

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

Fall 2021

healthy *together*

**BACK IN ACTION WITH
PHYSICAL THERAPY**

**LUNG HEALTH:
BREATHE EASIER**

**SAVED FROM A
HEART ATTACK**

**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.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset continues to invest in upgrading our facilities and adding the most advanced technologies to provide world-class care to our community. We recently updated one of our cardiac catheterization laboratories with new state-of-the-art technology and will soon be completing major renovations to our Eating Disorders Unit, expanding our inpatient beds from 14 to 20. We will begin construction later this year on a new two-story addition to our Pavilion building, which will include 35 private rooms for orthopedic surgery patients and an on-site gym for rehabilitation.

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




ANTHONY CAVA
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL SOMERSET



HEALTH NEWS



MULTIPLE HONORS FOR PANDEMIC EFFORTS

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset recently was recognized for bilingual outreach to the Latino community during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July, the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) honored the hospital with its Healthy New Jersey Award. (Photo: Members of RWJUH Somerset's Community Health and Diversity & Inclusion departments, executive team and SALUD Business Resource Group gather at NJHA's annual awards ceremony.) In August, the hospital was recognized by *NJBIZ* as a Healthcare Hero in the Public Health category.

The hospital's Community Health and Diversity & Inclusion departments collaborated with local schools, churches, food banks, health departments and municipalities to distribute 17,000 masks, 5,000 hand sanitizers and 5,000 soaps as well as bilingual educational materials. The efforts helped reduce new COVID-19 cases among the Latino community by as much as 85 percent in some hard-hit areas.



Ronald Nahass, MD

In addition, infectious disease specialist Ronald Nahass, MD, hospital epidemiologist, RWJUH Somerset, was recognized by *NJBIZ* as a Healthcare Hero in the Education category. Dr. Nahass worked throughout the pandemic to educate hospital employees, physicians and community members about preventing COVID-19 and the importance of vaccination through webinars, grand rounds and media interviews. He also co-authored studies in leading medical journals.

Robert Wood Johnson | RWJBarnabas
University Hospital | HEALTH
Somerset

110 Rehill Ave., Somerville, NJ 08876 | 908.685.2200

CONNECT WITH US ON

-  @RWJSomerset
-  @RWJSomerset
-  RWJBarnabas Health
-  @RWJSomerset
-  Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

RWJUH Somerset complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. For more information, see link on our home page at rwjbh.org/somerset. RWJUH Somerset cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo. ATENCIÓN: Si usted habla español, servicios de asistencia lingüística, de forma gratuita, están disponibles para usted. Llame al 908.685.2200. RWJUH Somerset konfòm ak lwa sou dwa sivil federal ki aplikab yo e li pa fè diskriminasyon sou baz ras, koulè, peyi orijin, laj, enfimite oswa sèks. ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 908.685.2200.

healthy *together* contents

FALL 2021



2. WELCOME LETTER.
A community update from our CEOs.

4. SINGING PRAISES.
Breast cancer treatment allows a woman to perform the National Anthem at a NJ Devils game.

6. BACK FROM THE BRINK. Quick action saves a man from a heart attack in the street.

8. LASTING LEGACY. Remembering a leader who helped shape community healthcare.



9. WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT CHOLESTEROL. Manage it now for a big payoff later in life.

10. HELPING SENIORS STAY HEALTHY. How the annual wellness visit can lead to improved health all year long.

12. GAME ON! RWJBarnabas Health helps bring soccer fields to urban neighborhoods.

14. BUILDING THE FUTURE OF CANCER CARE. A new cancer hub in New Brunswick will be a model for multidisciplinary care.

16. CHRONIC DISEASE: A TEEN TAKES CONTROL. A team of experts provides the tools needed to manage Type 2 diabetes.

17. ASK THE DOCTOR: LUNG HEALTH. What you need to know about common pulmonary problems.

18. A TRANSGENDER JOURNEY. Providing coordinated primary and specialized care to the LGBTQIA community.

20. BACK IN ACTION. Individualized physical therapy helps an elite athlete avoid spine surgery.

22. COMMUNITY CALENDAR. A roundup of health, education, screening and support programs.



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.

Breathing exercises during Camille See Wai's breast cancer treatment indicated her ability to sing.

SINGING PRAISES

SUCCESSFUL BREAST CANCER TREATMENT ALLOWS A WOMAN TO PERFORM THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AT A NJ DEVILS GAME.

When Camille See Wai discovered a lump in her left breast in summer 2020, she wisely reached out to her doctor. After undergoing a mammogram and a biopsy, she received an upsetting diagnosis: Camille, 55, of Somerset, had infiltrating ductal carcinoma—cancer that begins in a breast's milk duct and then invades the tissue beyond it. "I was numb when I got

the news," she says. "Even though I knew what they were saying, I was hearing it as though they were standing far away."

But a journey that began with fear in her heart ended with a song in her heart as treatment allowed Camille to express her passion for choir singing in a way she had not anticipated.

At the outset, she and her primary care physician discussed where to seek

treatment, and for Camille the choice was easy: the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset. “A family member had previously had cancer,” she says. “He had gone to RWJUH Somerset and had spoken highly of his care.” She talked it over with her sisters, with whom she has a close relationship, and they supported her decision.

She quickly felt she’d made the right choice. “From the first person I spoke to there to make my first appointment, everyone made me feel so comfortable,” she says. Camille grew even more impressed when she met her breast surgeon, Lindsay Potdevin, MD, a surgical oncologist at RWJUH Somerset and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. “I love her!” Camille says. “She made me feel as if I were her only patient.”

Camille’s breast tumor was a little over an inch long, so she first underwent a series of six chemotherapy treatments to shrink it prior to surgery. It was around the time those treatments began, in early fall 2020, that Camille was introduced to Kimberly Cromwell-Piniella, BSN, RN, CBCN, OCN, a breast cancer patient navigator at the Steeplechase Cancer Center.

ATTENTIVE CARE

“My role is to assist patients throughout the breast cancer trajectory,” Cromwell-Piniella explains. “The patient, throughout the plan of care, needs the navigator to help them emotionally, psychologically and physically. I’m a resource, an asset and a coordinator of appointments. There is a vast role that I cover, to help patients expedite their plan of care and help them throughout the whole transition.”

Cromwell-Piniella reviewed pre-operative educational materials with Camille so her patient would know what to expect during and after surgery. The information was not just helpful but comforting, Camille says. “I was nervous because I’d never had surgery before—never even had a broken arm or anything like that,” she says. “This was strange territory, but they helped set me very much at ease.”

Once Camille’s chemotherapy treatments were completed at the Steeplechase Cancer Center in January 2021, she had a partial mastectomy, an

outpatient procedure that removes the part of the breast that has cancer. When testing revealed more cancer in her lymph nodes, she underwent a second surgery in February to remove more tissue. This time, further testing showed no signs of cancer.

To minimize the chances of the cancer returning, Camille underwent a 17-day course of radiation therapy at the Steeplechase Cancer Center, which she completed in May, followed by a course of chemotherapy infusions.

All the while, Cromwell-Piniella kept a watchful eye on Camille, alert for problems such as lymphedema, a type of swelling that can occur after treatment for breast cancer. “A number of times, I would assess her and say, ‘Hey, you’re looking a little swollen,’ or ‘You look a little tired, how are you feeling?’” Cromwell-Piniella says. “I referred her to physical therapy to increase her stamina and occupational therapy to help with lymphedema because I had noticed—probably even before she did—that her left hand was becoming swollen.”

All of the Steeplechase Cancer Center’s staffers display this level of attentiveness, Cromwell-Piniella emphasizes. “We care—that’s what it comes down to,” she says. “We try and do the utmost in providing care and comfort for patients.”

Camille felt that kind of care from nurse practitioner Simona Schneider, RN, MSN, as well. “Simona held my hand every step of the way, ensured every appointment that I needed was made and that I was comfortable and not at all apprehensive,” Camille says.

The Steeplechase Cancer Center also strives to make care as convenient as possible, she says. Instead of traveling to different locations in the community or state for multidisciplinary care from specialists such as medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and surgical oncologists, patients can receive all these services in the cancer center. “It’s like one-stop shopping here,” Cromwell-Piniella says.

FROM CHOIR TO HOCKEY ARENA

Camille is now on the road to recovery. The family that has employed her for many years as a nanny held her job for



MAKE A MAMMOGRAM APPOINTMENT

Mammograms are crucial for early diagnosis of breast cancer and should be scheduled annually beginning at age 40. Be especially diligent about screening if you have a family history of breast cancer, have dense breasts, are African American, skipped or delayed screening due to the COVID-19 pandemic or have other known risk factors. If you are due for a mammogram, don’t put it off. Scheduling is quick and easy at the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, and you don’t need a prescription. Online scheduling is now available through healthconnect.rwjbh.org/hcweb or the **HEALTH CONNECT APP**, or by calling **908.704.3740**.

her. In the meantime, the Steeplechase Cancer Center has helped her get back to one of her favorite pastimes: singing.

Through RWJBarnabas Health’s partnership with the New Jersey Devils, Cromwell-Piniella learned of an opportunity for a cancer survivor to sing the national anthem before a game. Radiation treatment technicians had been impressed with Camille’s ability to hold her breath as part of the therapy. “Camille said, ‘It’s because I sing in the choir at St. Matthias Catholic Church in Somerset,’” Cromwell-Piniella says. Camille was referred and got the gig. “She was perfect for it,” Cromwell-Piniella says.

Camille is also happy to lift her voice in praise of the Steeplechase Cancer Center. “Even though cancer is such a scary thing,” she says, “when you go to the cancer center, you feel like you’re part of a family that is rooting for you.”



BACK FROM THE BRINK

**HOW A QUICK SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS SAVED
A MAN WHO HAD A HEART ATTACK IN THE STREET.**

Anthony Catanese, MD, a urologist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, didn't plan to save a life when he stepped out for a quick walk on March 30. But in a near miraculous sequence of events, his skills as an advanced cardiac life support instructor with experience resuscitating people in distress proved critical to 61-year-old Richard Smekal of Little Egg Harbor.

Exiting his office on Main Street in Somerville, Dr. Catanese was stunned to find Richard lying unconscious in the street not far from his door. The doctor instinctively rushed to the man's side, quickly taking stock of multiple emergency priorities. First, Dr. Catanese stopped traffic to protect Richard from vehicles and asked a bystander to call 911 for emergency assistance. Then he turned to the form crumpled on the pavement.

The man's pulse was slow at first—and then it stopped. Dr. Catanese knew this signaled cardiac arrest, an abrupt loss of heart function. Dr. Catanese immediately started performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), repeatedly compressing the man's chest to squeeze the heart and keep blood pumping through his body.

Richard, a crane operator for PSE&G, has no memory of what happened that day or the array of people in various roles who together saved his life. He had suffered a heart attack as he was working on an electrical pole and, while climbing into his utility truck, had collapsed onto the asphalt.

Although Dr. Catanese got to him first, police, EMTs from the Somerville Rescue Squad, paramedics from RWJBarnabas Health Mobile Health Services and Richard's own crew foreman arrived soon after and took turns performing CPR. Richard's heart kept stopping, and first responders had to use a defibrillator to shock it back to beating. Before the ambulance arrived, they had resuscitated him four times. He would have to be revived again on the way to the RWJUH Somerset Emergency Department (ED).

Dr. Catanese didn't hold much hope that the man he'd tried to save would live. "Less than 15 percent of people who have cardiac arrest outside a hospital survive," he says.

CRITICAL CALL

Once the ambulance headed to the hospital, Dr. Catanese called the ED. He knew from the pattern of Richard's pulse that in

Richard Smekal survived thanks to action from bystanders, first responders and multiple cardiology teams at RWJUH Somerset.



Anthony Catanese, MD (left), and Frederick Picchiello (right), an EMT with the Somerville Rescue Squad and RWJBarnabas Health Mobile Health Services, were among the first on the scene when Richard Smekal (second from left, with wife Rosemary) had a heart attack.

addition to a heart blockage, the electrical system of Richard's heart had been thrown into an abnormal rhythm. The doctors on call would need to know what they were facing.

Emergency medicine physician Lisa Ceppetelli, MD, took note and placed an external pacemaker on Richard's chest as soon as he arrived, which helped regulate his heart's electrical activity, a critical step.

After he was stabilized, Richard was rushed to the catheterization ("cath") lab. There, interventional cardiologist Daniel Fung, MD, performed an emergency angioplasty in which he threaded a thin tube through a blood vessel to open up the blockage with a tiny balloon and placed a stent to keep the blood vessel open, restoring blood flow to Richard's heart.

That's where Richard was when his wife, Rosemary, arrived at the hospital "in panic mode," she says. She and her sister had made a frantic drive from Lakewood after they got the news. "I cried the whole way," Rosemary says.

FIGHT FOR LIFE

Richard was put on a ventilator and moved to intensive care, his condition still precarious. He also had a concussion from the fall and cognitive problems due to loss of oxygen. Rosemary felt more hopeful the following day when her husband opened his eyes and smiled at her.

Richard was soon transferred to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick for rehabilitation. Physical therapists gradually got him standing, then walking with the help of a walker, while speech therapists helped him learn to swallow and eat again after his intubation. A few days after his discharge on April 6, Richard was able to walk without assistance. He continued outpatient cardiac rehabilitation and cognitive therapy and

is on his way to a full recovery.

Despite not remembering the incident or his time in the ICU, Richard understands how close he came to death, and the aftermath has been profoundly emotional. "I can't tell you how many boxes of tissues I've gone through," he says. Richard's life has changed in fundamental ways. It's not just that his diet "has done a 180," he says, referring to the healthy foods he's now eating. Says Rosemary, "The way we live now, everything revolves around enjoying life."

"It's really wonderful that he survived," Dr. Catanese says. "But it's a situation where many people did something. If anyone had been missing, it wouldn't have worked."

The Smekals reunited with the team that played a role in Richard's care two weeks later to say thanks, and many shed a tear. "So many people had a hand in his survival," says Rosemary. "We could not be more grateful. We are very lucky and very blessed."



Helping to cut the ribbon on Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's newly renovated cardiac catheterization lab were, from left, Michael Valendo, Chief Nursing Officer; Patrick Delaney, Chief Operating Officer; Tony Cava, President and Chief Executive Officer; Sharan Mahal, MD, Medical Director of Angioplasty Services; Parag Patel, MD, Chief of Cardiology; Katie Edge, Director, Cardiology Services; Edward Rachofsky, MD, Medical Director of the cardiac catheterization lab; and Salvatore Moffa, MD, Chief Medical Officer.

CATHETERIZATION LAB'S STATE-OF-THE-ART UPGRADE

One of RWJUH Somerset's three cardiac catheterization labs now offers the most advanced X-ray technology available for angioplasty and other catheterization-based cardiac procedures. Called Azurion with FlexArm, this image-guided therapy system provides 2-D and 3-D images with less radiation to the patient. The flexible arm moves around the patient's body, reducing the need to reposition providers and equipment, and promises to make setting up and performing the procedure faster and more efficient.

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





LASTING LEGACY

REMEMBERING A LEADER WHO HELPED SHAPE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset has lost a great friend and champion for the advancement of healthcare throughout the region: Steve Kalafer, chairman emeritus of Somerset Health Care Foundation's Board of Trustees and member of RWJBarnabas Health's Board of Trustees, passed away April 21 at the age of 71.

Steve, who was chairman emeritus of the Somerset Patriots and chairman of the Flemington Car & Truck Country Family of Brands, joined the Board of Trustees of the Somerset Medical Center Foundation in 2004 and became the organization's chairman in 2010. Signs of Steve's legacy are evident throughout the hospital campus. He led fundraising campaigns that supported the building of many hospital facilities, including:

- The Emergency Department
- The Paul R. Nardoni Oncology

Pavilion

- The Mary and John Obzansky Pavilion for orthopedic patients
- The Frimmer Healing Gardens
- The Edward and Anita Hogan Neuroscience Pavilion

Since 2009, the Flemington Car & Truck Country Family of Brands has sponsored free parking in the hospital's parking garage for patients and their families.

In addition, Steve, his wife, Suzanne, the Flemington Car & Truck Country Family of Brands and the Somerset Patriots recently donated \$1 million to support the renovation of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's 1-East Geriatric Unit.

Steve was also a former member of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital parent board. As a member of the board's Finance Committee and Strategic Planning Committee, he played a key role in guiding



Steve Kalafer (left, at right) served in a variety of leadership roles for RWJUH Somerset and RWJBarnabas Health, led fundraising campaigns and supported the hospital through donations.



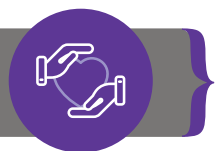
the merger between Robert Wood Johnson Health System and Barnabas Health in 2016. Since then, he has served on the RWJBarnabas Health Board of Trustees, continuing to guide the system's growth and ensure it meets the healthcare needs of a diverse community.

RWJBarnabas Health has also enjoyed a long partnership with Steve and the Somerset Patriots as the team's official healthcare provider.

"Steve Kalafer's impact on Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, RWJBarnabas Health and the communities we serve cannot be overstated," says Anthony Cava, President and CEO, RWJUH Somerset. "That impact goes far beyond his gifts for leadership, governance and strategic foresight. We'll also remember Steve for the generosity, warmth, integrity, enthusiasm, creativity and approachability that not only made him effective in official roles but endeared him to so many who encountered him in a wide variety of contexts."

Steve's family has requested that donations be made in his memory to the Somerset Health Care Foundation.

To make a donation in memory of Steve Kalafer, call Somerset Health Care Foundation at **908.685.2885** or visit www.rwjbh.org/somersetgiving.





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

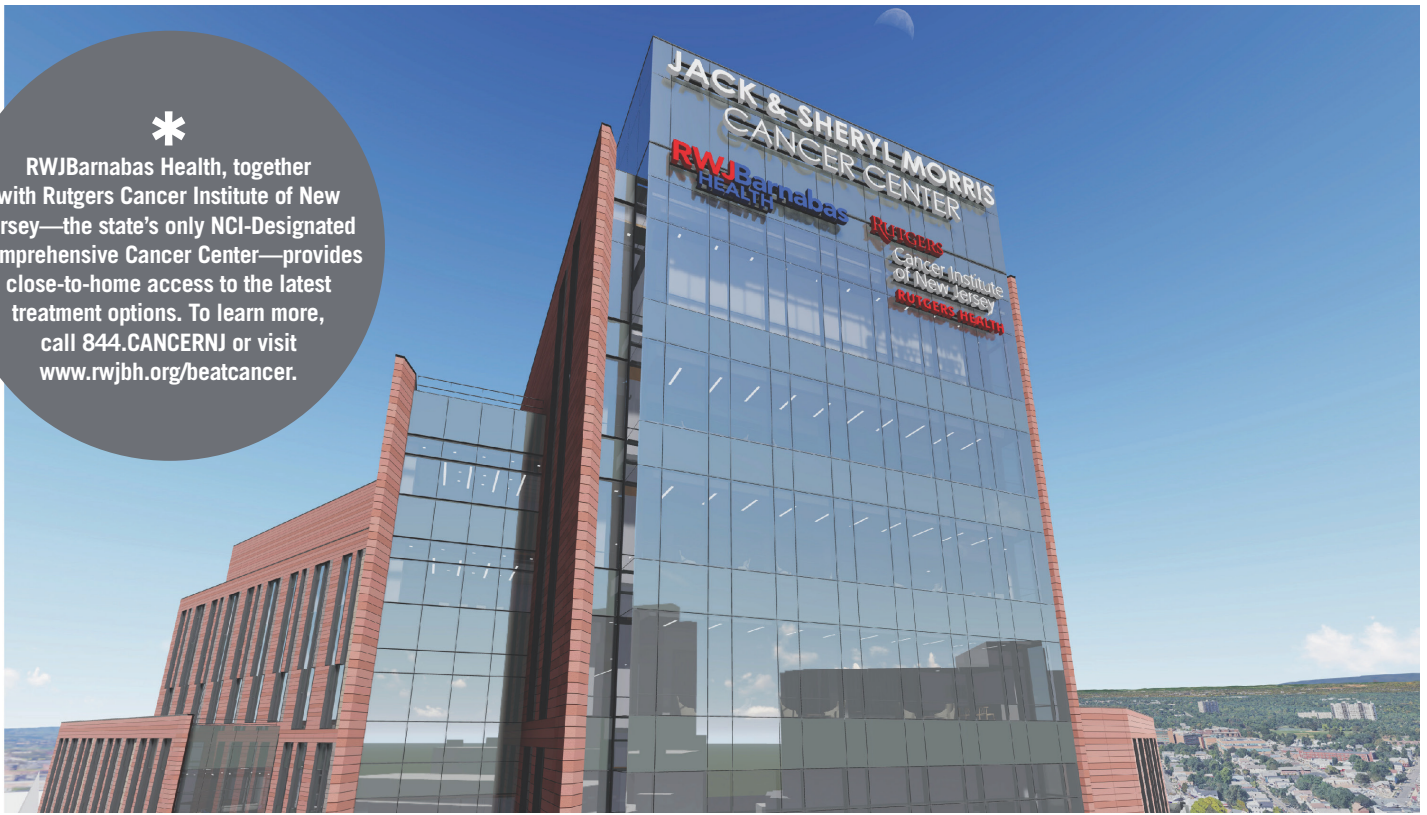
the game,” says Gerry McKeown, Boys Coaching Director, PDA. “The benefit of putting fields in these locations is that children can walk to them right in their neighborhood, and play or compete or just have fun, and fall in love with the game any way they would like. We’re bringing the best of the beautiful 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,



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.”

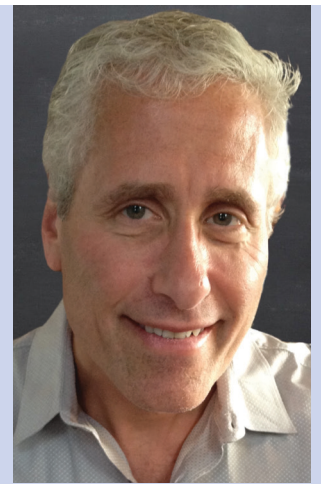
Specialists at the Chronic Illness Management Program at Children's Specialized Hospital coached Ariely in nutrition, exercise and more to help her learn to live well with Type 2 diabetes.

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.



KEITH GOLDSTEIN, MD, FCCP

BREATHING EASIER ABOUT LUNG HEALTH

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMMON PULMONARY PROBLEMS.

Breathing is essential for life, so it's not surprising that people can become deeply distressed if their ability to take in air becomes threatened. But patients sometimes worry more than they need to, says Keith Goldstein, MD, FCCP, a pulmonologist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

"Few people are more frightened than patients who have abnormal CT scans or chest X-rays," says Dr. Goldstein, who is board-certified in pulmonary, critical care and internal medicine. "They often don't realize how many options they have and that it's not necessarily the end of the world." He explains what people often don't know about lung health.

What misconceptions do people have about lung cancer?

One is that it doesn't happen to nonsmokers. True, smoking increases your risks substantially. That's why it's important to get regular lung cancer screenings if you have a history of smoking. But for smokers and nonsmokers alike, another misconception is that an abnormal CT scan is a death sentence. In some cases, the underlying condition may be benign. More serious cases require a full explanation from a capable physician who understands the workup, the increasingly wide range of advanced treatment options and potential complications. Avoid getting swept up in information off the internet, which seldom gives the whole picture and may not apply to you. But don't leave the doctor's office without having your questions answered or having an opportunity to get follow-up information.

What should people know about COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a complex entity that comes in many variations with many causes. It also can be mistaken for something else. Often, a preliminary diagnosis of COPD deserves a closer look. You might actually have a pulmonary embolism or an airway blockage. Other times, people with a normal pulmonary function test still have COPD. A capable pulmonologist has the expertise and tools to—together with the patient—discern what's going on and determine the appropriate treatment.

What should people consider about respiratory infections during cold and flu season?

We have learned good lessons about interpersonal hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic. You may not need to practice extreme measures, but be prudent. Don't get close to people who may transmit aerosols; bump fists instead of shaking hands; hold your own water glass when a waiter fills it to avoid spreading germs from the last glass the server touched.

To connect with a lung health specialist at RWJUH Somerset, call **888.724.7123** or visit www.rwjbh.org/somerset.





A TRANSGENDER JOURNEY

PROVIDING COORDINATED PRIMARY AND
SPECIALIZED CARE TO THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY.

Gwyndolin Vail was a student at Rutgers University in 2014 when the transitioning process began. “I had a kind of laissez-faire approach to gender,” says Gwyndolin, now a 30-year-old researcher. “I identify as nonbinary, and that’s been consistent from the start.” The decision to transition to a

more feminine appearance was carefully weighed. “It turned out to be a great choice that really improved my quality of life,” Gwyndolin says. “It allowed me to explore gender in a very positive way because it gave me access to how I wanted to look in ways I didn’t think I could before.”

Transitioning also exposed Gwyndolin to more complicated interactions with society, including the healthcare system. “The LGBTQIA population has often been marginalized, persecuted, looked down upon and judged,” says Sameh Abdelaal, MD, Medical Director of the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset, which

offers specialized primary care services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex and asexual community. “People often fear going for medical care or to the pharmacy because of personal challenges that can arise from not being accepted or being under threat of scrutiny and disapproval.”

“It’s daunting to put yourself into the care of doctors who are not necessarily trans focused, especially if they have preconceived notions of what it means to be transgender and what people are trying to achieve with their gender presentation,” says Gwyndolin, who prefers to be referred to with they/them pronouns rather than binary he/him or she/her. “That’s even more true for



SAMEH ABDELAAL, MD



JEREMY SINKIN, MD

Gwyndolin Vail receives ongoing care at the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center at RWJUH Somerset and recently underwent gender affirmation surgery.



surgeries. Do you have a doctor who really is going to listen to you and what you want or instead focus on what they think you want?”

SAFE, COMFORTABLE CARE

Gwyndolin's transition process first entailed hormone therapy at Rutgers University Student Health, working with Melodee Lasky, MD, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health and Wellness and a collaborative faculty member at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Therapy included taking androgen blockers and estrogen. “That produced demasculinizing effects from the blockers and specialized effects from the

estrogen,” Gwyndolin says. After graduating, Gwyndolin sought ongoing hormone therapy somewhere that would feel accepting and comfortable. “An endocrinologist at Rutgers Student Health connected me with the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center,” Gwyndolin says.

“We offer comprehensive care to anyone who needs help,” Dr. Abdelaal says. “If they have health needs, our attitude is, ‘You’re a human being; please come in and make yourself comfortable.’” He says a less welcoming attitude increases risks that members of the LGBTQIA community might skip medical care or seek it from unqualified sources.

In the case of transgender patients, “you can obtain hormones on the street or online, and there’s a lot of misinformation about their use,” Dr. Abdelaal says. Hormone treatments affect people differently and each patient’s goals are unique, so regimens need to be tailored and customized. Welcoming all patients helps ensure that care is both safe and respectful, he says.

“Simple things like having the names and pronouns that you want right in your chart make you feel respected for who you are,” Gwyndolin says. “One of the biggest benefits of having LGBTQIA-focused healthcare is that patients feel included and respected and not made to feel they’re different or strange or subjected to invasive curiosity, which I’ve definitely felt at doctors’ offices before.”

SURGICAL SOLUTIONS

Seven years after beginning the transition process, hormones had only gone so far and Gwyndolin continued to feel a sense of what’s known as gender dysphoria. “I was experiencing a disconnect between my identity and how my body looked,” Gwyndolin says. They made an appointment to discuss breast augmentation surgery through the PROUD Gender Center of New Jersey

at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH), which offers a suite of specialized services to the LGBTQIA community, including gender affirmation surgery.

“The goal of gender affirming surgery is to align a person’s physical body with their identified gender,” says Jeremy Sinkin, MD, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon at RWJUH and Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. “During the surgical consultation to achieve a feminine chest, the surgeon needs to understand what the patient’s goals are for size and aesthetics. We need to agree on what implant sizes are medically appropriate for the patient’s body. It’s a shared decision-making process between patient and surgeon.”

Dr. Sinkin and Gwyndolin met multiple times to discuss goals and options. “I just wanted a little increase in breast size,” Gwyndolin says. “I wanted them to look natural and didn’t want a hyperfeminine body that was out of sync with my nonbinary identity or would impede an androgynous aesthetic.”

The process also entails emotional support, especially from patient navigators such as Jackie Baras, MSN, MBA, RN, and Daniel Fernandez. “Gender affirming surgery is a big change, and there’s a lot to process emotionally,” Gwyndolin says. “I have a good support network in my personal life, but for them to offer support, especially post-op, was unexpected and really nice.” Patient navigator Danielle King, MPH, similarly offers support and guidance on appropriate resources and care at the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center.

During Gwyndolin’s May 2021 surgery, Dr. Sinkin made a small incision under the fold of each breast and placed small implants under muscle and native breast tissue. “The outcome has been great and I’m very, very happy,” Gwyndolin says. “When I look at my body now, it feels like this is how I’ve always been, which is pretty incredible. It just feels natural.”

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

When a back injury sidelined Chad DeBolt from high-level competition such as marathons and triathlons, physical therapy helped rebuild strength and function.



BACK

IN

ACTION

HOW INDIVIDUALIZED PHYSICAL THERAPY HELPED ONE ELITE ATHLETE AVOID SURGERY.

Triathlete Chad DeBolt, a former Division I football and lacrosse player at Notre Dame, is no stranger to pain. But when he injured his back after a day of heavy lifting in fall 2020, he was in a kind of agony he'd never experienced before. Eventually he could hardly stand and needed a cane to walk due to a severely herniated disc, which caused intense back and leg pain.

Chad, 41, who works in private equity real estate, lived in Gillette and now lives in Texas, saw no less than six medical specialists and received multiple epidural injections, but the treatments didn't touch his pain. All of the doctors recommended surgery. "Not one of them suggested physical therapy as a viable option," he says.

The week before he was scheduled to have surgery, however, Chad spoke with another former Notre Dame football player who had been able to eliminate his pain from several herniated discs

through intensive physical therapy. Another friend recommended the "McKenzie Method," a system of assessment and management for spinal and extremity musculoskeletal disorders.

Chad proactively emailed a handful of certified practitioners from a website dedicated to the McKenzie Method of Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy to see if he was a candidate. Only one responded: Edison Au, PT, the Center Coordinator of Clinical Education at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater. "Ed was my guardian angel," says Chad. "He took the time to reply to an unsolicited email and followed up with a call the next day."

NONSURGICAL GOALS

"Chad told me, 'I can take pain, but I can't live like this forever,'" Au says.

After they spoke, just two days before his scheduled spinal surgery, Chad decided to cancel it and give therapy a try. "Despite its severity, this was something that could be fixed through physical therapy," says Au. "I couldn't guarantee I would fix him, but I could guarantee that I would try my best to find a nonsurgical solution." Au was able to get Chad in for his first appointment at the clinic within a couple of days.

Au's training and background made him the ideal therapist for Chad. In addition to his credentials, he had significant experience getting athletes back in the game. Au has helped college, professional and even Olympic and Paralympic athletes regain their physical conditioning and competitive edge, and was selected as a team physical therapist for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. Au had also played a varsity sport (rugby) in college and through

“MY PROGRESS CONTINUED, AND I REGAINED MY ABILITY TO SWIM, BIKE AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, ACTIVELY PLAY WITH AND CARRY MY SMALL CHILDREN.”

Chad DeBolt, a former Division I football and lacrosse player at Notre Dame

therapy was able to avoid surgery himself for a herniated disc.

Au strives to understand every patient's expectations and objectives. “The challenge is finding out what inspires the athlete and setting optimized goals,” he says. “If you don't, the patient's not going to be motivated to do what it takes to get better.”

Chad's first priority was getting relief from his debilitating pain and resuming normal daily activities. Eventually, he wanted to return to competing in endurance events such as marathons, triathlons and Ironman competitions. Other goals were just as close to his heart. “One of his main objectives was: improve enough to get through a planned weeklong Disney World trip with his wife and four children,” says Au. “He said, ‘I don't want to cancel this trip; I have to get better for my family.’”

SUITE OF TREATMENTS

Over the next few months, Au used standard techniques like sports

massage, stretching and resistance training, but also drew from a repertoire of more advanced therapies like the McKenzie Method, in which practitioners create individualized treatment plans involving specific exercises to address patients' orthopedic pain.

Au also used myofascial release, in which practitioners manually relieve the tension and tightness in painful trigger points in the body's fascia, a dense layer of tissue surrounding muscles and bones. With Graston Technique therapy, Au used special instruments to release painful restrictions in soft tissue. Mulligan Concept techniques were used to address joint dysfunctions and restore optimal joint mobility, while Muscle Energy Techniques (MET) helped rebalance and normalize spinal and pelvic alignment.

Chad threw himself into treatment. “He was very focused and engaged,” Au says. The center allows for therapists to block off extra time for more complex patient cases, and Chad made the most of each of his therapy sessions. His execution was methodical and his progress steady. “As tough as Chad is, he wanted to do it the right way, avoiding any setbacks or long-term issues by rushing through things,” Au says.

The work started paying off right from the beginning. After one session with Au, Chad was already feeling better. “After a week, he was walking without his cane,” Au says. “After a few more days, he was able to get up and down stairs normally again,” which Chad hadn't been able to do for one to two months due to leg pain and fear of a relapse.

Within two months of his first session, Chad ran his first mile. “My progress continued, and I regained my ability to swim, bike and, most importantly, actively play with and carry my small children,” Chad says.

He also made it to Disney World with his wife and children, and survived the week. “He actually tracked his 30-plus miles with a pedometer and was able to keep his back healthy without encountering any contingencies that we had game-planned for,” Au says.

“Ed is, bar none, the best physical therapist I have ever worked with at any level of competition,” Chad says. “I was willing to take the longer, tough road to recovery as long as I believed it was in the right direction, and I would never have been able to reach the finish line without him. For that, I am forever grateful.”

PHYSICAL THERAPY IN YOUR BACKYARD

No matter where you live, there's an RWJUH Somerset Physical Therapy facility near you:

- **BEDMINSTER (TWO LOCATIONS)**
Excellent Physical Therapy
95 Somerville Road
908.234.9668
The Sports Rehab and Balance Center
2460 Lamington Road
908.234.2488
- **BRIDGEWATER**
1 Patriots Park (TD Bank Ballpark)
908.203.5972
- **FLEMINGTON**
295 State Highway 202/31
908.806.2000
- **HILLSBOROUGH**
1 Jill Court, Building 16, Suite 20
908.359.8800
- **PRINCETON**
743 Alexander Road, Suite 2
609.419.0455
- **SOMERVILLE**
110 Rehill Avenue
908.685.2944

To learn more about RWJUH Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater, call **908.203.5972** or visit www.rwjbh.org/sportspt.





Community Education

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

OCTOBER

Make Time for Mammography

According to Susan G. Komen, breast cancer mortality or deaths were 42% higher in Black women than in other women from 2010 to 2014. In this special webinar for African American women, discover causes of the increased mortality, strategies to reduce breast cancer risks, signs and symptoms, causes, the importance of getting an annual mammogram and treatment options. Offered in collaboration with Crossroads4Hope *Attiyyah Muhammad-Callaway, RN, procedure nurse*
Tuesday, October 5
Noon to 1 p.m. (virtual event)
To register, visit bit.ly/2TP7oUW

National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day

According to the CDC, Hispanic patients made up 27% of new HIV diagnoses within the United States in 2018. Understand acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), symptoms, disparities among the Latinx

community, causes of high transmission, barriers to care, diagnosis, treatments and prevention strategies, including the benefits of PrEP (preexposure prophylaxis).
Shayne Judge, PrEP Counselor
Raul Gonzales, MD, family practitioner
Abraham Linares, Statewide PrEP Coordinator, Hyacinth Foundation
Friday, October 15
Noon to 12:30 p.m. (virtual event)
To register, visit bit.ly/3k6lj3x

Día Nacional de Concientización Sobre el SIDA de Los Hispanos

Según los CDC, los hispanos representaron el 27% del nuevo diagnóstico de HIV en los Estados Unidos en 2018. Comprender el síndrome de inmunodeficiencia adquirida (SIDA), los síntomas, las disparidades entre la comunidad latina, las causas de la alta transmisión, las barreras para la atención, el diagnóstico, los tratamientos y estrategias de prevención que incluyen los beneficios de PrEP.
Raul Gonzales, MD, family practitioner

Abraham Linares, Statewide PrEP Coordinator, Hyacinth Foundation
Friday, October 15
12:30 to 1 p.m.
Para registrarse, visite bit.ly/3yTQKCB

Do You Have a Good Pair of Lungs? Practical Pointers for Respiratory Health

Fall can prompt an increase in flu, COVID-19 and pneumonia cases. Discover strategies for good respiratory health and learn about various lung conditions including cancer, causes of lung cancer, risk factors, diagnostic tools and latest treatments, including video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS) and robotic-assisted thoracic surgery (RATS).
Lee Gerson, MD, thoracic surgeon
Nehal Mehta, MD, pulmonologist
Tuesday, October 26
10 to 11:30 a.m.
Somerville Elks
To register for in-person participation, please call 908.685.2814, or to register for virtual participation, visit bit.ly/2VlaWiC. Seating is limited due

to COVID-19 parameters. Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

NOVEMBER

Is Your Joint Health Weighing on You?

Understand body mass index (BMI); the impact of weight on joint health; causes of joint deterioration; benefits of weight loss; strategies to lose weight and strengthen joints, such as physical therapy; diagnosis; and treatment options, including bariatric and joint replacement surgery.
Marcella O'Herlihy, RN, BSN, Total Joint Coordinator
Sandra Calado, MSN, RN, CBN, Bariatric Surgery Coordinator
Tuesday, November 9
10 to 11:30 a.m.
Somerville Elks
To register for in-person participation, please call 908.685.2814, or to register for virtual participation, visit bit.ly/3isiLeM. Seating is limited due to COVID-19 parameters. Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Food Remedies to Fight Breast Cancer

An estimated 35% of cancers are linked to nutritional factors. RWJUH Somerset invites you to a culinary cancer preventing and fighting awareness evening! Joy Bauer, nutrition and healthy lifestyle expert for the "Today" show and host of NBC's "Health + Happiness," will share nutrition tips and cook up a mouthwatering meal to help decrease cancer risks, boost energy and increase longevity. Discover

the modifiable and unmodifiable risk factors for breast cancer; causes, signs and symptoms; diagnostic tools; advanced treatment options, including RWJUH Somerset's High Risk Breast Cancer Program; and prevention strategies such as eating a healthy diet.

Joy Bauer, MS, RDN, CDN, registered dietitian, author and nutrition correspondent

Deborah Lue, MD, breast surgeon and Medical Director of Breast Cancer Program

Tuesday, October 19 | 6 to 8 p.m.

To register for this virtual event, visit bit.ly/3jGTddF

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCREENINGS

Flu Vaccinations

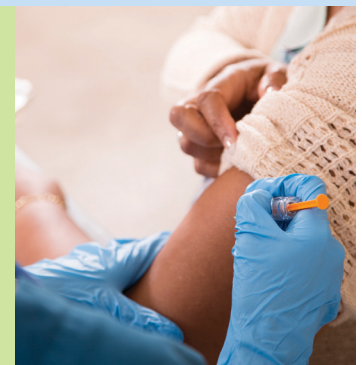
For adults age 18 and older. Participants will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

• **Tuesday, October 5**
6 to 8 p.m.

Steeplechase Cancer Center
First Floor Conference Room
\$25 for quadrivalent flu vaccine or free with Medicare Part B card

• **Saturday, October 9**
9 a.m. to noon

Steeplechase Cancer Center
First Floor Conference Room
\$25 for quadrivalent flu vaccine or free with Medicare Part B card
To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814.



Glucose and Blood Pressure Screenings

A registered nurse and dietitian will be available to answer questions about diabetes management and meal planning.

• **Thursday, November 4**
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Tarantino Promenade, Free
To schedule an appointment, call 908.685.2814. Fasting is not required.

The Hispanic Medical Program: Meeting Needs of Our Diverse Communities

During this webinar, discover the health disparities of the Hispanic community, how their needs differ from those of others, barriers to care and services this new medical program provides.

Sejal Dave Sharma, Director of Business Development

**Wednesday, November 17
Noon to 12:30 p.m. (virtual event)**

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

Great American Smoke-Out

In collaboration with RWJBarnabas Health Institute for Prevention and Recovery's Nicotine and Tobacco Recovery Program and RWJUH Somerset, the Great American Smoke-Out covers strategies for stopping tobacco use, including vaping, and how to access free quit services through our quit center. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and learn if you are eligible for lung cancer screenings.

Keri Britske, MBA, Community Educator

Eshan Patel, MD, hematology oncologist

**Thursday, November 18
Noon to 12:30 p.m.**

To register for this virtual event, visit bit.ly/3i5YctZ

Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

BARIATRIC SURGERY PROGRAMS

Weight Loss Surgery Seminar

Have you been unsuccessful at keeping the weight off? Weight loss surgery may be the right choice for you. But how do you know if you qualify and which procedure is your best option? Join bariatric surgeons at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset for free seminars to learn about your weight loss surgery options, including detailed information about gastric banding, gastric sleeve and gastric bypass.

**Thursday, November 18
David Ward, MD**

6:30 to 8 p.m.

To register for this virtual event, call 908.595.2304.

Virtual Bariatric Support Group

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

Tia Hagins, RD, community nutritionist

**Tuesdays: October 12,
November 9 and December 14
6 to 7 p.m.**

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

DECEMBER

PrEP for World AIDS Day

Understand acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the signs and symptoms, causes, modes of transmission, diagnosis, treatments and prevention strategies including the benefits of PrEP (preexposure prophylaxis).

Sameh Abdelaal, MD, infectious disease specialist

Shayne Judge, PrEP Counselor

**Wednesday, December 1
Noon to 1 p.m. (virtual event)**

To register, visit bit.ly/3AVTRM7

Driver Safety Program

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

Tuesday, December 7

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Somerville Elks, \$30 (breakfast and lunch included)

To register for this in-person event, please call 908.685.2814.



SUPPORT GROUPS

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset offers a variety of support groups, most of which are held virtually. For more information and links to the virtual events, call 908.685.2814.

Eating Disorders: Family Support

This is a parent-facilitated discussion.

Every Tuesday | 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. (virtual event)

Eating Disorders: Patient Support

This staff-facilitated discussion is open to anyone suffering from an eating disorder.

Every Tuesday | Noon to 1 p.m. (virtual event)

Diabetes Support Group

Diabetes Management Update

Leon Shulman, MD, endocrinologist and Diabetes Center Medical Director

Thursday, November 11 | 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Fuld Auditorium

To register, please call 908.685.2846.

Stroke Support Group

First Thursday of the month | 2 to 3 p.m. (virtual event)

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. (virtual event)

In addition, the Steeplechase Cancer Center holds a variety of support groups in partnership with Crossroads4Hope, including a Men's Cancer Support Group and a Multiple Myeloma Support Group. For more information, call 908.658.5400, ext. 0.

At the Core of Your Health: The Benefits of Pelvic Floor Exercises

Discover the various conditions that stem from weak core muscles; signs; causes; diagnosis; and treatments, including pelvic floor exercises. Understand the benefits and types of pelvic floor exercises, who's an ideal candidate and if a referral is required.

Neel Shah, MD, urologist

Ashwini Korgaonkar, PT, physical therapist

**Thursday, December 9
12 to 1 p.m. (virtual event)**

To register, visit bit.ly/3wzj3Vk

Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

Dance Your Worries Away

During this webinar, uncover the various causes of stress, signs and symptoms of anxiety, importance of early intervention, available screenings, stress-reduction strategies such as dance therapy, specific dance movements and available resources, including Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's Behavioral Health Services—Creative Arts Therapy Program.

Bryana Cruz, MA, MT-BC, creative art therapist

**Wednesday, December 15
Noon to 1 p.m.**

To register for this virtual event, visit bit.ly/3xTM6VO







Offered in collaboration with Friends Health Connection

RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group

Your primary source for primary care.

The Combined Medical Group of RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Health offers Somerset County residents an exceptional network of primary care physicians to not only treat you when you are sick, but guide you to improved health and wellness. Virtual and in-person visits available.

A primary care provider is your partner in:

-  The treatment of common illnesses and injuries
-  Reaching weight loss and wellness goals
-  Facilitating an annual physical and ordering appropriate tests and blood work
-  Mental health screenings
-  Medication management
-  Managing chronic health conditions like diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure and lupus

