for, and was determined to fight. Working in partnership with her multidisciplinary healthcare team at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, Kalyani conquered her cancer with a double mastectomy, radiation therapy and six months of oral chemotherapy. However, she then went a step further.

Kalyani decided in June 2020 to participate in a clinical trial that promised to boost her body's immune



RWJBarnabas Health and the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, 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.



HOW TO JOIN A CLINICAL TRIAL

If you're interested in enrolling in a cancer clinical trial, ask your physician if you might be eligible for an available study, advises Maria Scibilia, RN, Director of Oncology Research at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Steeplechase Cancer

Center. "Our physicians are very aware of all clinical trials we have to offer and which ones might potentially be best for a patient," she says.

If your doctor feels you might be a good candidate for a trial, you'll be referred to Scibilia's team, which will further evaluate whether the study is a good fit for you—and vice versa. If you're cleared to participate, the team will advise you on how to get started.

system and help prevent the cancer from coming back. "I wanted to do everything I could to fight the cancer and any recurrence," says Kalyani, now 42. "My physician told me that the immunotherapy used in the clinical trial has fewer side effects than chemotherapy or radiation, so I figured if it's not likely to harm anything and may help prevent the cancer from growing again, I should try it."

A WEALTH OF TRIALS

It was Kalyani's medical oncologist who suggested she consider enrolling in the clinical trial, which was available through RWJUH Somerset's partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Rutgers Cancer Institute currently offers more than 200 clinical trials on a wide range of cancers. RWJUH Somerset is participating in about two dozen of these trials for cancers of the breast, colon, lung, prostate and other organs, says Maria Scibilia, RN, Director of Oncology Research at RWJUH Somerset's Steeplechase Cancer Center.

Patients can benefit from participating in clinical trials that test new treatments by gaining access to top-notch medical care and cutting-edge therapies. "Often cancer patients participating in clinical trials have exhausted standard care options," Scibilia says. "A trial offers them different opportunities."

In Kalyani's trial, researchers are investigating whether taking the drug

pembrolizumab (Keytruda®) helps boost immunity and prevent cancer recurrence better than having no additional therapy. Kalyani joins more than 1,100 patients participating in the trial across the United States and Canada. All have been treated successfully for triple-negative breast cancer—a type of cancer that is estrogen-receptor, progesterone-receptor and HER2 negative. Triple-negative breast cancer patients do not respond to treatments such as hormone blockers and HER2 blockers that are used in many other breast cancer patients, explains Heather Davis, RN, a research nurse at Steeplechase Cancer Center who has worked with Kalyani.

Researchers hope that pembrolizumab—already used in other ways to treat patients with a variety of cancers, including certain groups of breast cancer patients—will be an effective tool for patients like Kalyani who can't benefit from using other breast cancer medications to help stave off a recurrence, Davis says. The trial will follow participants up to 10 years to find out.

CONTINUING THE BATTLE

During the trial, Kalyani received half-hour intravenous infusions of pembrolizumab every three weeks for about a year at RWJUH Somerset, finishing in June 2021. She experienced some drowsiness and joint pain from the treatment but no discomfort that exercise such as yoga and walking couldn't ease.

Kalyani checks in with her doctor every few months and is thankful she



HOW CLINICAL TRIALS BENEFIT PATIENTS

Participating in clinical trials can offer patients a number of advantages, says Maria Scibilia, RN, Director of Oncology Research at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Steeplechase Cancer Center. These include:

- Contact with top specialists who conduct research, are highly knowledgeable about the latest treatments and can help patients receive optimal care.
- Access to cutting-edge treatments and protocols not yet available to the general population that may help patients live longer or improve their quality of life. Such therapies may only be available at an NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center such as Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, where the necessary expertise, resources and equipment allow clinicians to do groundbreaking research and provide patients access to the most advanced therapies close to home.
- The satisfaction of not only potentially benefiting directly from an investigative therapy but also being part of a study that could help other patients in the future.

had an opportunity to try an approach that may guard her future. "It was great to participate in the trial," says Kalyani. "Knowing that I was doing something more helped me mentally as well. I liked that I was doing something to keep fighting."

Two years battling cancer and worrying about the impact on her family had been a nightmare. Now Kalyani says she is feeling great, has her energy back and can fully take care of her kids and home. "I can enjoy my family again," she says.



THE PLUSES OF A PATIENT PORTAL

**MYCHART OFFERS POWERFUL TOOLS FOR MANAGING
YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION.**

In the past, paper medical records were largely inaccessible to patients. Today, healthcare providers often store information such as health history, diagnoses, treatments, medications and billing and payments digitally. This electronic health information can be securely shared, creating opportunities for patients to participate in their own care.

In October, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset became the first acute care hospital in the RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) system to go live with a patient engagement platform called MyChart. Sometimes referred to as a portal,

MYCHART: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my privacy protected?

Yes. MyChart is HIPAA-compliant, so it stores and secures patient information in accordance with privacy standards required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Is there a fee?

No. There is no charge for patients or their proxies to use MyChart.

What do I need to do in order to use MyChart?

You can sign up by completing an online self-enrollment form that asks for demographic information such as your age and contact information, including a valid email address. You can then sign in (or sign up) at www.mychart.rwjbh.org. If you schedule an appointment for care, you may be provided with a sign-up link.

Can I opt out?

Yes. Patients aren't required to sign up for MyChart, and if you have signed up and want to discontinue access, you can cancel your enrollment.

Who can I call for technical help?

For assistance with MyChart, call 833.764.3570 or visit mychart-support@rwjbh.org.

MyChart gives you access not only to information about your individual care but also to powerful tools that can help you learn about and manage your overall health. MyChart is part of an electronic health records (EHR) system called Epic. It will roll out across all of RWJBH in several stages over the next two years so the entire network will be on one EHR system.

To learn more about MyChart at RWJUH Somerset or register for an account, visit www.rwjbh.org/mychart or use a smartphone camera to hover over this QR code for a direct link to the site.

“MyChart equips patients with important information at their fingertips,” says Jill Anderson, RWJBH Vice President, Patient Experience. “Providing patients with information about their personal health record allows them to feel connected and informed regarding their care. That engagement empowers patients and builds trust so they’re more likely to take an active role in their health.”

MANY ADVANTAGES

You and your RWJBH medical team share access to your patient health information, making MyChart a hub for your care. Once fully implemented, the platform will provide information about services you receive anywhere in the RWJBH system. Providers will be able to view your entire RWJBH health history and better coordinate your care. “You don’t need multiple accounts or access points,” says Harshal Shah, RWJBH Digital Experience Manager. “Everything is centralized in MyChart.”

Created with input from patients and family members through a Patient and Family Advisory Council, MyChart can be navigated in Spanish as well as English. It also allows you to manage care for your children and other consenting loved ones from your own account.

Here’s what some of MyChart’s key features allow you to do:

- **View a wide range of health information:** Records in your account include visits to clinicians, the names of providers you saw, summaries of what you discussed, diagnoses, prescriptions, scheduled screenings, family history, allergies and vaccinations. You can also edit certain information—for example, updating your family history or adding an immunization you received at a site outside RWJBH such as a pharmacy.
- **Get test results:** Rather than waiting for a phone call from your provider, you can see test results as soon as they’re available. Even if your doctor

explains that lab tests came back normal, you’ll get actual numbers that tell you exactly where you stand and allow you to track trends over time. Your account’s home page can even be customized to show test results first.

- **Manage appointments and prescriptions:** You can request an appointment with a provider in RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, schedule tests and procedures such as annual mammograms or change appointments already on the calendar. You can also use MyChart to request prescription renewals or report if you’ve stopped taking any medications on your list.
- **Fill out pre-appointment questionnaires:** Instead of filling out forms in your doctor’s waiting room, you can fill them out online before your visit. In some cases, you may only need to confirm that the information you input for an earlier visit is up to date.
- **Connect with your doctor:** MyChart lets you send messages to your care team and ask nonurgent questions. The platform even allows you to talk face-to-face with providers via telemedicine from your own home.
- **Track bills and payments:** MyChart will show any charges you need to pay and allow you to make credit or debit card payments online as well as ask any questions you may have about billing. “As a high reliability organization, RWJBH continually strives to offer patients consistent excellence in quality and safety, and always seeks to improve performance,” says Anderson. “Launching MyChart meets those goals by quickly and easily putting trusted health information in the hands of patients.”

SCAN ME



rwjbh.org/MyChart



Community Education

Unless otherwise indicated, events are free and registration is required. To register, visit rwjbh.org/somersetevents.

JANUARY

HPV Vaccine: Cancer Prevention for Youth

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, human papillomavirus is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. During this webinar, understand HPV, risk factors, causes, diagnosis, common health problems related to the virus, treatment options and prevention strategies, including vaccination and its benefits.

Amanda Francis, DO, Obstetrician and Gynecologist

**Thursday, January 13
6 to 7 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/2YJfvVt
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

National Maternal Health Awareness Day: Positive Pandemic Pregnancies

This webinar will cover the importance of prenatal care, how to keep mom and baby well amid COVID-19, how to keep baby well should mom become COVID positive and if breastfeeding can continue, recommended wellness care, benefits of breastfeeding and prevention strategies.

Sophia Viamonte, RN-BSN, IBCLC, International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant

**Wednesday, January 19
1 to 2 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3FEj7sn
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

MyChart: A Record of Health

Learn about MyChart, your personal health record, which allows you to manage your care from your computer or mobile device, how to register, access points, its functions, the benefits of creating an account and how to manage your appointments and test results.

Harshal Shah, Digital Experience

Manager, RWJBarnabas Health

**Thursday, January 20
Noon to 12:30 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3mMfnN1
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

COVID Protection: Boosters & Pills?

During this webinar, understand how the immune system contributes to varied responses to COVID-19, the role of autoantibodies, how the booster will improve protection, reasons to receive a third vaccination, the difference between a third COVID dose and a COVID booster, and the difference between the antiviral pill and other COVID medicine, as well as the potential role of the new antiviral COVID pill, who qualifies for it and when, approval status, motivation for use and any side effects.

Ron Nahass, MD, Infectious Disease and Chief Epidemiologist

**Tuesday, January 25
Noon to 1 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3iRdbCG
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

**Thursday, February 3,
noon to 1 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3FD5U3e
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

Speaking from the Heart about Dilated Cardiomyopathy

This webinar will explain how to prevent dilated cardiomyopathy; symptoms; common causes; the difference between dilated cardiomyopathy and congestive heart failure; diagnostic tools; latest treatment options; prevention strategies, including foods to avoid; and prognosis.

Oxana Ovakimyan, MD, Cardiologist

**Thursday, February 10,
noon to 12:30 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3arKK9L
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

Replacement Surgery: A Mobile Approach to Joint Health

During this webinar, understand joint replacement surgery, including the most common types; who is a

candidate; when surgery is recommended; the benefits; complications, if any; recovery time; and strategies to maintain healthy joints. Learn about RWJUH Somerset's Joint Surgery Program.

Stephen Kayiaros, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon and Medical Director, RWJUH Somerset's Joint Surgery Program

Marcella O'Herlihy, BSN, RN, Total Joint Coordinator

**Tuesday, February 15
6 to 7 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3oR8ZJx
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

Listen to Your Heart: The Sounds of Murmurs

During this webinar, understand heart murmurs, the different types, risk factors, symptoms, underlying causes, diagnostic tools and available treatments.

Asha Mahajan, MD, Cardiologist

**Thursday, February 17
Noon to 1 p.m.**

To register, visit bit.ly/3oTcAEm
Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Ladies, Shake the Salt Habit: Enjoy a Heart-Healthy Diet!

During this webinar, discover the effects of salt and fat on the heart; cardiac conditions they cause; appropriate daily sodium and fat intake; substitutes; the benefits of low-sodium, low-fat diets; signs and symptoms; causes; diagnosis; the latest treatments; and prevention strategies. A cooking demonstration will follow, and low-sodium, low-fat diet recipes will be provided.

*Rachana Kulkarni, MD, Cardiologist
Tia Hagins, RD, Community Nutritionist
Peter Pascale, Executive Chef*

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS



Cardiac Athletic Screening

This free cardiac screening for young athletes ages 14 to 18 can help determine those at risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

Saturday, February 5 | 8 a.m. to noon

Somerset Family Practice; free

Preregistration required; to schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2414.

Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, February 9 | 9 a.m. to noon

Tarantino Promenade at RWJUH Somerset; free

Preregistration required; call 908.685.2814.

Blood Glucose and Cholesterol Screening

Includes total cholesterol, HDL ratio and glucose.

Wednesday, February 9 | 9 a.m. to noon

Tarantino Promenade at RWJUH Somerset; \$15

Preregistration required; call 908.685.2814.

Take Sleep to Heart

This webinar will explain the relationship between sleep and heart health, conditions linked to a lack of sleep, sleep conditions that affect heart health, signs of these conditions, causes, risk factors, diagnosis, treatments and strategies for a good night's rest.

Mitul Kanzaria, MD, Cardiologist
Priyanka Yadav, DO, Sleep Medicine Physician

Wednesday, February 23

Noon to 1 p.m.

To register, visit bit.ly/3AvjDFA

Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

MARCH

Living with Lymphedema

During this webinar, understand lymphedema, at-risk groups, symptoms, its connection to cancer, causes of fluid buildup, other conditions it causes, diagnostic tools, various treatment options and tips for living with lymphedema. Learn about RWJUH Somerset's Lymphedema Program.

Faye Yin, MD, Hematologist and Oncologist

Karen Smith, OT, Occupational Health Clinical Supervisor

Wednesday, March 2

Noon to 12:30 p.m.

To register, visit bit.ly/3DmHn0m

Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

Salud Gastrointestinal: Aprendasobre la Relación Entre el Tractogastrointestinal y el Cáncer

Únase a Evelyn Fuentes, NDTR de Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey para una conversación sobre nutrición, salud colorrectal y prevención del cáncer.

Evelyn Fuentes, NDTR, Community Cancer Control Specialist

Tuesday, March 15

6 a 7 p.m.

Para registrarse, visite bit.ly/3By3Xme

Ofrecido en colaboración con

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey y Friends Health Connection

Nutrition for Colorectal Health & Cancer Prevention

Michelle Jansen, MS, MAT, a Community Cancer Control Specialist at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, will talk about how to promote your colorectal health through nutrition.

Michelle Jansen, MS, MAT, Community Outreach Coordinator
Wednesday, March 16

Noon to 1 p.m.

To register, visit bit.ly/3asM78e

Offered in collaboration with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Friends Health Connection

Adult Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in adults ages 18 and older.

This training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care. It also offers a five-step action plan on how to help people in both crisis and noncrisis situations. This includes a two-hour online course to be completed by March 15 and an instructor-led portion, which will be hosted on Zoom on March 23 and 24. Attendance at both sessions is required for certification.

Gail Schoenbach, Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor
Wednesday, March 23, and Thursday, March 24

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
To register, visit bit.ly/3Dvr0i5

Registration closes March 1. Offered in collaboration with EmPoWER Somerset



SUPPORT GROUPS

Living Well with Diabetes Support Group

Ask the Educator with Welda Joseph, APN

Tuesday, March 8 | 6 to 6:30 p.m.

To register, visit bit.ly/3oQVB5C

Stroke Support Group

First Thursday of the month | 2 to 3 p.m.

To register for the February 3 support group, visit bit.ly/3DuTF6L

To register for the March 3 support group, visit bit.ly/3iThuNY

Better Breathers' Club

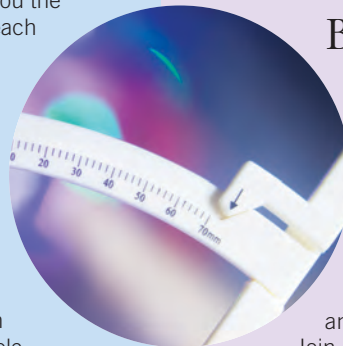
Promotes the management of COPD and other chronic lung disease (e.g., asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung cancer), offers a sense of belonging and hope, and aims to improve quality of life.

Second Thursday of the month | 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

To register for the January 13 support group, visit bit.ly/3oSjKca

To register for the February 10 support group, visit bit.ly/3mKS4D8

To register for the March 10 support group, visit bit.ly/3uZXldl



BARIATRIC SURGERY PROGRAMS

Ask the Doctor about Weight Loss Surgery

Are you struggling to lose weight? Weight loss surgery may be the right choice for you. But how do you know if you qualify and which procedure is your best option?

Join bariatric surgeons at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset for free seminars to learn about weight loss surgery, including detailed information about gastric sleeve, gastric bypass and nonsurgical options. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions during this interactive webinar.

• **Tuesday, January 18 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.** | Ajay Goyal, MD

• **Thursday, March 17 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.** | David Ward, MD

To register, call 908.595.2304.

Virtual Bariatric Support Group

Anyone considering bariatric surgery and postsurgical patients are welcome to attend. The group will discuss topics such as healthy meal ideas, mindful eating, emotional eating, the importance of exercise, surviving holidays, smart shopping and how to eat healthy when dining out.

Tia Hagins, RD, Community Nutritionist

Tuesdays: January 11, February 8 and March 8 | 6 to 7 p.m.

To register, call Tia Hagins at 908.704.3765.

Did *you* know...

You may know **Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset** as your community hospital that has been caring for generations of families for more than a century.

But **did you know** Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset is ...



Nationally recognized for patient safety

Healthgrades presented Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset with its 2021 Patient Safety Excellence Award, ranking us in the top 5% in the nation for patient safety. The Leapfrog Group, a leading national hospital watchdog organization, also gave us its highest grade – an “A” – 13 times. The Lown Hospitals Index also gave us “A” ratings for Patient Safety, Clinical Outcomes, Patient Outcomes, Cost Efficiency and Social Responsibility.



Providing world-class nursing care

As a three-time recipient of the Magnet® Award for Nursing Excellence by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, our nurses are recognized for achieving the highest standards in their profession. Only 9 percent of hospitals nationwide have achieved Magnet recognition.



Honored for surgical excellence

We are accredited as a Center of Excellence in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery by the Surgical Review Corporation. We've also earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for total hip and total knee replacement surgery. Healthgrades recognized us with its 2021 Gynecologic Surgery Excellence Award, ranking us in the top 10% in the nation six years in a row.



Delivering state-of-the-art cardiac and stroke care

We have received the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for our acute myocardial infarction program and our Primary Stroke Center. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized us as “high performing” in the care of patients with stroke, heart failure, kidney failure, diabetes and COPD. In addition, we were honored with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get with the Guidelines® Stroke Quality Achievement Award, Target: Stroke Honor Roll Award and Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll Award.



On the front lines of cancer care

Our Steeplechase Cancer Center is nationally accredited by the Commission on Cancer, a quality program of the American College of Surgeons. The Sanofi US Breast Care Program at the Steeplechase Cancer Center is accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC) and has been named a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology.



A leader in maternity care

Our Maternity Services has received 5-star ratings from Healthgrades for C-section and vaginal deliveries.



A trailblazer in LGBTQ+ healthcare

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset has been nationally recognized as a “Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality” by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation six years in a row.



“Most Wired”

Our hospital has been named one of the nation's “Most Wired” hospitals by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) eight times, receiving its 2021 Performance Excellence Award.

