

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

Summer 2022

healthy *together*



**WEIGHT
LOSS:
A MOTHER-
DAUGHTER
JOURNEY**

**ARE YOU
AT RISK FOR
PROSTATE
CANCER?**

**THE VACCINE
EVERY TEEN
NEEDS**

**HEALING HEARTS:
IT TAKES A TEAM**

MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP



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

BARRY H. OSTROWSKY | Chief Executive Officer, RWJBarnabas Health



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

MARK E. MANIGAN | President, RWJBarnabas Health



“The Babs Siperstein PROUD Center was the first of its kind in New Jersey when it opened in 2017. We continue to expand our services, ensuring members of the LGBTQIA-plus community have access to quality medical care close to home.”

ANTHONY CAVA | President and Chief Executive Officer, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

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

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HEALTH NEWS



A ribbon-cutting launches a new Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset space at Iron Peak Sports & Events.

OPENING A NEW SPACE AT IRON PEAK SPORTS & EVENTS

With a recent ribbon-cutting, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset opened a new space within Iron Peak Sports & Events, New Jersey's premier venue for sports, events and family entertainment. The facility is part of a multiyear partnership and will be used for a variety of purposes, including athletic training and community health initiatives.

“We're truly excited about what this partnership has meant to Iron Peak,” says Gregg Wilke, Iron Peak Sports & Events' Managing Partner. “This new chapter will serve to strengthen the partnership and integrate RWJBarnabas Health into even more of our programs, including our Yeti basketball and volleyball clubs.”

The 1,200-square-foot space, located just inside the front entrance, serves as a location for athletic training services for Iron Peak's athletes and partners. The RWJUH Somerset Community Health Department will also use the space for community outreach initiatives, including education programs and health screenings.

“Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset is committed to promoting the health and wellness of our communities,” says Tony Cava, president and CEO, RWJUH Somerset. “Partnering with Iron Peak will help us enhance the safety of young athletes and also give Hillsborough area residents greater access to our education programs and screenings so they can take steps toward healthier lifestyles.”

To date, the partnership between the two organizations has included athletic training services for both external sporting events and those run by Iron Peak. In addition, RWJBarnabas Health was a valued consultant as Iron Peak established health and safety policies and procedures. As the partnership grows, Iron Peak will integrate RWJBarnabas Health into more of its programming, providing a premier level of service for athletes who train at the facility.

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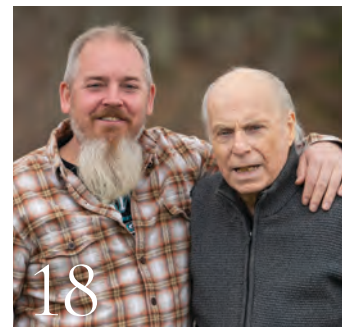
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HEART TESTS FOR EVERY BODY



CHECKUPS IN THE RENOVATED CARDIAC DIAGNOSTIC TESTING DEPARTMENT CAN BE A KEY TO PROTECTING YOUR HEALTH.

You may know that heart disease kills one in four Americans and is the nation's leading cause of death. But treating problems like heart attack or heart failure after they happen is just one approach to reducing this toll.

"Preventive management to avoid developing cardiovascular disease in the first place is the direction healthcare is increasingly going," says Parag Patel,

MD, FACC, Chief of Cardiology at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset. "There's more emphasis on actively screening for early signs of trouble."



PARAG PATEL, MD, FACC

That's why RWJUH Somerset has moved its Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department to a newly renovated space on the hospital's second floor. The new 10,000-square-foot location comprises six patient bays and eight procedure rooms along with a bright, modern waiting area. The Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department is on the same floor as the hospital's recently renovated cardiology pavilions, Critical Care Department and Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory.

"We provide total access to complete state-of-the-art testing and treatment services in one comprehensive center," Dr. Patel says. "Everything you need to prevent and treat cardiovascular disease is here, including technologies at the forefront of testing."

If you're at risk of cardiovascular

disease or your heart health needs to be evaluated, you may benefit from diagnostic and screening tests like these.

ECHOCARDIOGRAMS

In these tests, ultrasound provides images and generates measurements of the heart's interior, including chambers, blood vessels, valves and blood flow. In some tests, images come from a noninvasive instrument called a transducer as it moves over the skin of your torso.

Cardiologists can get additional information with other forms of echocardiography. One is transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE), in which you're sedated and a transducer is inserted down your throat to a position closer to your heart. Another is 3D echocardiogram, which provides detailed, three-

IS YOUR HEART HEALTHY?

Preventing heart disease takes lifestyle steps like regular physical activity and a heart-healthy diet. You and your doctor can periodically track your risks with basic measures like these:

- **BLOOD PRESSURE:** A painless cuff that compresses an artery in your arm measures the force that blood exerts as your heart pumps. If your blood pressure is high, you have a significantly greater risk of heart disease—often with no symptoms.
- **LIPID PROFILE:** A blood test checks levels of fatty substances such as cholesterol (total, LDL and HDL) and triglycerides. High levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides boost your risk of heart disease, while HDL cholesterol is protective.
- **BLOOD GLUCOSE:** A variety of blood tests assess blood glucose, or sugar, which reflects your risk of diabetes. Untreated diabetes increases your risk of heart disease, but elevated blood glucose that's caught early can be reversed.

heart are narrowed or blocked, and a procedure to open them may be done during the same catheterization.

Additional tests may include chest X-rays that can reveal heart-related problems such as fluid resulting from congestive heart failure or abnormalities in the heart's size or shape, and electrocardiograms (EKGs) that measure electrical activity in the heart as it beats.

"We provide the latest advanced equipment and software all under one roof," Dr. Patel says. "Patients in our area can conveniently and confidently get all the heart care they need without having to leave their community."



The newly renovated Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department features (clockwise from left) a state-of-the-art SPECT scanner, a bright waiting area, echocardiograms, six patient bays and activity-based stress tests.

dimensional images. This technology has spurred a growing field called cardio-oncology, in which cardiologists team with oncologists to carefully monitor heart health in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

CT SCANS

Computed tomography uses X-rays from multiple angles to produce three-dimensional images of the heart and its arteries. The Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department features a new state-of-the-art single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) scanner—a nuclear imaging device that creates high-resolution 3D images using a radioactive tracer and special camera. SPECT images help doctors diagnose heart disease, identify heart damage after a heart attack, find blocked arteries and assess how well the heart is pumping blood.

Other types of CT scans include calcium score screening, which reveals calcium deposits in arteries that indicate potential blood flow blockages, and coronary CT angiogram, which provides

more detailed information about arteries than a calcium scan.


"These technologies are moving to the forefront of prevention and evaluation of atherosclerosis," Dr. Patel says, referring to deposits inside blood vessels that limit or cut off blood flow.

STRESS TESTS

Various tests can monitor your heart during activity such as walking on a treadmill. These include nuclear stress tests and stress echocardiography, in which images taken before, during and after activity help detect circulation problems.

RWJUH Somerset cardiologists also perform cardiac catheterization in the hospital's state-of-the-art Cardiac Catheterization Lab on the second floor just down the hall from the Cardiac Diagnostic Testing Department. This procedure entails a cardiologist inserting a thin tube called a catheter into a blood vessel and threading it to your heart to obtain images or samples. Images can show if blood vessels supplying the

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



Rafaelle Lozada uses and applauds primary care and support services at the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center.

5 YEARS OF INCLUSIVE CARE

HOW SERVICES TAILORED TO THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY ‘MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE’

Discovering a health center dedicated to the LGBTQIA population was as welcome as it was unexpected for Rafaelle Lozada.

Lozada, who identifies as gender fluid or trans femme, learned of Barbara “Babs” Casbar Siperstein, a noted New Jersey transgender leader and activist, while interning with coLAB Arts, an organization based in New Brunswick. That led Lozada to hear about the groundbreaking Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, named in Siperstein’s memory after

her death in 2019. “PROUD” stands for “Promoting Respect, Outreach, Understanding and Dignity.”

“Other places may offer services like support groups,” says Lozada, who works as an actor, customer service specialist and LGBTQIA-plus advocate. “But this was the only program I knew of that provided actual primary healthcare.”

A PIONEERING INITIATIVE

Founded in 2017, the PROUD Center was the first hospital program in New Jersey to offer services tailored to the LGBTQIA community in a safe, supportive environment. Now celebrating its fifth anniversary, the center provides services to adults and children including HIV care, hormone therapy and monitoring, health education, counseling, support groups and referrals for specialty services.

RWJUH Somerset has been nationally recognized for providing culturally competent care and reducing healthcare

disparities. The Human Rights Campaign has honored the hospital as a Leader in LGBTQ Healthcare Equality six years in a row.

“We opened the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center five years ago to provide professional and compassionate care to the LGBTQIA community in New Jersey, the needs of which were not being met in the state at the time,” says Tony Cava, President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJUH Somerset. “It’s been an honor to be able to provide specialized medical care to over 1,000 patients with the respect and dignity they deserve, and we are excited to continue to grow and serve this community for many years to come.”

SPECIAL AWARENESS

Lozada has benefited from numerous health services at the PROUD Center beginning in 2020, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a medication that helps prevent HIV infection, and a

PROUD MILESTONES

2017

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset opens PROUD Family Health—the first program of its kind in New Jersey. Beginning as a one-night-a-week clinic, the center serves over 200 patients in its first year.

2019

Renamed the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center in memory of transgender activist Barbra “Babs” Casbar Siperstein, the center moves into a new space to accommodate a growing patient population.

2021

TD Bank grants the center \$150,000 to improve access to medical care for members of the LGBTQIA community with a focus on HIV prevention and mental health.

2022

The PROUD Center serves more than 1,000 patients and is open five days a week.



Staff at the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center celebrate recently being honored as Organization of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers–New Jersey Chapter.

support group. “I’m being tested for STIs [sexually transmitted infections] on a more consistent basis than before,” Lozada says.

The center also has provided clarity about what it means to transition. “There are health risks that can come with making that decision,” Lozada says. “Center staff have educated me, and as a result, I’ve concluded I want to take my time when it comes to doing anything drastic.”

Heightened awareness of mental health issues makes care even more effective and inclusive, Lozada says. Research shows that members of the LGBTQIA community are more than twice as likely as heterosexual people to have a mental health disorder in their lifetime and to experience depression, anxiety and substance misuse. The RWJUH Somerset Behavioral Health Department now offers consults

for PROUD patients from a dedicated therapist with experience serving the LGBTQIA community.

“People at the PROUD Center are educated about additional challenges a person might face just from identifying as part of this community,” Lozada says, including financial stress, threats of violence, transportation difficulties, lack of housing and high suicide rates.

“Anywhere you go, you face some kind of rejection or find people not as open if they notice your gender expression is not traditional,” Lozada says. “Finding a place offering specific care for people like me is almost a guarantee I’ll be provided more respect and kindness. Feeling welcomed and included makes a big difference.”

WELCOMING A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

Patients at the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center now have access to behavioral health services from a therapist dedicated to working with members of the LGBTQIA community.

Kim Keyes, LCSW, an outpatient behavioral health therapist, has 18 years of experience as a social worker helping children and families. Keyes is available five days a week for in-person and telehealth appointments.

“I’ve always had a special interest in working with the LGBTQIA community but recently decided to become more professionally involved, as I have a close family member who identifies as transgender,” she says. “I’m here to help support members of the LGBTQIA community throughout their journey, from exploring gender identity or sexual orientation to coming out to their friends and family and learning to live fully as their true selves, which may include developing coping skills or ways to build their personal support network. This is a safe space where they can find understanding and acceptance, and develop a plan to address the unique challenges they face.”

To learn more about the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at RWJUH Somerset, call **855.776.8334** or visit www.rwjbh.org/somersetproud.





DHARTI PANARA, MD

WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HPV

VACCINATION WORKS BEST BEFORE YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME SEXUALLY ACTIVE.

With so much attention focused on vital COVID-19 vaccines, other important inoculations are sometimes overlooked, says Dharti Panara, MD, a family medicine physician at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

One concerning example is the vaccine that protects against human papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted infection that tens of millions of Americans have contracted, often during their teens and early 20s. HPV can lie dormant in the body for decades and has been linked to cancer—especially cervical cancer, for which HPV is thought to cause as many as 91 percent of U.S. cases.

“HPV is a very common sexually transmitted infection that has become more prevalent in the last decade or two,” Dr. Panara says. “Some HPV strains are higher-risk than others, but the high-risk types cause about 5 percent of all worldwide cancers, most commonly cervical cancer, and are infecting younger and younger patients.”

The HPV vaccine, Gardasil 9, protects against nine high-risk strains. Dr. Panara explains more about protection and why it’s so important.

How does the HPV vaccine protect?

The nine strains it covers are known to cause several forms of cancer. Two strains in particular, HPV 16 and 18, cause cervical cancer as well as anal, vulvar and penile cancer. The vaccine exposes the body to an antigen—an inactive component of the virus—and prompts the body to build antibodies that strengthen immunity to it. Then if you’re exposed to actual HPV, your body is better able to fight it, forestall infection and ultimately prevent cancer.

What is the HPV vaccine’s track record?

It was introduced in the U.S. in 2006, and in the 16 years since, significant evidence has shown that it’s safe, effective and long-lasting. It has significantly reduced cervical cancer and other forms of cancer in both men and women.

Who should get the HPV vaccine?

Recommendations at first included only females but have expanded to anyone in appropriate age ranges regardless of gender. The vaccine should be given to preteens ages 11 to 12, can be started as early as 9 and is recommended through age 26. The ideal is to get doses into patients’ systems before they become sexually active. It’s also available for people ages 27 to 45 if their doctors think it would be beneficial.

Should anyone be hesitant?

You should avoid the HPV vaccine if you have an allergy to any of its components or had an adverse reaction to a previous dose. The best advice is to speak with your primary care provider and/or a gynecologist or pediatrician to know if you or your child is a candidate.

In general, the vaccine is safe and most people can get it.

*

RWJBarnabas Health and 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.



HEALING HEARTS

A TEAM APPROACH TO CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE



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

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

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



BRUCE HAIK, MD

MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAKING THE CALL

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

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

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

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



NEW WAYS TO TREAT SKIN CANCER

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

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

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



ADAM BERGER, MD



SARAH WEISS, MD

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

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



MELANOMA: WHAT TO KNOW

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

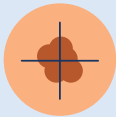
"I advise patients to see a dermatologist for a skin check regularly, and if there's any change in a mole, to be seen right away," says Adam Berger, MD, FACS, Chief, Melanoma and Soft Tissue Surgical Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute.

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

A

A IS FOR ASYMMETRY:

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



B

B IS FOR BORDER:

The edges are irregular, ragged, notched or blurred.



C

C IS FOR COLOR:

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



D

D IS FOR DIAMETER:

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



E

E IS FOR EVOLVING:

The mole is changing in size, shape or color.



Source: American Cancer Society

ADVANCED TREATMENTS

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

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

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

Patients may be eligible for one of

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

MANY MINDS

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

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

Physicians throughout Rutgers

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

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

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

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





A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN PLAY





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUTSIDE THE BOX

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

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

anything to help him get better.”

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

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

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

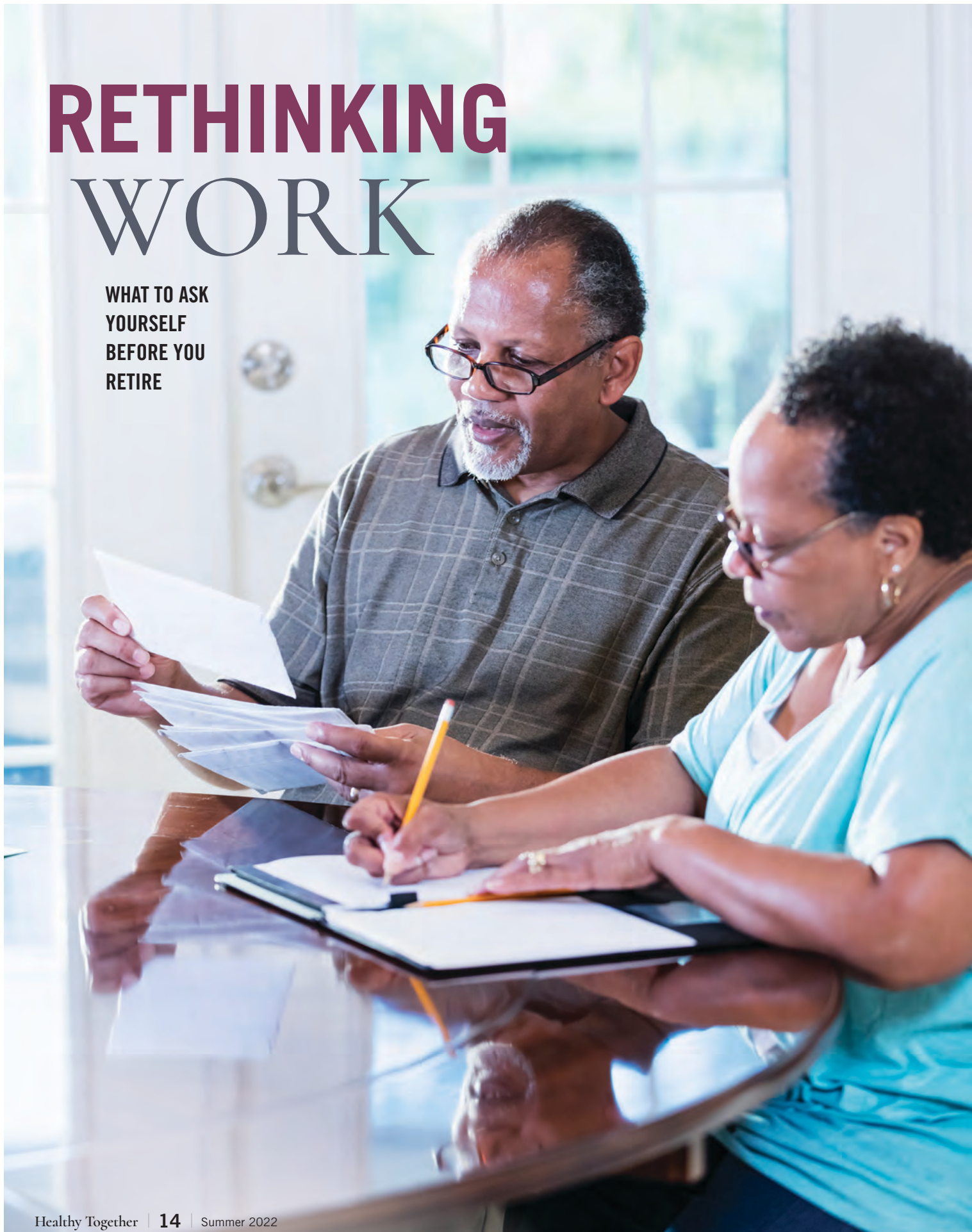
“Gavin is extremely excited,” says Kane. “Now he can play with his friends and meet new people.”

To learn more, visit
www.rwjbhfieldofdreams.com.



RETHINKING WORK

WHAT TO ASK
YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU
RETIRE



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

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

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

REASONS TO LEAVE

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

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



FRANK A. GHINASSI, PHD

"Then, as the

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

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

AND THEN WHAT?

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

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

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

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

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

8 QUESTIONS TO ASK

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



- How are you going to cover medical costs?



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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

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





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

THE VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE

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

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

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

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

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

A NEW MODEL

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RWJ THE STEEPLCHASE
CANCER CENTER



JOIN THE STEEPLCHASE DISTANCE RUN

The 14th annual Steeplechase Distance Run will be held September 25. Coordinated by the Somerset Health Care Foundation, the 2022 event will be a 10K Masters race in which cash awards will be presented to winners in different age groups from adolescents to older adults.

For information, call **908.685.2885** or visit www.steeplechasedistance.com.

SURGEON AND SUPPORTER

RAISING FUNDS THROUGH THE
STEEPLCHASE DISTANCE RUN
HELPS A DOCTOR'S OWN PATIENTS.



Colin Failey, MD, FACS, has seen firsthand how supporting the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset helps patients. That's because many Cancer Center patients are his own.

Dr. Failey is Chief of Plastic Surgery at RWJUH Somerset and a member of Steeplechase Cancer Center's multidisciplinary breast cancer team. "I perform many of the hospital's breast reconstruction surgeries," Dr. Failey says.

Plastic surgery to reconstruct one or both breasts either at the time of a partial mastectomy or after removal in a total mastectomy is often an important step for women fighting breast cancer.

"Fundraising helps provide boots-on-the-ground supplies and services that women going through treatment need," Dr. Failey says.

Dr. Failey was Titanium Sponsor of the 13th annual Steeplechase Distance Run held in September 2021 at the Amsterdam

School in Hillsborough to raise funds for the Steeplechase Cancer Center. He has supported the event for more than five years and plans to continue for the 2022 event.

"Dr. Failey has been a generous sponsor continually," says Donna Castronovo, Vice President, Foundation and Development, Somerset Health Care Foundation, RWJUH Somerset. "Many of our physicians care not just about clinical care but also supporting patients in their journeys, but his caring and passion come through especially loud and clear."

DIRECT SUPPORT

The Steeplechase Distance Run includes 10K and 5K runs as well as a 2-mile walk and kids' sprint.


Participants can attend in person or support the event virtually by running or walking on their own.

Patients' loved ones often participate to support ongoing care. Participants also include cancer survivors and patients,

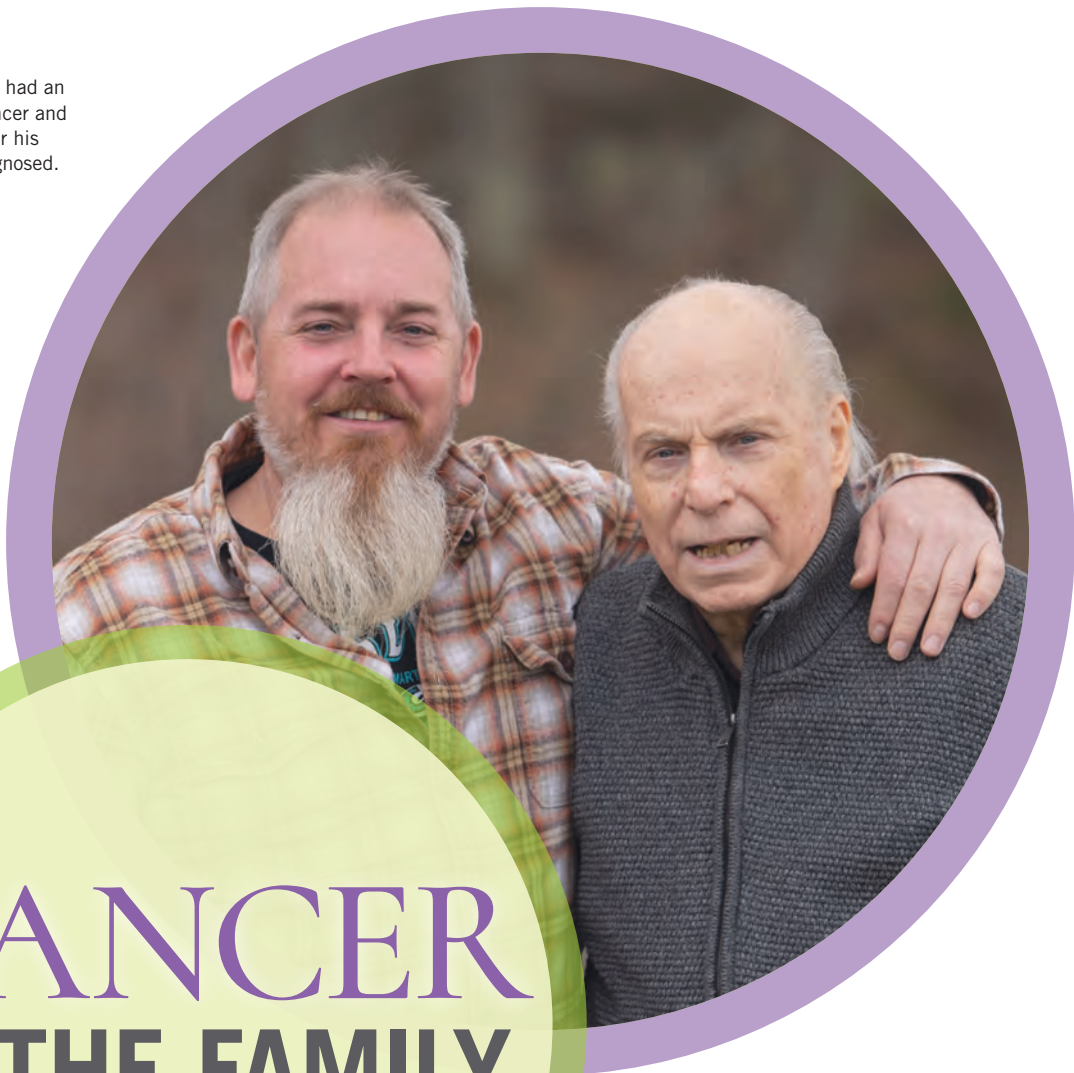
along with those left behind. "It's a beautiful experience to see people who have been coming for years in memory of someone who lost the battle, so they can raise money for the Cancer Center to help others," Castronovo says.

"I've tried to contribute in whatever way I can in any given year," Dr. Failey says. In addition to providing financial support, he personally attends the event as COVID-19 limitations or travel allow, often sponsoring a tent or table to enhance activities and provide items such as food, coffee, water, sunscreen or even music from a DJ.

"What's always struck me is that this event isn't a global fundraiser for the hospital or health system but specifically benefits Steeplechase Cancer Center patients," Dr. Failey says. "Funds help provide an unusually high level of patient support through features such as educational and support programs, the Sanofi US Wellness Boutique that provides items like wigs, prostheses and post-op recovery bras and pillows, along with financial or transportation assistance. With a pool of support, we can continue to provide patients with everything they need."


RWJBarnabas Health and 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.

Brian Turner (left) learned he had an increased risk of prostate cancer and started regular screening after his father, Steve (right), was diagnosed.



CANCER IN THE FAMILY

**ROBOTIC SURGERY HELPS A FATHER AND
SON BATTLE PROSTATE TUMORS.**

Steve Turner of Middlesex is grateful for advice he received about his prostate cancer—not for himself



DHIREN DAVE, MD

but for his son, Brian.

It was late 2011 and Steve, now 81, underwent surgery performed by urologist Dhiren Dave, MD, Director of Robotic Surgery at

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, to remove his cancerous gland. “When I was diagnosed, Dr. Dave indicated to me that I should inform my son because prostate cancer can be hereditary, so Brian should start getting tested,” Steve says.

Brian, a now-51-year-old facilities manager who lives in Bound Brook, took

the heads-up seriously. Only in his 40s at the time, he decided to get checked for prostate cancer earlier than many men do.

At first, Brian’s prostate cancer screenings, which included a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test and a physical evaluation called a digital rectal exam (DRE), were normal. But in 2020, Brian’s PSA levels started to rise. Follow-up X-rays and a CT scan revealed a large, aggressive mass in his prostate.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Brian considered different treatment options. One was to have doctors implant radioactive seeds that would kill cancer cells with minimal damage to healthy tissue. This approach carries less risk of side effects such as urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction than surgery does, but takes longer. It

TREATMENTS FOR PROSTATE CANCER

After skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. But survival rates are high, especially when the cancer is caught early. Because prostate cancer can be slow-growing, not every man will need to be treated right away. However, depending on the stage of the cancer, leading treatments include:



Radiation therapy, which uses a state-of-the-art linear accelerator that delivers external beam radiation. Brachytherapy, in which radioactive material is sealed in a seed and placed inside the body, may also be used.



Radical prostatectomy, which removes the entire prostate gland, sometimes with nearby tissue such as lymph nodes. Robotic surgery allows the procedure to be done with small incisions, high magnification and greater precision, which can help quicken recovery and reduce side effects or complications.



Cryotherapy, which, in select cases, uses extreme cold to freeze and kill prostate cancer cells.

also would have prevented him from holding his young daughter in his lap for about a year due to radiation exposure risks to her.

The cancerous mass had started to press against Brian's bladder, and he wanted to eliminate the cancer as quickly as possible. Like his father, Brian opted to have robotic surgery to remove his prostate—and have Dr. Dave perform the procedure.

As with his father, Brian's surgery was successful. Neither man suffered side effects from their robotic procedures, and both remain cancer-free today.

Things might have turned out differently had he not started screening when he did, given how quickly his test results changed, Brian says. "I had no signs of prostate cancer," he says, "no kinds of problems at all. So I was really shocked at how advanced my cancer was when I was diagnosed."

INHERITED RISKS

Men with a family history of prostate cancer are at increased risk not only of developing prostate cancer, but also of combating a more aggressive form, Dr. Dave says. Prostate tumors usually are slow-growing and often can be monitored by a physician. But aggressive types can be deadly and require treatment.

"Having a strong family history such as a father who had prostate cancer increases the risk of developing prostate cancer from about one in six, which is the overall risk for the general population, to about one in four," Dr. Dave says.

Dr. Dave advises men to have in-depth discussions with their doctors about the pros and cons of screening, including potential risks of treatments that may be unnecessary for some. With physician guidance, men can then consider whether and when to start screening, given factors such as age, health and family history.

"I encourage anybody who is at increased risk because of a strong family history or factors such as being African American to start screening at age 40 to 45 with an annual PSA blood test and a digital rectal exam," Dr. Dave says.

Brian says screening may have saved his life. For men with a family history of prostate cancer, he says, "I think the sooner you get screened, the better."




DO YOUR GENES BOOST CANCER RISKS? HOW TO FIND OUT


If you're concerned about your personal cancer risk or cancer within your family, the Hereditary Oncology Prevention and Evaluation (HOPE) program at the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson

University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, offers genetic counseling.

You can meet with a genetic counselor either in person or by phone or video call. Discussing your family and personal medical histories will help determine if you should undergo genetic testing, which may involve a blood or saliva test. (Saliva tests can even be done at home with a testing kit.) If results indicate you have a genetic marker that elevates cancer risk, doctors can determine the next steps, which may include further tests for you and possibly other family members.

To learn more or schedule an appointment, call **609.584.2836**.


RWJBarnabas Health and 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.



Ana Arroyo (left) and her daughter Gabrielle Rodriguez (right) have made important lifestyle changes to help ensure the success of their bariatric procedures.

NEW WEIGHTS, NEW TRADITIONS

HOW A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER'S DIETARY MODIFICATIONS BOLSTER THE IMPACT OF THEIR WEIGHT LOSS SURGERIES

Gabrielle Rodriguez, 25, and her mother, Ana Arroyo, 57, of Port Reading knew something had to change. Food had always been an important part of their

Hispanic heritage and family celebrations, but they realized cultural traditions contributed to longtime struggles with weight.

"A lot of our foods are

traditionally based on carbs like rice and beans," says Rodriguez, an IT security engineer. "Even with protein options, the ways they're prepared can sometimes be unhealthy. A lot of dishes are fried or covered in grease."

Both women eventually decided to have weight loss, or bariatric, surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset. They also came to realize that surgery alone won't cure obesity. For weight loss efforts to succeed, they needed to make significant lifestyle modifications as well.

"We've had to train ourselves to

prepare food differently, like air frying or baking instead of deep frying," says Rodriguez, who lives with her mother and sister. Now their meals look very different. "A lot of things we used to eat are not the best options for us anymore," Rodriguez says. She has lost 125 pounds since having weight loss surgery in 2020; Arroyo has shed 55 pounds since her surgery in 2021.

"Bariatric surgery is just the first step in a lifelong commitment toward better health," says Tina Thomas, MD, bariatric surgeon at RWJUH Somerset, who performed both women's surgeries



TINA THOMAS, MD

at the hospital. “We communicate to all our patients considering weight loss surgery that surgery is a tool to jump-start weight loss. When it’s combined with dietary and lifestyle modifications, long-term weight loss success and a healthier outlook can be achieved.”

THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Rodriguez’s weight loss journey began six years ago when she was 19 and tipped the scales at 300 pounds. When she developed leg pain and breathing difficulties, she decided to take action.

Another family member had done well after bariatric surgery, so Rodriguez decided to follow his lead. In 2016, she opted for a gastric sleeve procedure in which a surgeon removed a portion of her stomach and narrowed the remainder to the size of a banana.

Surgery reduced Rodriguez’s appetite and food intake, and she dropped from 282 pounds to 185. But weight crept back on, over time inching as high as 242 pounds. Health problems returned. “I didn’t make the best choices then,” she says.

“Obesity is a disease that weight loss surgery doesn’t cure, and weight loss surgery and adapting to the new eating and exercise modifications that follow it are big changes,” Dr. Thomas says. “We understand how hard it is to lose weight and keep it off, and the importance of offering a second chance. We’ve seen this even more amid the stresses of the pandemic, when many people have struggled with eating and weight gain.”

Rodriguez met with Dr. Thomas in 2020 to discuss her options for a second chance at weight loss surgery. This time, she was ready to work harder at taking and keeping weight off, staying up to date with follow-up visits and taking advantage of the long-term support Dr. Thomas’s team offers.

Rodriguez decided to have revision surgery to a gastric bypass. This procedure creates a smaller stomach pouch and reroutes the path that food

follows, bypassing part of the stomach and the small intestine so you feel full faster, absorb fewer calories and have less overall hunger. “I had more awareness and made a big mental shift,” Rodriguez says. With her renewed commitment, her weight began to drop again soon after surgery.

Inspired by her daughter’s success, Arroyo, a human resources manager, decided to undergo gastric sleeve surgery last summer. “My legs and back were hurting, and I just didn’t feel good,” she says. She also had begun to have trouble breathing and was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, in which the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick and pumping blood becomes more difficult. “The way things were going, I didn’t think I’d make it to 70,” she says. “I wanted to add more years to my life.”

LIFE-CHANGING OUTCOMES

Gastric sleeve and gastric bypass are both highly effective bariatric surgeries, Dr. Thomas says. “Once the body adjusts to lower food volume, it begins to recognize smaller portions as just enough,” she says. “Just as important as weight loss are health improvements patients experience as they lose the weight. From the resolution of Type 2 diabetes in many to a decrease in blood pressure, weight loss surgery has long-term health benefits.”

Arroyo, who once weighed 285 pounds, is well on her way to a healthier weight after her procedure. To stay on track, she walks, uses a scale to measure food and has a meal replacement shake daily. When she craves a starchy food, she takes only a small bite. “Honestly, it doesn’t taste as good to me anymore, so it’s not worth it,” she says.

Rodriguez works out at a gym and makes better food choices. She plans meals, packs food to her job and makes healthy substitutions such as cauliflower rice instead of starchy white rice. “My life has done a complete 180,” says



SHOULD YOU GET WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY?

Weight loss surgery can lower obesity-related risks including heart disease, diabetes and obstructive sleep apnea, which blocks airways during slumber. You may be a candidate for surgery if you have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or one of these conditions and a BMI of 35 to 39.

You and your doctor decide which surgery is best for you based on individual needs and preferences.

Rodriguez, who likes to dance and sing karaoke. “Weight loss has helped my confidence. Being able to accomplish a goal like that feels great.”

“The best part of the surgical weight loss journey is seeing my patients radiate self-confidence and self-esteem when they are able to enjoy their favorite things in life,” says Dr. Thomas. “The non-scale victories—being active with your children or feeling comfortable going to the gym again—are often the most proud moments for our patients and strong motivation for sustaining the weight loss.”

CIRUGÍA BARIÁTRICA EN

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

Conozca la historia de una paciente que logró perder peso y mejorar su salud gracias a la cirugía bariátrica realizada en Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset.



For more information about weight loss surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, visit www.rwjbh.org/weightloss.





Community Education

JULY

Chair Yoga for Seniors

This ancient fitness routine builds flexibility and strength and relieves pain associated with arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, migraines, and back and neck strain. A medical release form is required to participate.

Chanchal Arora, certified yoga instructor
8-week course begins:

Tuesday, July 5

10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Congregational Church of Bound Brook, \$48

To register, call 908.685.2814.

Aquacize

This water exercise program soothes arthritis pain, strengthens joints, and improves range of motion and lung capacity. A medical release form is required to participate.

Ellen Helman, certified water fitness instructor

8-week courses begin:

Wednesday, July 6, and

Monday, July 11

10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Somerville YMCA, \$50

To register, call 908.685.2814.

Keep Your Eye on Vision Health

Learn about various conditions that affect sight, such as astigmatism, cataracts, diabetes retinopathy, glaucoma and thyroid eye disease, as well as signs, causes, diagnostic tools, the importance of annual eye exams, surgical and nonsurgical treatment options, and strategies to maintain healthy vision.

Lawrence Najarian, MD, ophthalmologist

Thursday, July 14

10 to 11 a.m.

Somerville Elks, Bridgewater

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/37sYLPu>

“Let’s Be Healthy Together”

Wellness Day

Tour the RWJUH Somerset space at Iron Peak Sports & Events and enjoy interactive table displays. Visit our EMS vehicle and the Wellness on Wheels bus, a greenhouse and cooking school that offers free demonstrations and nutrition education. Learn the importance of a healthy diet and its link to health, as well as how to make healthier food choices, prepare healthy food

and grow produce hydroponically. Participants will also learn what to do in case of an emergency.

Friday, July 15 | 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Iron Peak Sports & Events, Hillsborough

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3L1G2jW>

Nutrition Dialogue with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

During this webinar, discover how your diet can help reduce your risk of cancer. Includes healthy recipe demonstrations.

Evelyn Fuytes, NDTR, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Tuesday, July 19 | Noon to 1 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3MkMqD5>

Offered in collaboration with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

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 for how to help people in both crisis and noncrisis situations. This includes a 2-hour online course to be completed by July 18 and an instructor-led portion, which will be hosted on Zoom July 20 and 21. Attendance both days is required to receive certification.

Gail Schoenbach, Certified Mental Health First Aid instructor

Wednesday and Thursday,

July 20 & 21 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/37n5PED>

Registration closes June 30.

Offered in collaboration with EmPoWER Somerset

AARP Driver Safety Program

Learn techniques to prevent accidents and/or tickets in this AARP defensive driving course. Certificates awarded upon completion of the course may entitle participants to an auto insurance discount.

Monday, July 25 | 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Fellowship Village, Basking Ridge, \$35 (AARP member discount accepted; breakfast and lunch included)

To register, call 908.685.2814.

AUGUST

Aromatherapy: The Sweet Smell of Joint Pain Relief

Discover aromatherapy for reducing joint pain—how it works, the healing benefits, modes of absorption, the difference between diffusers and essential oils, effectiveness in pain reduction and duration of relief. Learn about RWJUH Somerset’s Joint Surgery Program. Participants will receive lavender samples.

Marcella O’Herlihy, RN, BSN, Total Joint Care Coordinator

Kathleen Wilson, MSN, RN, CNL, SCRNP

Tuesday, August 2 | 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Somerville Elks, Bridgewater

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3KX14Qt>

AARP Driver Safety Program

Participants will learn techniques to prevent accidents and/or tickets in this AARP defensive driving course. Certificates awarded upon completion of the course may entitle

participants to an auto insurance discount.

Monday, August 8 | 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Fellowship Village, Basking Ridge, \$35 (AARP member discount accepted; breakfast and lunch included)

To register, call 908.685.2814.

Breastfeeding Basics & Benefits

During this webinar, discover breastfeeding tips, the health benefits, common positions such as the cradle or clutch, strategies to overcome problems such as mastitis or cracked nipples, techniques to encourage latching, the ideal feeding pattern, the recommended length of feeding time on each side and pumping tips, as well as supplementation recommendations, including when it’s appropriate.

Sophia Viamonte, RN, BSN, IBCLC, Certified Lactation Consultant

Thursday, August 11 | 6 to 7 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3a0Q86U>

Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS

Sports and Exercise Injury Assessment

This screening is intended for those dealing with an orthopedic or sports-related injury and those who wish to evaluate their risk of potential injuries. RWJUH Somerset physical therapists will be on hand to assess your symptoms and concerns and, based on your results, provide individualized recommendations for care and prevention.

RWJUH Somerset physical therapists

Thursday, August 18

5 to 7 p.m.

Iron Peak Sports & Events, Hillsborough

To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814.

Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, September 14

9 a.m. to noon

Tarantino Promenade at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, free

To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814.

Cholesterol Screening

Includes total cholesterol, HDL, ratio and glucose.

Wednesday, September 14

9 a.m. to noon

Tarantino Promenade at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, \$15

To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814.

Prostate Cancer Screening

This free PSA screening and exam by a urologist is for high-risk men 35 and over and all men 40 and over with no personal history of prostate cancer. As part of a research study, participants must complete a questionnaire. Registration is required.

Thursday, September 22

5 to 7 p.m. or

Saturday, September 24

9 to 11 a.m.

Steeplechase Cancer Center, Suite 2300

To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814.

Is Dementia a Hidden Risk of Hearing Loss?

According to a Johns Hopkins study, hearing loss is linked to walking problems, falls and dementia. Understand risk factors for hearing loss, causes, signs and symptoms, diagnostic tools to assess hearing, how hearing loss impacts memory, treatments and preventive strategies. Hearing screenings will be offered afterward.

Deborah Fugaro, AuD, CCC/A, audiologist and director, rehabilitation services
Wednesday, August 17

10 to 11:30 a.m.

Somerville Elks, Bridgewater

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3KQ2tbw>

Managing Cancer Pain: Soothing Strategies for Healing and Recovery

About 9 out of 10 cancer pain patients find relief using a combination of medications. Others use various nonmedicinal strategies to soothe the aches. During this webinar, learn about stages of cancer recovery, the causes of cancer-related pain, both medicinal and nontraditional techniques to relieve discomfort, side effects of some medications, tips to avoid overuse or addiction, and the benefits of these options.

Eshan Patel, MD, oncologist

Tuesday, August 23 | Noon to 1 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3Op3l9m>

Offered in collaboration with CrossRoads4Hope

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Children face many stressors, including bullying and peer pressure to vape or consume other substances. Discover how to help children or youth experiencing challenges or addictions by learning typical adolescent development. A five-step action plan for helping youth in both crisis and noncrisis situations covers anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD) and eating disorders. This includes a 2-hour online course to be completed by August 25 and an instructor-led portion to be hosted on Zoom August 30.

Catherine Hoben, MSW, Certified Youth Mental Health First Aid instructor

Joshua Wolf, Certified Mental Health First Aid instructor

Tuesday, August 30 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3ErflRo>

Registration closes August 17.

Offered in collaboration with EmPoWER Somerset

SEPTEMBER

Chair Yoga for Seniors

This ancient fitness routine builds flexibility and strength and relieves pain associated with arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, migraines and back and neck strain. A medical release form is required to participate.

Chanchal Arora, certified yoga instructor

8-week course begins:

Tuesday, September 6 | 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Congregational Church, Bound Brook, \$48

To register, call 908.685.2814.

Aquacize

This water exercise program soothes arthritis pain, strengthens joints, and improves range of motion and lung capacity.

Ellen Helman, certified water fitness instructor

8-week courses begin:

Wednesday, September 7, and Monday,

September 12 | 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Somerville YMCA, \$50

To register, call 908.685.2814.

Jazz Up Your Prostate Health

Learn strategies to enhance prostate health and reduce risks of prostate cancer. Find out about conditions that affect the prostate (e.g., BPH, prostatitis, cancer), symptoms, causes, diagnostic tools (e.g., PSA, DRE, biopsy) including the Stockholm 3 test, and advanced treatments. Participants will enjoy a jazz concert afterward.

Joel Braver, MD, radiation oncologist

Dhiren Dave, MD, urologist and robotic surgeon

Tuesday, September 13 | 11 a.m. to noon

Somerville Elks, Bridgewater

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/37tqqy3>

From Feet to Beats...

Peripheral Vascular Disease and Atrial Fibrillation

Discover the correlation between peripheral vascular disease (PVD) and atrial fibrillation (AF), symptoms of each, the six P's of PVD, different types, causes, increased risks associated with additional medical conditions, diagnostic tools, complications if untreated, treatment options and prevention strategies.

Mitul Kanzaria, MD, cardiologist

Tuesday, September 27 | Noon to 1 p.m.

Somerville Elks, Bridgewater

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3vLsfaf>

SUPPORT GROUPS

Eating Disorders—Family Support

This is a parent-facilitated discussion.

First and third Thursdays of each month

7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Conference Rooms A & B

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/501486981>

You can also dial in using your phone: **408.650.3123; access code: 501-486-981**

Eating Disorders—Patient Support

This is a staff-facilitated discussion open to anyone with an eating disorder.

Second and fourth Thursdays of each month

7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Hamilton Conference Room

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/355332573>

You can also dial in using your phone: **571.317.3122; access code: 355-332-573**

Stroke Support Group

First Thursday of the Month
2 to 3 p.m.

Steeplechase Cancer Center 1st Floor Conference Room

To register for the July 7 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3jSagcU>

To register for the August 4 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3vsvbCAD>

To register for the September 1 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3KX22MB>

Better Breathers Club

Promotes the management of COPD and other chronic lung diseases (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.

Steeplechase Cancer Center 1st Floor Conference Room

• **To register for the July 14 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3jQXQIK>**

• **To register for the August 11 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3uV3M3C>**

• **To register for the September 8 support group, visit <https://bit.ly/3vBIHLQ>**

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 RWJUH Somerset for free seminars to learn about your weight loss surgery options, including detailed information about gastric banding, gastric sleeve and gastric bypass.

• **David Ward, MD**
Thursday, July 21
6:30 to 8 p.m.
To register, call 908.595.2304.

• **Ajay Goyal, MD**
Tuesday, September 20
6:30 to 8 p.m.
To register, call 908.595.2304.

Virtual Bariatric Support Group

Anyone who is considering bariatric surgery as well as 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 while dining out.

Tia Hagins, RD, community nutritionist

Tuesdays: July 19, August 9 and September 20

6 to 7 p.m.

To register for the bariatric support group, call Tia Hagins at 908.704.3765.

When joint surgery affects more than just you. Closer is better. Do it right. Here.

Having board-certified surgeons nearby makes life easier for you, and all the people you count on.

Recovering from knee surgery involves regular trips to therapy, and the less time you spend traveling, the more time you can spend healing. You'll find the highest level of orthopedic care at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, with board-certified surgeons using the latest treatments and technology, and physical therapy right on site.

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