

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

Fall 2021

1 healthy *together*

**TOO MANY PILLS?
HOW TO TELL**

**NEW CANCER
CENTER TEAM:
HERE FOR YOU**

**TAKE CONTROL OF
YOUR WEIGHT**

**CANCER CARE:
A NEW VISION**

Investing in the Future

As New Jersey's most comprehensive academic health system, RWJBarnabas Health serves more than 3 million patients each year. You depend on us for the highest quality of care, and you count on us to keep pace with your evolving needs. That's why, as indicated by our many national awards, we never stop moving forward, as you'll see in this issue.

For example, in New Brunswick, we recently broke ground on the state's first freestanding cancer hospital, which will feature a comprehensive range of patient services as well as advanced research laboratories. Earlier this year, we debuted Braven Advantage, a new Medicare Advantage plan that offers unprecedented choice for New Jersey residents.

And, in keeping with our robust commitment to improve the health of our communities, we're supporting the creation of soccer fields in urban settings. These fields are transforming neighborhoods and lives as they provide new opportunities for children and adults alike to be healthy and active.

We were proud to officially open the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton Community Field in Bromley on July 29. We welcomed leaders from RWJBarnabas Health, Hamilton Township, Players Development Academy and, most importantly, many of the young Hamiltonians who will enjoy it. This event was the kickoff of our ongoing commitment to promote community, encourage activity and provide soccer coaching and playing opportunities to encourage the physical and mental health of kids in Hamilton in a fun way—another way we are working with our community to be healthy together.

Whatever the future brings for New Jersey, you can count on RWJBarnabas Health to be there for your healthcare needs, both inside and outside the hospital walls.

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



SOCCER FIELD DEDICATED

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton, RWJBarnabas Health, Hamilton Township and Players Development Academy (PDA) officially

opened RWJUH Hamilton Community Field, a small-sided turf soccer field at the Bromley Sports Complex in Hamilton on July 29 as part of the PDA Urban Initiative.

Bobby Smith, a Hamilton native, National Soccer Hall of Famer and former U.S. National Team player, spoke at the event.

RWJUH HAMILTON HONORED FOR PROMOTING ORGAN DONATION

RWJUH Hamilton was recently awarded Platinum Level status by the New Jersey Sharing Network (NJSN) for its activities to promote donor registration at the hospital and awareness of the lifesaving benefits of organ donation within the community. To learn more about the benefits of organ and tissue donation and to register as a donor, visit www.njsharingnetwork.org/register.

GARNERING 5-STAR REVIEWS FOR PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

RWJUH Hamilton's 11 physical rehabilitation services sites recently crossed the 500 mark for 5-star Google reviews. Our team takes great pride in this success, as serving our patients and excellence in the treatment and care we provide is of utmost importance to all of our staff. "These reviews help other patients find the best fit for their care based on the experiences of others," says Pamela Randolph, DPT, MBA, FACHE, Director, Rehabilitation Services.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**

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

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- www.linkedin.com/company/290186/admin

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CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

All programs are **IN PERSON** unless otherwise noted. In-person classes will be limited in size and held at the RWJ Fitness and 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.



BEDSIDE HARP®

Classes are ongoing. For start dates and fees or to register, call 609.273.0068 or visit bedsideharp.com.

Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program

Mondays & Wednesdays, 1 to 5 p.m.

One-on-one and walk-in hours for individual/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.

Tobacco Recovery Group

Thursdays, 6 to 6:45 p.m.

Group share. 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.

50+ Bridge Club

Fr Fridays, noon to 3 p.m.

Join us if you have basic knowledge of the game and point system.

The AARP Driving Course

Mon., November 1, December 6 & January 3; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Be a safer, better driver. Most insurance companies will lower

your premium with a completion certificate. Bring your NJ or PA driver's license. Cash or check only to AARP. Discount for AARP members. Call 609.584.5900 for fee and information.

Cancer: Thriving and Surviving Program

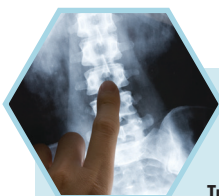
Wed., November 3, 10, 17 & December 1, 8, 15; 1 to 3:30 p.m.

This six-week interactive program designed by Stanford University teaches techniques to deal with frustration, fatigue, pain, isolation, poor sleep and living with uncertainty. Information on nutrition, exercise, communication, relationships and complementary therapies is addressed. Textbook included.

Physical Therapy for the Pelvic Floor: The Impact on Bladder, Bowel and Sexual Health

Thu., November 11, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Learn how physical therapy can improve pelvic health in women and men. Explore what the pelvic floor muscles are and how they can affect conditions such as bladder urgency, incontinence, constipation and pain with intimacy. Michele Dela Rosa, PT, DPT, PRPC



Common Spine Cases and Treatments: A Roundtable Discussion of Experts

Tue., November 16; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Join Marc J. Levine, MD, Director of Spine

Surgery, as he presents and moderates a panel review of actual spine surgery cases and asks specialists in radiology, pain management, neurology and rehab the age-old question "What would you do?"

- Eric Bosworth, MD (Radiologist)
- Stephen Roman, MD (Pain Management)
- Scott Weaner, DO (Neurologist)
- Pamela Randolph, PT, DPT, MBA (Physical Therapist)

A Matter of Balance

Tue. & Thu., November 16, 18, 23, 30 & December 2, 7, 9, 14; 10 a.m. to noon

This eight-session, evidence-based program helps reduce the fear of falling and improve activity levels. Goals are set to make small changes to reduce fall risk, including exercise to increase strength and balance.

Medicare Update 2022

Tue., November 16; 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Learn about changes to your Medicare benefits and drug plan from Mary McGeary, Director of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Open enrollment is from October 15 to December 7.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Trained counselors provide free, objective, confidential help on questions and issues related to Medicare. Call 609.695.6274, ext. 215, for an appointment.

"Love Your Heart" Discussion Group

Mon., December 6; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

If you were diagnosed with a cardiac condition or had a recent cardiac procedure, please join us on a "tour of the Mediterranean"

Legal, Financial and Ethical Care Planning for Caregivers

Thu., December 2; 5 to 7:30 p.m.

For those caring for seniors with long-term illnesses, this powerful conference will address various legal and medical instructions, the role of a financial adviser and ethical issues surrounding decision making for care. Robyn Kohn, MA, CDP, and Ryann M. Siclari, Esq. Refreshments provided. Presented by Oaks Integrated Care—Senior Well-Being Program, which is funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended through a grant by Mercer County ADRC.

as we look at lifestyles of some of the healthiest people in the world; includes a recipe tasting and discussion. Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD, and Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC.

ORTHOPEDICS OPEN HOUSE Joint Replacement

Tue., December 7; 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 R. Schnell, MD, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon

Ask the Diabetes Team

Fri., December 10; 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Do you have questions about the lifestyle changes required to achieve better control of diabetes or prediabetes? Bring your questions for discussion.

Managing Diabetes During the Holidays!

Mon., December 20; 10 to 11 a.m.

Having diabetes doesn't mean you have to miss out on all the excitement and deliciousness that the holidays offer. Tips for planning and managing blood sugar will be discussed. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

Gynecologic Cancer Roundtable Discussion

Tue., January 11; 6 to 8 p.m.

Bring your questions and concerns for an open discussion with our RWJBH gynecologic physicians. Topics include cancer prevention, diagnostic testing and treatment. Gynecologic oncologists James Aikins, MD, and Ruth Stephenson, DO, from Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Prevention and Treatment for Dizziness, Vertigo and Imbalance

Wed., January 19; 10 to 11 a.m.

It is not uncommon for individuals with a history of vertigo or dizziness to regain their balance through accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment and/or rehabilitation exercises. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Vascular Disease in the 'Age of COVID'

Tue., January 25; 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Scientists have evidence that in many people, COVID-19 attacks the vascular system and the 60,000 miles' worth of blood vessels (arteries, veins and capillaries) that run throughout the body. Join Biagio Manna, DO, fellowship-trained in cardiothoracic surgery and vascular surgery and co-medical director of The Center for Wound Healing, as he discusses the vascular impact the virus can have on our bodies, from head to toe.



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.

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

This eight-week all-inclusive wellness program teaches children, young 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 609.584.5900 to register.

Kids in the Kitchen

Cook up some fun and sample healthy foods in new ways! For children ages 5 and older with a parent or caregiver. Fee: \$5 per child/\$5 per parent/caregiver. Register early; class size is limited.

- **Thu., November 4; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**
- **A New Twist on Nachos!**
National Nachos Day is November

6. Kick off the celebration with a clever twist on this fiesta favorite!

- **Thu., December 9; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**
- **Cookies with Grandma**
Pair up for some unique treats with this holiday tradition.
- **Thu., January 13; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**
- **Winter Warmup**
Discover soothing and healthy comfort foods kids will love.

Culinary Creations: Taste and Learn Series

Get up-to-date on nutrition and health issues, and sample tasty new recipes! Fee: \$5 per participant. Space is limited; register at least 48 hours prior to event.

- **Fri., November 12; 10 to 11 a.m.**
- **Kitchen Clean-out!** Did you know National Clean Out Your Fridge Day is upon us? Learn

the best way to accomplish the task, along with simple recipes using pantry, fridge and freezer staples.

- **Fri., December 3; 10 to 11 a.m.**
- **Ho Ho...Whole!** Discover whole-food, plant-based holiday desserts that will please anyone on your gift list.
- **Thu., January 6; 10 to 11 a.m.**
- **Lean, Bean and Clean:** It's National Bean Day! Learn why beans and other legumes are a mainstay of healthy eating while jump-starting your new year's healthy eating plan.
- **Wed., January 26; 10 to 11 a.m.**
- **An Introduction to Intuitive Eating:** Trapped by the dieting cycle and constant negative self-talk about your body? Learn the basics of a positive approach to eating, and sample some healthy snacks...guilt-free!

Ask the Dietitian

Wed., November 17; Tue., December 14 & Fri., January 21; 9 to 11 a.m.

Do you have a question about diet and nutrition? Join a Community Ed dietitian for a one-on-one Q&A and receive a body fat screening. Registration required.

Dining Healthy with Diabetes

Wed., December 29 & Thu., January 13; 1 to 2 p.m.

Join us in the healthy cooking kitchen for an afternoon of cooking and education geared toward answering questions about managing diabetes. Registered Dietitian Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM. Registration required.



SPIRIT

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Crystals for Emotional Well-being

Thu., November 4; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Crystals are a gift from Mother Earth and hold sacred healing properties. Learn about crystals that offer soothing energy to help regain emotional balance and support positive well-being. Fee: \$15. Donna Sweeney, IET Master Teacher, Reiki Master

HealthRhythms® Drumming Circle

Wed., November 17 & January 19; 7 to 8 p.m.
Come drum with us



at this evidence-based program to help improve immune function, lower blood pressure and calm stress. Drums provided. Fee: \$15. Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP

Beginners Meditation Class

Wed., November 17, December 15 & January 19; 1 to 2 p.m.

Meditation offers benefits for physical and emotional health. Learn this simple technique to help calm the body and the mind. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse

Private Reiki Sessions

Tue., November 16, December 21 & January 18; 3 to 7 p.m.,

by appointment

Reiki is a hands-on energy modality to help ease the tense body and busy mind into a relaxed and healing state. Fee: \$30/half-hour; \$60/hour. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Keeping Calm through the Holidays

Thu., November 18; 7 to 8 p.m.

We all love the holidays, even when family gatherings can produce stress and anxiety. Learn how to let go and prioritize your well-being with Transformational Life Coach Kathi Szabo.

Humor & Healing

Thu., December 9; 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Learn about the health benefits of humor and how to bring it into our daily lives without a lot of effort. Edie Glover, MSW, LCSW

Mindfulness Meditation for the Curious Beginner

Mon., December 13; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Learn what everyone is talking about regarding the health benefits of meditation. It's one of the best things you can do for your physical and emotional health, it's completely free, and you have all the tools you need to do it! Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse

Winter Solstice Drumming Circle Celebration

Wed., December 15; 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Celebrate the darkest night with drumming, song and ritual to bring back the light! HealthRhythms®, an evidence-based program, strengthens the immune system and reduces stress. Drums provided. Fee: \$15. Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP

Reiki Share

Wed., January 26; 7 to 9 p.m.

Open to all those attuned to Reiki (at any level) to share the gift of Reiki with other practitioners. Bring a sheet and small pillow. Fee: \$5

Reiki "Re-fresher"

Thu., January 20; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Have you been Reiki certified but it's been so long since you've used it you wonder if you still "have it"? Yes, you do! Explore Reiki energy with those in the same boat. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher. Fee: \$20

CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING



Bereavement Support

Call 609.631.6980 for registration information and location.

Breast Cancer Support Group

First Tuesday of every month; 6:30 p.m.

Please call ahead to confirm attendance: 609.584.2836.

The group meets at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, 2575 Klockner Road, Hamilton.

Peripheral Neuropathy Support

Call 609.587.7215 for assistance or information.

Stroke Survivors Support Group

Wed., November 3, December 1 & January 5; 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Call 609.584.5900 for information.

Caregiver Series: Caring for Loved Ones with Chronic Conditions

- **Mondays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.**
 - **November 1:** Respite Options for Caregivers
 - **November 15:** Caregiving during the Holidays
 - **December 6:** Seven Stages of Dementia
 - **December 20:** Dealing with Challenging Behaviors
 - **January 3:** Homecare vs. Placement
 - **January 24:** Controlling Caregiver Burnout
- 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.

- **November 1:** Caregiving during the Holidays
 - **November 15:** Dealing with Challenging Behaviors
 - **December 6:** Homecare vs. Placement
 - **December 20:** Respite Options for Caregivers
 - **January 3:** Controlling Caregiver Burnout
 - **January 24:** Sibling Conflicts while Caregiving
- An Oaks Integrated Care Caregiver Specialist will conduct these interactive workshops on crucial topics and facilitate a supportive group experience.

Caregiver Support Group

Wed., November 3, December 1 & January 5; 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., November 4 & 18, December 9 & 23 and January 6 & 20; 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.

Bariatric Weight Loss Support Group

Tue., November 9 & January 11; 6 to 7 p.m.

Call 609.584.5900 to register.

Letting Go of Clutter

Tue., November 2, December 14 & January 11; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

This support group explores how emotional ties to “stuff” can create clutter and affect mood.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Wed., November 17, December 15 & January 19; 6 to 7 p.m.

Support and information for family and friends of people with Alzheimer's disease.

Wise Women

Thu., November 18, December 16 & January 27; 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.

- **November 18:** Self-Compassion
- **December 16:** Holidays—Joy, Stress or Both?
- **January 27:** Conversations around Healthcare Decisions



HEALTH SCREENINGS

All screenings are at the RWJ Fitness and Wellness Center unless otherwise noted.

Osteoporosis Screening

Tue., November 30; 10 a.m. to noon
Ultrasound of heel and personalized information. Registration and appointment required.

Take-Home Colorectal Screening

Thu., December 9, 10 to 11 a.m.
Learn how to use a simple take-home test to detect early colon cancer. Registration required.

Memory Screening

Thu., January 13; 10 a.m. to noon
Are you concerned about “senior moments”? The Mini-Mental State Exam is a quick assessment to discern normal aging vs. potential problems. Appointment and registration required.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL CLASSES.
Visit www.rwjbh.org/Hamilton or call 609.584.5900.

Select programs will be recorded and available for future viewing. Details will be emailed to Better Health members.

Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement

Better Health Program

Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old



Living Your Best Life Symposium

Tue., November 9; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
In-person

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, James and Sharon Maida Geriatrics Institute, RWJBarnabas Health, as well as a panel discussion on the future of geriatrics and independent living. There will be 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! Registration required. Call 609.584.5900 or visit www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth.

Home at Last Book Signing & Discussion

Wed., December 15; 10 to 11 a.m.
Author Sarada Chiruvolu shares her journey seeking enlightened consciousness through the discipline of meditation, which she pursued while grounded in work, family and community, and how that inner energy and realization integrated with her life. Registration required.

Gentle Yoga Classes

Tue., November 23 & December 21 and Thu., January 6; 10 to 11 a.m.
Gentle Flow Yoga is geared for those who are new to yoga or interested in a gentle practice. It focuses on warming the body and alignment, strength, balance and flexibility. No experience or flexibility required. Must be a Better Health member to attend. Registration required.

Tai Chi

Thu., November 11, December 2, & January 20; 10 to 11 a.m.

Tony Jackson focuses on improving balance and strengthening legs. Gentle stretching improves flexibility. Learn how to get up if a fall does happen. Must be a Better Health member to attend. Registration required.

Vertigo: Causes, Symptoms & Treatments

Tue., November 30; 10 to 11 a.m.
Discuss vertigo with audiologist Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD. Registration required.

Jane Zamost: Art from the Heart

Tue., December 7; 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Painter/mixed media artist and healing art instructor Jane Zamost is coming to RWJ! Join us in person for a thought-provoking and heart-connected class, "Creating Your Own Peaceful Sanctuary." Whether you paint or use photos, cutouts or other items, everyone will leave with their own Peaceful Sanctuary artwork. A cost-conscious list of suggested materials will be sent to registrants in advance. Limited seating, and registration is required.

HOLIDAY PARTY

Thu., December 16; noon to 2 p.m.
Join Sara I. Ali, MD, and Joyce Cantalice to celebrate the holiday season with food, fun and music. Must be a Better Health member to attend. Registration required.

Navigating the Medicaid Process

Wed., January 5; 10 to 11 a.m.
Justin Scott, Esq., author, explains the process of enrollment and benefits of Medicaid. Registration required.

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.

Crafting with Clay

Wed., January 12; 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Lisa Freeman, passionate advocate for the Holistic Program at The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton and Board Member of the RWJUH Hamilton Foundation, joins us for a hands-on activity to create beautiful and uniquely shaped jewelry bowls. Registration required.

How Balance/Vestibular Rehabilitation Can Help You

Tue., January 18; 11 a.m. to noon
Jinbo Jung, DPT, Senior Physical Therapist. If you are someone who lives in fear of falling, sometimes feels like the room is spinning or is afraid of stepping off a curb, you may be among the estimated 69 million Americans who have some sort of vestibular dysfunction. Learn how rehabilitation helps retrain the brain to work through some of the side effects. Registration required.

2022 Financial Outlook with David Bossio

Wed., January 19; 1 to 2 p.m.
Get a market update on what's new and which changes may affect your money in 2022. A Q&A session lets you ask those burning questions. Registration required.

Painting from Life with Léni Paquet-Morante

Tue., January 25; 1 to 3 p.m.
Develop your observational skills and mark making techniques to approach the natural world as inspiration for both drawing and painting. For all experience levels. A short, cost-conscious list of items for the class will be provided. Must be a Better Health member to attend. Registration required.

DISCUSSIONS WITH SARA I. ALI, MD, Geriatric and Internal Medicine

Our geriatrician answers your questions about health concerns. All Dr. Ali's programs are held on Thursdays from 1 to 2 p.m. and include a Q&A.

Staying Healthy—Vaccines to Consider & COVID Update

November 4
Dr. Ali discusses available vaccines, specifically for those 65+, and how they work. She will provide an update on the flu season, COVID-19 and how best to stay healthy.

My Aching Joints! Diagnosing and Treating Arthritis

November 11
Dr. Ali discusses different types of arthritis and the treatments that can help reduce symptoms and improve quality of life.

Let's Talk Vitamins

December 2
Separating fact from fiction is a difficult task, but not for Dr. Ali! She shares the facts about which vitamins work and which don't.

Nutrition, Weight Management and Exercise after 65

January 13
Join the discussion about how to best nourish the body, maintain a healthy weight and safely exercise.

Your Vision & Hearing: Preventing Loss

January 27
As we age, changes in our vision and hearing are not uncommon. Learn what to look for and how to slow or stop the progression of hearing and vision loss.



PAMELA RANDOLPH,
PT, DPT, MBA, FACHE

THE CHALLENGE OF LONG COVID

REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY ARE DIFFERENT FOR EVERY PATIENT.

Almost two years after COVID-19 emerged, there's still much that isn't fully understood about the coronavirus. But it's become clear that about 1 in 10 infected people will go on to experience lingering health problems 12 or more weeks after first becoming ill.

This phenomenon, dubbed "long COVID," can involve a combination of symptoms such as shortness of breath, cough, tiredness, headache, brain fog and chest, joint or muscle pain, among others, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"Long COVID doesn't have one classic presentation—everyone is unique," says Pamela Randolph, PT, DPT, MBA, FACHE, Director of Rehabilitation Services at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton. "We modify treatment plans to make them specific to each patient."

Dr. Randolph explains more about long COVID and how rehabilitation can help move patients toward a full recovery.

What are the most common challenges people with long COVID face?

These patients can't navigate life without feeling exhausted. We're trying to get them back to baseline and then back to doing the physical things they used to do. Some do fine in their home but can't exercise like they used to. But a lot of people with long COVID don't understand their symptoms or even know there's something they can do about them.

What can they expect in terms of recovery?

Everyone is individual, and what to expect is very hard to pinpoint. We had one patient with COVID-19 hospitalized here for more than 70 days, so their weakness level was extreme. Others who haven't been hospitalized have fewer obstacles to recovery. Many long COVID patients continue having breathing difficulties, but rehab also touches on aspects of recovery such as nutrition, sleep and stress.

How can rehabilitation help?

The goal with medical management of COVID is to optimize function and quality of life. That's what we do in rehab—it's truly our sole purpose. Depending on each patient's situation, we work on walking, balance, strength and endurance. We also teach them breathing exercises. We meet them where they are and work toward their individual goals.

Why is it important for long COVID patients to follow up with their doctors?

It takes a whole team to get people back to where they need to be. Our physical therapists work with physicians here to figure out what else patients may need, whether that's more rehab, a sleep workup or nutritionists to help them get their appetite back. Rehab is only one cog in the whole wheel. People who aren't able to do what they expect after having COVID should reach out to their physicians so we as a team can see what their needs are.

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 Surgery

Firas Eladoumikhachi, 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

Anthony Notaroberto, F&WC, Manager - Trainers

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

Donna Reger, MD, Internal & Occupational 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 learn more about rehabilitation at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, call **87.REHAB.RWJ (877.342.2795)** or visit **www.rwjrehab.com**.



WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT CHOLESTEROL

MANAGE THESE MOLECULES NOW FOR A BIG PAYOFF LATER IN LIFE.

You probably know that cholesterol is a fat-like substance in the blood that can cling to the walls of arteries, leading to cardiovascular disease or stroke. And you know that controlling cholesterol involves eating right, exercising and taking medication as prescribed.

But because it takes years before a person really feels the effects of high cholesterol, you may not realize just how big an impact it will have on your future.

“Managing cholesterol is a way of investing in your health decades from now,” says David Feldman, MD, Section



DAVID FELDMAN, MD

Chief of Advanced Heart Failure and Transplantation at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. “In my field, we take care of patients who have had acute heart attacks, or are in cardiogenic

shock, or who need a heart transplant. But many serious heart problems can be prevented through decades of maintaining healthy cholesterol levels.”

Here, Dr. Feldman clears up some common misunderstandings:

- **We need cholesterol.** “It’s the basic building block for all the male and female hormones in the body and helps enhance brain function,” he says. “That’s why the cholesterol levels in pregnant women shoot up; they need it to help create another life.”

- **It’s not all about the numbers.** We’re used to hearing that an overall cholesterol level above 200 is outside the healthy range, but Dr. Feldman says the thinking on that has evolved. “There are many variables—how much medication you can tolerate, what your genetic predisposition is, what level you’re starting from,” says Dr. Feldman. “In some cases, reducing cholesterol too far can be dangerous.” Your doctor can customize a target to best suit your



PUMPKIN POWER

What does pumpkin have to do with reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease? More than you may think. “Pumpkin’s high in vitamins A, C and E, and as a consequence is related to decreasing inflammation in the body’s immune system. That means decreasing risk for heart disease and cancer,” says cardiologist David Feldman, MD. “Pumpkin has twice as much fiber, which helps lower cholesterol, as kale. And unlike many canned foods, canned pumpkin retains its nutritional value.”

individual situation.

- **Some foods are more equal than others when it comes to combating cholesterol.** “A niacin, or vitamin B3, supplement is especially helpful in lowering ‘bad’ LDL [low-density lipoprotein] levels, as are fish, flaxseed oil and foods with lots of fiber,” says Dr. Feldman. Consult your physician before adding any supplements to your diet.

- **A moderate amount of alcohol may help keep cholesterol low.** “Moderate’ means one drink a day for women, two for men. That’s defined as one beer, 1.5 ounces of liquor or 4 ounces of wine,” Dr. Feldman explains. “Also, you can’t skip Wednesday and Thursday and then have triple the amount on Friday—that’s not a healthy approach.”

- **Any amount of activity helps reduce cholesterol.** “It may not be realistic for you to run a few miles every day and lift weights every other day,” says Dr. Feldman. “You just have to work on yourself. If you’ve been sedentary and you get off the couch and go for a walk for 30 minutes every day, or even a few times per week, you’ll improve your life, keep your cholesterol and blood sugar down, feel better and have the potential to live longer.”

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with one of New Jersey’s top cardiac specialists, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.





HELPING SENIORS STAY HEALTHY

HOW THE ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT CAN LEAD TO IMPROVED HEALTH ALL YEAR LONG

If you or a loved one has Medicare, one of its most important benefits is the annual wellness visit. This no-copay visit is not the same as an annual physical. Instead, it's a chance



JESSICA ISRAEL, MD

for you and your provider to create a personalized preventative plan to help you stay well and get any help you may need.

"The annual visit is my favorite visit to have with

patients because I really get a chance to talk to them and to hear about how they live every single day," says Jessica Israel, MD, Senior Vice President, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, for RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. "We touch on areas of the patient's life that might not come up otherwise."

The range of subjects covered is broad. "I ask about whether they have access to healthy foods and whether their teeth hurt when they chew," Dr. Israel says. "I ask about throw rugs in their home that might be a tripping hazard,

and whether they need safety bars in the shower. I ask if they have someone to call if they need help."

Patients shouldn't feel intimidated by these questions, but should welcome and even demand them. "You can never put too much value on what comes out of an honest conversation," Dr. Israel says.

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Dr. Israel's philosophy is shared by providers of geriatric care throughout the RWJBH system and RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group. RWJBH is a member of the Age-Friendly Health



A MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLAN FOR NEW JERSEY

Braven Health, a new Medicare Advantage offering, was created with New Jersey senior citizens in mind. A partnership between three New Jersey healthcare leaders—RWJBarnabas Health, Hackensack Meridian Health and Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey—Braven Health offers access to 51,000 in-network healthcare professionals and 82 in-network hospitals and healthcare facilities.

“Having a partnership between our medical system and Horizon together means that patients have a lot of choices in their network,” explains Jessica Israel, MD, a Braven Health Provider Council Member and Senior Vice President, Geriatrics and Palliative Care, for RWJBarnabas Health. “In addition, procedures and prescriptions get approved more quickly because we’re all working together with the goal of eliminating the hassle that can come with healthcare plans.”

Braven Health also helps patients focus on wellness by offering flexible benefits for a range of wellness activities, such as joining a gym, getting a mammogram, taking a fitness class and getting bars installed in the shower for safety.

Launched in January 2021, the plan is available for residents of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic and Union counties. (The program is not available in Somerset and Mercer counties.) As of May 31 this year, Braven had a higher enrollment than any other Medicare Advantage plan in the eight counties it serves.

To learn about Medicare and Medicare Advantage programs, including Braven Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/braven.

System action community, an initiative spearheaded by the John A. Hartford Foundation, the American Hospital Association and the Catholic Health Association of the United States.

Being an Age-Friendly Health System means applying four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the 4M Framework, to all older adults. “We apply the 4Ms—medications, mobility, mentation and what matters—to elder healthcare in all our hospitals as well as outpatient settings, including in the annual wellness visit,” Dr. Israel says.

“For example, elderly people are often taking multiple medications because they have more than one health condition. We’ll ask about all of them to be sure there are no negative interactions or side effects,” she explains. “We’ll ask about mobility—how much and how well they’re moving around and whether physical therapy or equipment is needed. We’ll talk about areas related to mentation, or the mind—are there any issues with anxiety or depression, or perhaps forgetfulness?”

Equally important, she says, is the “what matters” aspect of the conversation,

which covers patients’ goals for their healthcare and what they don’t want, as well as the importance of having an advance directive. “The ‘what matters’ talk will vary from patient to patient,” Dr. Israel says. “We have a saying in geriatrics: ‘If you’ve seen one 80-year-old, you’ve seen one 80-year-old.’ Each patient is different, and the art of medicine is getting to know your patients.”

Annual wellness visits are inevitably revealing, says Dr. Israel. “Each time, something comes up that I didn’t know about the patient,” she says. “Then, we can have the next discussion: ‘How can we make this better?’”

To learn more about senior healthcare and geriatric medicine at RWJBarnabas Health, visit www.rwjbh.org/seniorhealth.





GAME ON!

RWJBARNABAS HEALTH HELPS BRING SOCCER FIELDS TO URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world—but for many kids in urban communities, there’s no good local place to play it.

Now there is for kids in Newark, New Brunswick and Hamilton. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Somerset-based Players Development Academy (PDA) created its Urban Initiative to bring soccer facilities and coaching to underserved communities across the nation. Thanks to strong partnerships with RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) and local communities, the initiative is up and running in New Jersey.

In May, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Community Field opened at Kossuth Park in New Brunswick. In July, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center Community Field opened at the Marquis “Bo” Porter Sports Complex in Newark. Also in July, the RWJUH Hamilton Community Field opened at the Bromley Sports Complex in Hamilton Township. More fields will open across the state in the RWJBH service area this year and in 2022.

The fields are part of RWJBH’s commitment to enhance well-being in the communities it serves. “Our

mission, improving the health and lives of the people in our communities, is an audacious goal,” says Barry Ostrowsky, President and CEO of RWJBH. “In order to do that effectively, you have to have a team of people dedicated to big ideas, and you have to have similarly minded partners.”

In addition to providing funding to build the fields, RWJBH will provide off-the-field education in nutrition, wellness and sports performance. The PDA will run soccer clinics and other training sessions, and local recreation departments will manage the fields. Often, the fields serve as



Opposite page and above, local children and officials participated in field openings in urban neighborhoods in Newark, New Brunswick and Hamilton.

an anchor for further revitalization of a neighborhood or expansion of community sports facilities.

A SOCCER OASIS

Each field is approximately 40' by 70', allowing for a scaled-down version of the game known as futsal. These relatively small areas make the most sense for urban settings and allow players to have more time on the ball. The fields are made of artificial turf, allowing for nearly year-round play.

“PDA has been an incredible partner as we create a home for soccer programs as well as community-member pickup games in underserved urban areas,” says Justin Edelman, Senior Vice President, Corporate Partnerships, at RWJBH. “The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. You see such a wide range of people—friends, family, all ages—using the facilities.”

“This type of field is important for the community because it’s an oasis for

the game,” says Gerry McKeown, Boys Coaching Director, PDA. “The benefit of putting fields in these locations is that children can walk to them right in their neighborhood, and play or compete or just have fun, and fall in love with the game any way they would like. We’re bringing the best of the beautiful game to boys and girls that need our support. We hope this initiative sparks greater interest in the game, leading to more opportunities for kids from diverse backgrounds.”

To learn more about the Urban Initiative, visit www.urbaninitiativepda.org. To learn more about RWJBarnabas Health social impact initiatives, visit www.rwjbh.org/socialimpact.





RWJBarnabas Health, together with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provides close-to-home access to the latest treatment options. To learn more, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.



BUILDING THE FUTURE OF CANCER CARE

A NEW CANCER HUB IN NEW BRUNSWICK WILL BE A MODEL FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE.



It will soar 12 stories and cover 510,000 square feet. It will cost an estimated \$750 million and will be completed in 2024.

Most important, the Jack & Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, which broke ground in June, will transform cancer research and care throughout New Jersey and beyond. The state’s first and only freestanding cancer hospital is a joint venture of RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, in partnership with the New Brunswick Development Corporation.

“The Jack & Sheryl Morris Cancer Center will be a model for cancer care delivery, bringing together the three mission areas of academic medicine—





Opposite page, renderings of the new center and scenes from the ceremonial groundbreaking. Above, left to right: cancer survivor Keosha Doyle, who was treated at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey; Barry Ostrowsky, President and CEO, RWJBH, with Sheryl and Jack Morris and Steven K. Libutti, MD, Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and Senior Vice President of Oncology Services at RWJBH; Jack Morris delivers remarks at the event.

research, education and patient care—under one roof,” says Barry Ostrowsky, President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJBH.

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

“The new cancer center brings together all the facets of research, prevention and clinical care that we drive and deliver into one location,” says Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey Director Steven K. Libutti, MD, who is also the Senior Vice President of Oncology Services at RWJBH.

The facility will have 10 state-of-the-art laboratories where teams of scientists will study cancer as a disease and develop new treatments. Many of the discoveries from these laboratories will be translated directly to the clinical setting at Rutgers Cancer Institute and across the RWJBH system.

“We will be bringing science from the bench to the patient’s bedside and back again,” says Dr. Libutti. “That means we’ll be able to further tailor patient treatments and collect important research data more rapidly and directly.”

Patients will be able to receive a wide range of both inpatient and outpatient cancer care in the new cancer center, including advanced imaging services as well as radiation and chemotherapy treatments.

The facility will have 96 inpatient beds, including an entire floor dedicated to surgical services.

Exam rooms have been designed so that a multidisciplinary team of specialists can see a patient in one location, rather than having the patient travel from doctor office to doctor office. Specially trained oncology nurse navigators will guide patients on their journey from diagnosis through survivorship.

Wellness, prevention and education resources, including a wellness garden, will be available for the community, patients, caregivers and families.

A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

RWJBH and Rutgers Cancer Institute, the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, have partnered to provide close-to-home access to the most advanced cancer care.

Cancer specialists throughout RWJBH collaborate with experts at Rutgers Cancer Institute to devise the best treatment plan for each patient, including clinical trials, immunotherapy and precision medicine. That means that a patient being treated for cancer at any RWJBH

hospital will have access to the treatment options and clinical expertise anywhere in the hospital system, as well as at Rutgers Cancer Institute.

“The new cancer center will be integrated into our multidisciplinary care paradigm, which is across the entire RWJBarnabas Health system,” says Dr. Libutti.

“We believe it is critically important that we have sites and facilities all across the state to bring cancer care as close to home as possible,” he says. “We also believe that we need one hub that allows us to bring the highest level of extremely specialized, multidisciplinary cancer care in the setting of groundbreaking research.”

The center is named in recognition of the philanthropic leadership of Jack Morris, who has been a longtime supporter and pillar in New Brunswick development, and his wife, Sheryl.

“People shouldn’t have to go all over the country to get great care,” says Jack Morris. “We’re doing it right here. It has been our vision, our hope and our dream to have the top cancer center in the nation here in New Brunswick. Sheryl and I are so proud that we can play a role in helping to make this dream a reality.”

To learn more about the Jack & Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, visit www.cinj.org/jackandsherylmorriscancercenter.



CHRONIC DISEASE: A TEEN TAKES CONTROL

A TEAM OF EXPERTS PROVIDES THE TOOLS NEEDED TO MANAGE TYPE 2 DIABETES.

“I was so nervous when I first stepped into the hospital,” says Ariely Garcia. “I was so far away from home.”

Ariely was just 16 when she got a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes, a chronic condition marked by high blood glucose levels that can result in major health complications. Often referred to as adult-onset diabetes, Type 2 can also develop during childhood as a result of improper nutrition and lack of exercise.

Although Type 2 diabetes can't be cured, it can be managed with healthy eating, medication and lifestyle changes. On her doctor's recommendation, Ariely had come to the Chronic Illness Management Program (CIMP) at Children's Specialized Hospital in New Brunswick to learn how to do just that.

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Ariely worked with a variety of CIMP specialists in areas including recreational therapy, physical therapy,



Specialists at the Chronic Illness Management Program at Children's Specialized Hospital coached Ariely in nutrition, exercise and more to help her learn to live well with Type 2 diabetes.



Children's Specialized Hospital®

An RWJBarnabas Health facility

occupational therapy, nutrition education and psychology.

After four weeks in the program, Ariely felt confident that she could manage her diabetes. Her greatest fear: that she would “fall off the wagon” when she got back to her familiar home and school environment. And in fact, by the fall of that year, Ariely had stopped taking the medication she needed to help manage diabetes.

Recognizing that she needed help, she asked if she could go back to Children's Specialized Hospital. “I knew the program had everything I needed to take control of my diabetes again, and I knew that this time, I was ready,” she says.

At the beginning of 2021, Ariely re-entered CIMP. “This time, I was less nervous and was ready to get back on track,” she says. “I was on board with the hard work I needed to do.”

Her team was prepared with a plan that was customized to provide resources for her home environment. During her stay, Ariely strategized with the physical therapist on ways to stay active while at home, including the use of free smartphone apps and exercises that don't require equipment. She learned to grill chicken, make a kale salad and prepare a breakfast smoothie. She met with the psychology team to talk about stressors and learn to better communicate and cope with challenges. A certified diabetes educator talked with Ariely about the condition, with lessons culminating in “Jeopardy”-style games at the end of each week.

Ariely went home the day after her 18th birthday. “Now I really understand the effects diabetes has on me,” she says, “and I don't need to rely on anyone to do what I need to do to control it.”

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

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



Chair, Foundation Board; Nina Melker, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees; Richard Freeman, President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJUH Hamilton; and Mary Pucciarelli, Vice Chair, Foundation Board. “Our co-chairs rallied golfers and sponsors, and raised \$97,000,” Alleman says.

SUPPORTING HOLISTIC HEALING

Five days later, the Foundation celebrated the art of healing at We vs. C: Tree of Life at Brick Farm Tavern in Pennington to support the Cancer Center’s Holistic Program.

Guests at the outdoor event experienced seasonally designed culinary arts; a private sculpture gallery created by artist Mira DeMartino; tea leaf readings and tea tastings by Jackie Mlodgenski and Sipology; wine and spirit tastings; and desserts. Custom wood-burned ornaments by artist Faraz Khan were placed on a symbolic tree of life and will be added to a permanent tree of life display at the hospital in November. The date of We vs. C, June 19, coincided with the first national holiday celebrating Juneteenth, and presentations and performances marked that milestone along with Pride recognition. Fundraisers included opportunities to acquire seasonally themed gift baskets and a weekend beach getaway valued at \$3,000.

Event co-chairs were Lisa Freeman, Member, Foundation Board (photo at bottom left, second from left), and Ilana Gutierrez (far right) with (from left) Richard Freeman; Bill Walsh, Chair, Foundation Board of Trustees; and Nina Melker. The We vs. C committee and volunteers also included Alleman and event advisor Donna Bouchard. “We are thrilled to share that we raised over \$102,000, well beyond our goal of \$80,000,” says Lisa Freeman. “The generosity of our supporters and guests will allow for us to provide even more holistic program services to more patients and their families.”

TOGETHER AGAIN

IN-PERSON EVENTS EXCEED FUNDRAISING EXPECTATIONS.

The Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton Foundation recently held its first two in-person events since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. “It felt really special,” says Jessica Alleman, Director, RWJUH Hamilton Foundation. “Last year we either canceled or went virtual with all events, and there was uncertainty early on about what would happen this year. We wanted to introduce donors back to normalcy.”

Donors responded with both enthusiasm and generosity. “People were glad to see each other,” Alleman says. “It was great to see our benefactors smiling, laughing and having a good time again, and all for a great cause.”

SUCCESS ON THE LINKS

The kickoff event was the Foundation’s 30th annual golf outing at Cobblestone Creek Country Club in Lawrence Township on June 14. The day featured a day on the links, a putting contest

and dinner. The event was sponsored by longtime supporter Sean’s Landscaping, while Princeton BMW partnered to sponsor a hole-in-one contest.

With disease-prevention protocols relaxed due to the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, the 104 golfers were able to share carts and chat. “We worked closely with Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, RWJUH Hamilton, to conduct the event in the safest way possible,” Alleman says. All activities took place outside, and hand sanitizer was readily available.

Co-chairs of the event were (photo at top left, from left) Joe Bogdan, Director of Hamilton Continuing Care, and Sharif Hatab, Member, Foundation Board of Trustees, with Yolanda Stinger,

To learn more about fundraising events and to support RWJUH Hamilton, visit www.rwjbh.org/hamiltongivenow.



MEET THE CANCER CENTER TEAM

RWJBarnabas Health and RWJUH 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. For more information, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer.

NEW PHYSICIANS ADD TO A WIDE RANGE OF EXPERTISE.

Malini Patel, MD, officially joined The Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton in June as the Director of Medical Oncology. Dr. Patel was previously a medical oncologist at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Her appointment was just one piece of the enhanced alignment between The Cancer Center and Rutgers Cancer Institute. In addition to Dr. Patel, several nationally recognized disease-specific cancer specialists from Rutgers Cancer Institute are also now providing patient care at The Cancer Center as well.

As the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute, together with RWJUH Hamilton, provides patients with the most advanced treatment options close to home. In addition to the nationally renowned physicians, patients at The Cancer Center will continue to benefit from:

- The strong alliance between RWJUH Hamilton, RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute, which offers access to treatments including precision medicine, immunotherapy, complex surgical procedures, sophisticated radiation therapy techniques and novel clinical trials, many of which are not available elsewhere

- An integrated, multidisciplinary cancer care model featuring providers who have exceptional knowledge and skill with advanced therapies to treat routine, rare and complex cancers
- A beautifully appointed Cancer Center that attracts nationally renowned specialists who provide exceptional care in a compassionate, welcoming environment with the latest in patient-centered treatment and technology
- Resources offered at no cost to help patients and families navigate their unique cancer journeys, including dedicated, disease-specific patient navigators; support groups; and a robust

holistic healing program

- A single location where patients can see their doctors, undergo outpatient treatment, make use of oncology support services and participate in promising cancer research studies.

At the core of these services is the cancer team, which, in addition to new doctors from Rutgers Cancer Institute, includes familiar cancer specialists with long histories of providing care to RWJUH Hamilton patients. They’re joined by a team of nursing and support staff who provide the highest level of quality care and a healing culture. Comprising the team are:

NCI DESIGNATION: WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

Just 51 of the thousands of U.S. facilities that have cancer programs are designated by the National Cancer Institute as Comprehensive Cancer Centers. Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, with RWJBarnabas Health, is among that prestigious group—and the only one in New Jersey. That tells patients they can expect:

- High-level physician expertise
- Cancer doctors involved with the latest research
- State-of-the-art surgical technology
- Advanced treatments including immunotherapy and precision medicine
- Access to clinical trials
- Personalized care
- Support from care partners such as nurse navigators.



MALINI PATEL, MD

Director, Medical Oncology
SPECIALIZES IN: medical oncology; lung cancer; head and neck cancer; clinical trials



DEBORAH TOPPEMEYER, MD

SPECIALIZES IN: medical oncology; breast cancer; cancer genetics; clinical trials



FIRAS ELADOUMIKDACHI, MD, FACS

Program Director, The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton
SPECIALIZES IN: surgical oncology; breast cancer



KEVIN DAVID, MD

SPECIALIZES IN: hematology/oncology; leukemia; non-Hodgkin lymphoma; Hodgkin lymphoma; blood cancers



MICHAEL MCKENNA, MD

SPECIALIZES IN: radiation oncology



JAMES K. AIKINS, JR., MD, FACOG, FACS

Chief, Gynecologic Oncology
SPECIALIZES IN: fertility preservation; management of vulvar, vaginal, cervical, uterine, tubal and ovarian cancers; minimally invasive surgeries (robotics); complex gynecologic surgeries; clinical trials



RACHANA SINGH, MD

SPECIALIZES IN: radiation oncology

WHAT IS MULTIDISCIPLINARY CANCER CARE?

Cancer can be complicated—and so can cancer care. Multiple healthcare providers often get involved, creating potential for poor communication or coordination. That’s why cancer care experts at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and RWJUH Hamilton follow a model known as multidisciplinary cancer care.

“Providers take an integrated team approach in which a mix of specialists from different fields consider all relevant treatment options collaboratively to come up with an individual plan that’s best for a given patient,” says Malini Patel, MD, Director of Medical Oncology at The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton. “Multidisciplinary care fosters communication and information sharing, which in turn can expand perspectives and promote innovative solutions.”

Doctors aren’t the only contributors. The multidisciplinary team at The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton also includes providers such as nurse practitioner Vivian Owusu-Mensah, DNP, APN-BC, OCN, CTTS, who works in oncology and breast care, and nurse navigator Patty Hutman Parker, BSN, RN, OCN, who helps patients negotiate the multidisciplinary world of cancer care, especially for breast and gynecologic cancers.

Research suggests multidisciplinary care offers a number of potential benefits to patients over less collaborative approaches to cancer care, including:

- More accurate diagnoses
- More effective treatment
- Better adherence to evidence-based guidelines
- Better communication with primary care doctors
- Potentially improved survival.

“Perhaps most important,” Dr. Patel says, “this model of care is associated with high patient satisfaction.”



DO YOUR MEDS NEED MANAGEMENT?

ADDRESSING POLYPHARMACY AND THE POTENTIAL PERILS OF TOO MANY PILLS.

‘Polypharmacy’ is a complex-sounding word with a simple meaning: It refers to the simultaneous use of multiple medications, says Sara Ali, MD, a geriatrics and palliative care specialist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton.



SARA ALI, MD

Taking numerous drugs is often necessary to manage chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or kidney disease. The practice can happen at

any age but occurs most often among older adults, who are most likely to have multiple health conditions. It's not unusual for people to take five to seven medications, and some people take 12 to 15 or even more, Dr. Ali says. But problems can arise when these medications start causing more harm than good and are not stopped after treatment completion.

Polypharmacy can lead to potentially troublesome or even dangerous drug interactions or side effects.

"Polypharmacy is very common and something I'm always talking about with my patients," Dr. Ali says. "A lot of issues can result, like falls, fractures, emergency room visits and hospitalizations. For some people, the whole cascade can lead from hospital to nursing home and go downhill from there."

In many cases, patients can work with their doctors to manage side effects and reduce risks by adjusting doses, tracking compliance, fine-tuning which specific medications are prescribed or, in some instances, even eliminating unnecessary drugs from a regimen.

COMMON INTERACTIONS

Polypharmacy doesn't just involve prescription drugs. Over-the-counter remedies such as aspirin, acetaminophen, naproxen or ibuprofen count, too, as do supplemental vitamins and herbs. National survey data suggest that nearly two-thirds of older Americans use dietary supplements, but many don't mention this to their doctors. "Sometimes patients don't categorize these as medications when they're not prescribed by a physician, but that doesn't mean they're completely harmless," Dr. Ali says.

Some of the most common polypharmacy offenders among prescription drugs include sleeping pills or sedatives such as benzodiazepines; certain pain relievers, including opioids; some older antidepressants; and heartburn medications.

The combined effects of multiple medications can be especially harmful to older people, who tend to metabolize drugs slower than younger people. Kidney and liver function change with

age, which can trigger new or recurring side effects such as drowsiness, dizziness, constipation or diarrhea, confusion, weakness, anxiety and appetite loss.

"People often believe older age itself is why they're feeling tired, dizzy or drowsy, but it could actually be side effects from drug interactions," Dr. Ali adds. "And side effects can start happening at any time, even if you've been taking a medication for a long time."

PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS

Knowing these risks, Dr. Ali takes a proactive approach with patients, routinely reviewing their full list of medications and supplements to determine if any might be problems or even unnecessary. She recommends frequent, open discussions with your doctor to tackle challenges stemming from medication use so that drugs or doses can be adjusted to minimize side effects while maintaining desired results. "I often explain to patients, 'I'm not decreasing your dose so the medication is less effective,'" Dr. Ali says. "I'm doing it because taking less is just as effective for you."

Often, Dr. Ali can suggest alternate ways of delivering a medication that can alleviate side effects. For example, it may be possible to use a topical ointment instead of an oral medication. Using combination drugs, which wrap two or more medications into a single pill, can also help patients stay on track with regimens and lower overall medication intake.

But it's important not to adjust or, especially, quit a medication without consulting a physician. "It's always an ongoing conversation—we build trust together," Dr. Ali says. "Some medications we can easily stop altogether and others we can taper off slowly. It's a partnership."

If you see multiple specialists for various health problems, make sure each knows the complete list of medications you take, including vitamins and other supplements. Ideally, one doctor—such



BETTER HEALTH EVENTS BROCH AMENDING MEDICATIONS

When geriatrician Sara Ali, MD, speaks at a Better Health event at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton, medication management often becomes the focus. She says the topic is so relevant to Better Health Program members—many of whom take multiple medications to manage chronic conditions—that new questions are constantly popping up. "We always get a good audience at these talks," Dr. Ali says. "It's interesting and important to address specific questions and cases there."

On December 2 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., Dr. Ali will present "Let's Talk Vitamins," a program that will separate fact from fiction and provide information on what works and what doesn't.

The Better Health Program is a free membership program that RWJUH Hamilton offers to people ages 65-plus—at no cost—that helps them meet like-minded people and learn from doctors and other professionals. Better Health programs touch on both fun and serious matters, including travel, finances, spirituality and various health conditions. Dr. Ali's seminar topics have included diabetes, preventive care, gait impairment and falls, and vision and hearing, among others.

as a geriatrician—should oversee your care, taking all your conditions and medications into account.

"Sometimes patients don't know that we can make changes to their medications and they'll not only be totally fine but benefit from this," Dr. Ali says. "Most of the time, they're excited by the idea and want to talk about it."

To join the complimentary Better Health Program at RWJUH Hamilton, call **609.584.5900** or visit www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth.



GETTING OFF THE WEIGHT CYCLE

**SURGERY HELPS A MAN TAKE
CONTROL OF HIS HEALTH.**

Richard Episcopo is the first to admit that he was never a skinny person. He struggled with his weight all through his school years and well into adulthood. At his 1991 wedding when he was 24, he weighed 217 pounds. By the time he was 52, he weighed 354 pounds.

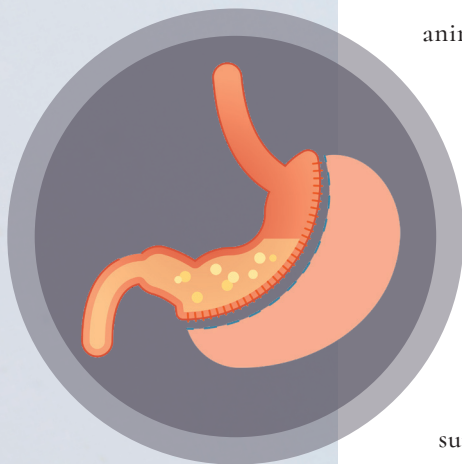


RAGUI SADEK, MD

While his weight never caused him to be

bedridden or prevented him from being an active father to his two children, Richie and Gina, it was starting to affect his life in alarming ways. “I’d be falling asleep at work at 2 p.m. or while I was driving,” he says. “I was always sore or hurting, and sleep apnea kept me from getting more than three hours of shut-eye a night.”

He had tried a variety of diets and programs, but each attempt became part of a vicious cycle that led to even more weight gain. “I would lose 10, gain 15; lose 20, gain 30; lose 40, gain



LAPAROSCOPIC SLEEVE GASTRECTOMY SURGERY REDUCES THE SIZE OF THE STOMACH SO THAT PATIENTS EAT SMALLER MEALS AND DECREASE CALORIE CONSUMPTION. IN ADDITION TO PARING DOWN FOOD VOLUME, THE PROCEDURE CAN LOWER RISKS FROM OBESITY-RELATED METABOLIC CONDITIONS.

50,” he says. “You get pretty disgusted with that over time.” When he wasn’t diet-cycling, he was consuming far more food than his body could handle.

A tragedy on a cold, wet afternoon in summer 2020 convinced Richard that he needed to take more decisive action. He was heading outside to walk the Yorkie-mix puppy that he and his family had just adopted from a local breeder. As he descended the steps, the dog ran in front of him and tangled his legs with the leash. Richard fell on top of the puppy, and his weight killed the

animal instantly.

“That was the day I knew: God had sent me that dog to save my life, and I had to wake up and make a change now,” he says.

That day, Richard phoned a friend who works in disease management at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH)

Hamilton and asked her to recommend a surgeon he could consult about weight loss surgery.

A MINIMALLY INVASIVE SOLUTION

The friend connected Richard with bariatric surgeon Ragui Sadek, MD, FACS, Director, Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery at RWJUH Hamilton and Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. During his consultation with Richard, Dr. Sadek recommended a type of bariatric surgery known as laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy.

This surgery reduces the size of the stomach so that patients eat smaller meals and decrease calorie consumption. In addition to paring down food volume, the procedure can lower risks from obesity-related metabolic conditions. “Richard had morbid obesity and a slew of medical problems, including high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and he was at risk for diabetes and heart disease,” Dr. Sadek says.

During the minimally invasive procedure, surgeons access the stomach through several small incisions and use a camera and various instruments to reshape the stomach and remove tissue containing cells that secrete a hunger-stimulating hormone. Typically, the operation takes 45 minutes to an hour, and patients leave the hospital in less than 24 hours. Following surgery, about

three-quarters of patients maintain their weight loss and keep it off for five years or more, Dr. Sadek says.

Proper preparation for surgery is a crucial element of long-term success. Richard followed a specific diet two weeks prior to the procedure that significantly reduced his calorie intake as well as certain foods like sweets and carbohydrates. “It was pretty much lean protein and vegetables,” Richard says. “About two days before the surgery, I had to switch to an entirely liquid diet.” Though he admits to a few slips along the way, “I was totally committed,” he says.

A WEIGHT LIFTED

The surgery went better than Richard dreamed. “I got there at 6 a.m., went into surgery at 7:30, was out, up and dressed by 9:30 and was walking around the hospital taking business calls by that afternoon,” he says. He was discharged the next morning and went back to work that day.

Richard has dropped 142 pounds and feels more alive than ever before. “My energy level is through the roof, my everyday activities are unbelievable, I’m totally alert the entire day and I’m sleeping six to seven hours uninterrupted each night,” he says. “While in my mind, part of me still thinks, ‘fat,’ I eat significantly smaller portions.”

The biggest difference he sees is his ability to not overindulge. “If I’m craving a cheesecake, I will eat three bites,” he says. “Portions are more like normal portions.”

Richard can’t imagine what his life would have been like had he not gone ahead with surgery. “I would probably be dieting all the way into my 60s and be truly miserable as health condition after health condition started to mount,” he says. “Now I take nothing but a single allergy pill each day, and I couldn’t be happier.”

To learn more about weight loss surgery at RWJUH Hamilton, visit rwjhb.org/weightloss.



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