

Spring 2021

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

# healthy

*together*

**4 WAYS TO OVERCOME  
SLEEP APNEA**

**REBOUNDED AFTER A  
KNEE INJURY**

**COMFORTING  
CANCER PATIENTS**

**SAVE LIVES  
CHOOSE  
VACCINATION**

Robert Wood Johnson

**50**  
Years  
Together

University Hospital Hamilton

# Let's Beat COVID-19

The development of COVID-19 vaccines is one of the greatest achievements in medical science. At RWJBarnabas Health, we're proud to be a key part of the effort to get the vaccine into the arms of all eligible people in New Jersey.

We also remain committed to fighting the spread of the disease. That's why we join with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in urging everyone, whether vaccinated or not, to continue with the simple precautions we know are effective in preventing the spread of the coronavirus:

- Wear a mask.
- Stay at least six feet apart from people who don't live with you and avoid crowds.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often; use a hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

The reason for this continued caution: In some cases, COVID-19 vaccines may protect against severe infection, but may not necessarily prevent mild or asymptomatic infection. If this is the case, an infected person could still spread the virus.

At Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, we continue to fight COVID-19 by providing vaccinations to staff and community members who meet New Jersey criteria with a convenient, efficient process. With so many questions arising about COVID-19 vaccines, we are working diligently to provide as much information as possible in print, online and on the air to all consumers. Our priority is to ensure that everyone has the answers they need to make an empowered decision about the vaccine. When it's your turn, we encourage you to take whichever vaccine option is available to you—and feel confident doing so.

It will take all of us working together as a community to minimize the ongoing effects of COVID-19. Together, we can protect friends, family and neighbors and end this pandemic.

Yours in good health,

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



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



## HEALTH NEWS



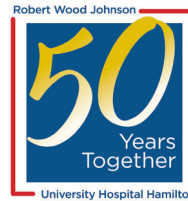
### FRESH FARE AT THE WELLNESS CENTER

JADE Grill & Café is now open at RWJ Fitness & Wellness, 3100 Quakerbridge Road, in Hamilton. Nationally recognized Chef Janet Davis offers fresh, healthy eating options for breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus catering. The meals are infused with international flavors.



### CALLING ALL FLEA MARKET VENDORS

The Community Impact Alliance, formerly the RWJ Hamilton Auxiliary, is hosting a flea market this fall. Vendors, reserve your spot by calling 609.584.5900.



### A MILESTONE YEAR FOR RWJUH HAMILTON

Do you have memorabilia and photos of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton over the past 50 years? Help us remember our last half-century serving the community and share your memories with us. Upload your images and memories—and enjoy those shared by your friends and neighbors—at [www.rwjh.org/hamiltonhistory](http://www.rwjh.org/hamiltonhistory).

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

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

### CONNECT WITH US ON

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- [www.linkedin.com/company/290186/admin](http://www.linkedin.com/company/290186/admin)

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# VACCINATING NEW JERSEY

AS AVAILABILITY INCREASES, EXPERTS HAVE ONE STRONG MESSAGE FOR THE PUBLIC: GET THE SHOT.

“At the outset, we knew we would be helping with the COVID-19 vaccination effort,” says John Bonamo, MD, MS, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH). “But we weren’t aware just how much the state would be relying on healthcare systems to make this happen.”

Just as they did when the pandemic first hit, the experts at RWJBH rose to the challenge. “We opened our first vaccine clinic the week the vaccine came out in December,” he recounts. “Then we opened clinics at each of our 11 acute care hospitals.”

RWJBH is also administering the vaccine at the Middlesex County megasite in Edison, which it runs; the former Sears in the Livingston Mall; RWJBarnabas Health Arena in Toms River; Brookdale Community College in Monmouth

County; and smaller clinics, including in Bayonne and in the Greenville section of Jersey City.

“We’re also assisting municipal efforts in four counties—Ocean, Somerset, Essex

and Monmouth— by providing some or all vaccinators for their clinics,” Dr. Bonamo says, “and we’re partnering with the state, the National Guard and others. In addition, we’ve applied for more vaccination sites for physician offices.”

As of mid-March, RWJBH had already vaccinated approximately 150,500 people and was vaccinating more at the rate of 2,000 a day at its hospitals and 4,000 a day at the Edison megasite. However, Dr. Bonamo says that number will increase significantly as vaccine availability does. “We’re ramping up,” he says. “We’re in this to get it done.”

By summer, Dr. Bonamo says, vaccine supplies will make it available to all who want it. The challenge will shift to making sure everyone who’s eligible chooses to be vaccinated.

## DISPELLING FEARS

“Many people started out with ‘vaccine hesitancy’—they wanted to see how other people did with the vaccine first,” says Dr. Bonamo. “As they saw others feeling good about having had the vaccine, they became more open to it.” That led to the

clamor for vaccination appointments the state saw in the winter.

Vaccine hesitancy persists, however. “There’s understandable mistrust, especially in the black community, born of all the social inequity and healthcare injustice that has happened over the years,” he says. “We’re working hard to dispel that with all kinds of outreach and town halls being done by healthcare professionals of color.”

Older adults should prioritize getting the vaccine, Dr. Bonamo says. “The years they have are precious, and many seniors who got COVID-19 did not do well,” he says. “Often, that’s because they have at least one other comorbidity—diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, lung disease or obesity—that contributes to their risk.”

Dr. Bonamo emphasizes that his message isn’t just for certain groups, but for everybody who’s eligible for the vaccine. “Get vaccinated,” he says. “That’s it. It’s safe, it’s smart, it’s advanced science and it’s the right thing to do to protect yourself and your family.”



JOHN BONAMO, MD

To learn more or to make a vaccination appointment, visit [www.rwjbh.org/covid19](http://www.rwjbh.org/covid19).





# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

In-person classes will be limited in size and held at the RWJUH Hamilton Fitness & Wellness Center. Attendees must wear a mask and practice social distancing to help ensure the safety of everyone present. For more information or to register, call 609.584.5900 or visit us online at [www.rwjbh.org/hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamilton).



## MIND

[LIFELONG LEARNING]

### State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

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

### Stroke: Every Second Counts!

🕒 **Tue., May 4; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
In honor of Stroke Awareness Month, join Rao Pasupuleti, MD, and Connie Mocerri, MSN, RN, AGNP-C, Director, Disease Management/Stroke Coordinator, for information about all things stroke-related, including prevention, risk factors, warning signs and the importance of prompt treatment.

### Nurse Navigation Program

🌐 **Mon., May 10; 1:15 to 2:15 p.m.**  
Virtual program by Jeanne Silva discussing the Nurse Navigation Program and the role of human touch.

### Orthopedics Open House: Joint Replacement

🕒 **Thu., May 13; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Discover the latest advances in knee and hip replacement, including robotic-assisted surgery. Learn how the Center for Orthopedic & Spine Health prepares you for a successful joint replacement and talk to our rehabilitation team. Michael R. Duch, MD, fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon

### Ask the Diabetes Educator

🕒 **Fri., May 14, June 11 & July 16; 10 a.m. to Noon**  
Bring your questions about prediabetes, Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes. M. Billie O'Donnell, BSN, RN, CDE  
Registration and appointment required.

### Ask the Plastic Surgeon

🕒 **Tue., May 18; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
It's been a long winter. Let's spruce up for spring and summer! Join Matthew Lynch, MD, board-certified plastic surgeon, who will explain the latest facial rejuvenation products and procedures. They are certain to put a "spring" in your step!

### Sleepless in Hamilton!

🕒 **Thu., May 20; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Insomnia is a sleep disorder experienced by more than 3 million Americans. People with insomnia have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. The causes, symptoms and treatment will be discussed. Marcella M. Frank, DO, FACOI, FCCP, FAASM, board-certified in internal medicine, pulmonary diseases and sleep medicine

### The Latest Buzz on Tinnitus

🌐 **Thu., May 20; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
Tinnitus is a common problem, but it's poorly understood. New technologies can help tinnitus sufferers experience a reduction in their symptoms and a better way to live. Learn about the newest therapies. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

### 2021 Update on Lyme Disease

🕒 **Tue., May 25; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Did you know that New Jersey ranks among the top five states in the U.S. for Lyme disease? Seth D. Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, SVP, Chief Medical Officer, board-certified in infectious disease and internal medicine, will share the latest on prevention and treatment.

### Sun Smart = Skin Smart!

🕒 **Tue., June 1; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Did you know that sun exposure is the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer? Learn about early detection, risk factors and treatment for basal cell and squamous cell cancers and malignant melanoma. Also, learn how to prevent skin damage. Donna Reger, MD, board-certified in internal medicine

### Dealing with the Stress of Cancer

🌐 **Wed., June 2; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Has your life been turned upside down by cancer? Cancer survivor and stress expert Carol Rickard, LCSW, will teach you simple steps for navigating overwhelming stress and move toward wellness. This program will be held virtually.

### Wound Care Management

🕒 **Tue., June 8; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Learn about risk factors, prevention and state-of-the-art approaches for treating common wounds and ulcers. Biagio Manna, DO, fellowship-trained in cardiothoracic surgery and vascular surgery and Co-Medical Director of The Center for Wound Healing

### Letting Go of Clutter

🕒 **Tue., June 8 & July 13; 1:30 to 3 p.m.**  
This support/discussion group explores how our emotional ties to our "stuff" can create clutter and affect our mood. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### Take Control of Your Health: Diabetes Self-Management, a Six-Session Program

🕒 **Wed., June 9, 16, 23, 30; July 7 & 14; 1 to 3:30 p.m.**  
Designed by Stanford University, this workshop empowers people who have diabetes with the skills and support needed in the day-to-day management of this chronic condition. Topics include menu planning, preventing complications and more. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC and Marguerite Billie O'Donnell, RN, BSN, CDE

### Common Spinal Conditions

🕒 **Tue., June 15; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Cervical and lumbar spinal stenosis and disc herniations are some of the most common spinal conditions. Symptoms and the latest nonoperative and minimally invasive treatments will be discussed with Rony Nazarian, MD, fellowship-trained in orthopedics.

### Being Prepared for Your Hospital Admission

🌐 **Thu., June 17; 11 a.m. to Noon**  
Being admitted to a hospital is the last thing on our minds, but being prepared for it can take away some of the unknowns. A discussion on medical insurance, living wills, rehabilitation, going home with the Visiting Nurse Association and working with a hospital social worker and case managers. Robin McManus, RN, BSN, Utilization Review Nurse

### Breaking Barriers in Brain Surgery: A Conversation with Dr. Hakma

🕒 **Tue., June 22; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
An elite vascular neurosurgeon will describe the latest groundbreaking procedures for aneurysm, brain tumors, stroke, intracranial vascular disorders and minimally invasive spine procedures. Zakaria Hakma, MD, FACS, FAANS

### Wise Women

🕒 **Thu., June 24 & July 22; 1:30 to 3 p.m.**  
As we age, the twists and turns of life challenge us to remain positive, stay engaged, find new meaning and grow in wisdom. Discussion group format. **June 24:** Loneliness **July 22:** Happiness in Hard Times

### Gynecologic Cancer Roundtable

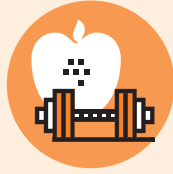
🕒 **Tue., July 6; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Bring your questions and concerns for an open discussion with a gynecologic oncologist. Topics will include cancer prevention, diagnostic testing and treatment. Ruth Stephenson, DO, Gynecologic Oncologist at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center

### Oh, My Aching Joints!

🕒 **Tue., July 27; 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Osteoarthritis of the hip and knee occurs when inflammation and injury cause cartilage to break down. Signs, symptoms and treatment will be discussed. Hari P. Bezwada, MD, orthopedic surgeon

### Are You Feeling Tired?

🕒 **Wed., July 28; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Fatigue can be a symptom of many diseases and conditions. Causes range from a lack of sleep to overwork to a variety of medical conditions. Fatigue can be debilitating and interfere with normal daily activities. Let's find out why you are tired and what to do about it! Maqsood Amjad, MD, Diplomate in Internal Medicine, Hematology and Oncology, and Director, Medical Oncology, Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton



# BODY

[NUTRITION, FITNESS & WELLNESS]

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

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

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

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

## Kids in the Kitchen

Hands-on cooking class directed by a dietitian. For children ages 6 and up and their parent/caregiver. \$5 per child/\$5 per parent/caregiver. Register 48 hours in advance.

## May, Moms & Mmm-Mmm Good!

**Wed., May 5; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
Mother's Day recipes kids can cook for Mom.

**Farm Fresh & Flavorful**  
**Wed., June 2; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
Down-home favorites with a twist, in celebration of Dairy Month.

**Merry Berry Month!**  
**Wed., July 7; 6:30 to 8 p.m.;**  
**& Fri., July 9; 11 a.m. to Noon**  
(ages 3-6)

Super-sweet recipes jam-packed with good nutrition.

## Culinary Medicine Pilot: Lunch & Learn with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM)

**Mon., May 3, 10, 17 & Wed.,  
May 26; Noon to 1 p.m.**

PCRM is committed to preparing next-generation physicians and other healthcare professionals with plant-based resources to change the future of patient care. If you are a medical, nursing or clinical nutrition student or professional, register today. Open to the public.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

- **May 3:** Evidence-Based Eating Patterns for Type 2 Diabetes
- **May 10:** A Plant-Based Diet for the Treatment and Prevention of Hypertension
- **May 17:** Evidence-Based Eating Patterns for Heart Disease
- **May 26:** Evidence-Based Eating Patterns for Weight-Control

## Fight Back Inflammation with Food

**Wed., May 12; 7 to 8 p.m.**

Functional foods are the name, and making them accessible is the game. Learn how to turn popular anti-inflammatory foods into treats to celebrate our nurses and teachers.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## Family Meal Makeovers: Healthy Eating Lunch & Learn

Shake off those pandemic blues with fresh ideas and info on healthy eating. Recipes and cooking demo are included. Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD

**Eating Your Colors: The  
Science Behind the Spectrum**  
Fri., May 21; Noon to 12:45 p.m.

**Family-Friendly Sugar Swaps**  
Fri., June 11; Noon to 12:45 p.m.

## Plant-Based Athletic Performance

**Wed., June 9; 7 to 8 p.m.**

One of the biggest challenges in eating a plant-based diet is consuming enough calories. We'll review some top athletes' game plans and how they continue to make world records happen.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## Semi-Homemade Meals & Navigating the New Food Labels

**Wed., June 23; 6 to 7 p.m.**

Explore strategies for simple weeknight meals full of flavor—without the fuss. You'll learn about recent changes made to food labels and what to look for when choosing products.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## International Culinary Nutrition

**Fri., July 2; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Learn about other cultures' contributions to healthy and delicious eating.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## Summer Chef Club

Attention, aspiring chefs! Join us for a series of hands-on cooking classes for teens. Each week will feature a guest chef, lifestyle tips and take-home materials.

\$5 per class; register 48 hours in advance.

**Plant-Based: What's the Hype?**  
**Wed., July 14; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

**A Trip to the Islands: Caribbean  
Cuisine**

**Wed., July 21; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

**Farmer's Market Fresh**  
**Wed., July 28; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

## Sustainability in the Kitchen

**Wed., July 21; 10 to 11 a.m.**

How we shop, cook and eat affect the environment. Learn how to be kind to our planet, from farm to plate, with recipes celebrating summer.

Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM



# SPIRIT

[HOLISTIC HEALTH]

## HealthRhythms® Drumming

**Wed., May 19, June 16 & July 21; 7 to 8 p.m.**

Come have fun with this evidence-based program that helps to strengthen the immune system and reduce stress. Drums provided. Fee: \$15.

Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP

## Mindfulness Meditation for Beginners

**Wed., May 19, June 16 & July 21;  
1 to 2 p.m.**

Enjoy the profound relaxation and health benefits of meditation. No experience necessary. Patti McDougall, Integrative RN

## Vision Board Workshop

**Mon., May 24; 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

What do you really want to be, do and have? Create a vision board to help you discover your deepest desires. Bring scissors. All other supplies provided.

Patti McDougall, Integrative RN

## Reiki Share

**Wed., May 26, June 23 & July 28; 7 to 9 p.m.**

For those currently certified in Reiki (at any level) to share their gift of Reiki with other Reiki practitioners. Please bring a sheet and a small pillow. Fee: \$5

## Mind Shift: The key to everything you want

**Thu., June 3; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

Learn how to develop a growth mindset that will allow you to use one simple technique to let go of 90 percent of what is holding you back. Kathi Szabo of Eclectic Well Being

## Reiki Level 1 Certification

**Sat., June 5; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Become a Certified Reiki Level 1 practitioner and use the gift of Reiki on yourself, others and pets. Classes limited to six participants to allow time for practice. Fee: \$170. Patti McDougall, RN, BSN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master

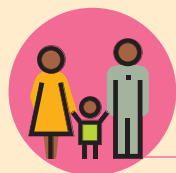
## Angels Among Us

**Tue., June 15; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

What are angels and how can we connect with these celestial beings? We are guided by angels on our life's journey. Fee: \$15. Donna Sweeney, Reiki Master, Integrated Energy Therapist



# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING



## YOU

### [SUPPORT GROUPS]

#### Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program

📅 **Mon. & Wed., 1 to 5 p.m., & Fri., 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Phone or teleconferencing as well as in-person appointments for individual and group counseling. Prescriptions for smoking cessation medication (gum, patches, etc.) available upon request. To preregister or for information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, CTTS, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416 or email [quitcenter@rwjhb.org](mailto:quitcenter@rwjhb.org).

#### Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program Group Session Counseling

📅 **Thursdays, 6 to 7 p.m. & Tuesdays, 3 to 4 p.m.**

Group counseling. To preregister or for information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, CTTS, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416 or email [quitcenter@rwjhb.org](mailto:quitcenter@rwjhb.org).

#### Peripheral Neuropathy Support

📞 Call 609.587.7215 for more information.

#### Breast Cancer Support Group

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

Please call 609.584.2836 to confirm the program is available. The group will meet at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey; 2575 Klockner Road, Hamilton.

#### Stroke Survivors Support Group

📅 **Wed., May 5, June 2 & July 7; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

Call 609.584.5900 to register.

#### Grief & Loss Support Group

📅 **Thu., May 6 & 20; June 3 & 17 and July 1 & 15; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

If you have lost a loved one or have been separated from your support system, you can find comfort and begin to cope better by interacting with others.

#### Bariatric Weight Loss Support Group

📅 **Tue., May 11, June 8 & July 13; 6 to 7 p.m.**

Call 609.584.5900 to register.

#### Alzheimer's Support Group

📅 **Wed., May 19, June 16 & July 21; 6 to 7 p.m.**

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

#### Caregiver Learning Workshop: Controlling Caregiver Burnout

📅 **Mon., June 7; 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

An Oaks Integrated Care caregiver specialist provides information, discussion and support.

#### Caregiver Workshop: Adults Caring for Aging Parents, Homecare versus Placement

📅 **Mon, July 12; 5:30 to 7 p.m.**

An Oaks Integrated Care caregiver specialist will provide information and support to adults who are juggling the responsibilities of a job, children and aging parents.

### HEALTH SCREENINGS

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

📅 **Fri., May 7, June 4 & July 2; 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.**

Eighty percent of strokes can be prevented by controlling your risk factors. Simple finger stick and fast 12 hours prior. Fee: \$5. Appointment and registration required.

#### Hearing Screening

📅 **Thu., May 20; 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

RWJ Hamilton Balance & Hearing Center  
2 Hamilton Health Place,  
Hamilton Township  
Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

#### Fall Prevention/Balance Screening

📅 **Thu., May 20; 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

RWJ Hamilton Balance & Hearing Center  
2 Hamilton Health Place,  
Hamilton Township  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

#### Blood Pressure Screenings

📅 **Mon., May 24, June 21 & July 26; 10 a.m. to Noon**

Hypertension can lead to heart disease, stroke and kidney damage, so it pays to know your numbers.

#### Ask the Dietitian & Body Fat Screening

📅 **Tue., May 25 & June 15 and Fri., July 23; 9 to 11 a.m.**

Do you have a question about

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

#### Osteoporosis Screening

📅 **Wed., May 26; 10 a.m. to Noon**

May is National Osteoporosis Awareness Month. Ultrasound of the heel and personalized information. Appointment and registration required.

#### Take-Home Colorectal Kit

📅 **Tue., June 8; 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.**

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

#### Memory Screening

📅 **Fri., July 9; 10 a.m. to Noon**

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

#### Are You Stressed?

📅 **Wed., July 28; 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

Take a simple test to pinpoint your stress level. Information and coping strategies will be individualized for you. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC. Appointment and registration required.



Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement

# Better Health Program

Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old



## INTRODUCING THE BETTER HEALTH PROGRAM AT RWJUH HAMILTON

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

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

### After COVID, Then What?

**Wed., May 5, June 2 & July 7; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Delve into the emotional and physical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC, and Joyce Cantalice, Manager, Better Health, lead this group discussion.

### Navigating the Medicaid Process

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

Elder law attorney and author Justin Scott, Esquire, helps us understand the application process and benefits of Medicaid.

### Lifestyle Can Save Your Brain

**Wed., May 19; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Maintain brain health with a lifestyle to match! Join Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC, for this fascinating discussion, complete with tips!

### Grounds for Sculpture Wellness Walk

**Thu., May 13; 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.**  
**(Rain date: Fri., May 14)**

Better Health members are invited to join the group for a guided Wellness Walk at Grounds for Sculpture (GFS)! Feast your eyes on the ambiance and art and enjoy the outdoors. Members are invited to enjoy GFS for the remainder of the day. Attendees must be Better Health Program members, and space is limited. Program is a benefit of membership and is complimentary. Must register in advance.

### Plant-Based Recipes, One Meal at a Time

**Wed., June 9; 2 to 3 p.m.**

What is a plant-based diet? How can you include it in your daily menu? Registered dietician Alyssa Luning will explain and share easy suggestions for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

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

Take the opportunity to connect with a geriatrician, who can answer any questions you might have about your health.

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

**Thu., May 6, June 3 & July 1; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Explore the benefits of RWJUH Hamilton's no-cost Better Health Program, which is designed to engage the mind, body and spirit of members ages 65 and up.

#### Get and Keep Healthy Bones

**Thu., May 13; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Avoid fractures and breaks! Learn how a healthy diet and physical activity strengthens your bones.

#### Women & Incontinence

**Thu., May 20; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Learn about the latest incontinence treatments. This program is virtual to maintain confidentiality; anonymous Q&A will be conducted.

#### Healthy Heart Tips

**Thu., May 27; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Love your heart! Learn easy, achievable ways to maintain heart health.

#### Mental Health for All of Us

**Thu., June 10; 1 to 2 p.m.**

An honest and understanding discussion about mental health, its symptoms and assessment. This program will maintain confidentiality. An anonymous Q&A will be conducted.

#### Cooking for Diabetes

**Thu., June 17; 1 to 3 p.m.**

Michelle Summerson, MEd, RD, and Dr. Ali cook a healthy meal for those with diabetes and provide pointers on how to find diabetes-friendly recipes.

#### Q&A with Dr. Ali

**Thu., July 8; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Bring your health and wellness questions to this casual conversation. Dr. Ali has answers for you!

#### Palliative Care: Managing Chronic Pain from Serious Illness

**Thu., July 22; 1 to 2 p.m.**

Learn how palliative care provides relief from the symptoms and stress of an illness.

### Forever Young: For Women Only

**Wed., June 16; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Offered in person and in a virtual format.

Caterina Young, owner & artisan of the Blo Out Lounge in Hamilton, shares professional tips and tricks to look your best at any age.

### Holistic Healing Program Overview

**Tue., June 22; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Offered in-person and virtual  
Carol Doherty, Coordinator, Holistic Program, RWJUH Hamilton, explains the extensive holistic healing program options at the Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton, and how they complement the exceptional care provided there.

### Conversations with David Bossio, Investment Specialist

**Tue., June 29; 10 to 11 a.m.; and Wed., July 14; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Hear a market update from investment specialist David Bossio; then, he'll lead a Q&A session for additional insight you can use now!

### The Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton: Why Choose Us

**Wed., July 21; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Rachana Singh, MD, a radiation oncologist, provides the most recent updates in cancer-fighting treatment and technology at RWJUH Hamilton.

### The Power of a Power of Attorney

**Wed., July 28; 2 to 3 p.m.**

Elder law attorney and author Justin Scott, Esquire, clarifies the purpose and benefits of a power of attorney document and the differences between a financial and medical power of attorney.



**JILL GIORDANO-FARMER, DO, MPH**

# MOVE BETTER, LIVE BETTER

**THANKS TO EFFECTIVE THERAPIES, PATIENTS WITH MOVEMENT DISORDERS CAN HAVE A PRODUCTIVE LIFE.**

There's new hope for patients with movement disorders, such as Parkinson's disease, essential tremor and restless legs syndrome. With the right treatments, they can live full, productive lives, says Jill Giordano-Farmer, DO, MPH, director of the Parkinson's Disease & Movement Disorders Program at The Center for Neurosciences at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. Here, she explains how she cares for patients.

## What is your treatment philosophy?

I form partnerships with patients so I can have ongoing discussions with them about these chronic neurologic conditions. Patients' needs change throughout the course of the diseases.

## How has the pandemic changed the way you're caring for patients?

I'm providing routine follow-up care and seeing new patients via telemedicine and office visits. I can get 90 percent of the information I need just by observing patients. I can see a person's tremor, stiffness and

balance when he or she walks. For a new patient, I can gather information about the person's medical history, symptoms and past medications. I can also ask him or her to perform certain movements to assess joint stiffness.

## How are patients treated?

Parkinson's disease is due to a deficiency of dopamine, a brain chemical. Patients do best with a combination of medication, rehabilitation and exercise. Injections of botulinum toxin can relax a person's muscles, and surgical treatments can improve tremor and stiffness.



To learn more about The Center for Neurosciences at RWJUH Hamilton, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonneuro](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonneuro).

## MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

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

**Richard Freeman, CEO**

**Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, SVP, CMO, Infectious Disease**

**Javier F. Villota, MD, Chair, Internal & Occupational Medicine**

**Diane Grillo, MS, VP, Health Promotion**

**Sara Ali, MD, Internal Medicine / Geriatrics**

**Maqsood Amjad, MD, Hematology / Oncology**

**Leslie Adelman Banks, Fitness & Wellness Center / Managing Partner**

**Hari P. Bezwada, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**

**Anjali Bhandarkar, MD, Internal Medicine**

**Gurvan Blackman, MD, Interventional Radiology**

**Sean Bradley, DMD, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery**

**Oleg Chebotarev, MD, Cardiology**

**George DiFerdinando, Jr., MD, MPH, Public Health**

**Michael Duch, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon**

**David Eingorn, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon**

**Firas Eladoumikdachi, MD, Oncology / Breast Surgery**

**Jill Giordano-Farmer, DO, MPH, Neurology**

**Jessica Federman, Director, Public Relations & Marketing**

**David Feldstein, MD, Interventional Radiology**

**Jarad Fingerman, DO, Urology**

**Marcella M. Frank, DO, Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Disease and Sleep Medicine**

**Dorota Gribbin, MD, Physical Medicine & Rehab / Pain Management**

**Zakaria Hakma, MD, Neurosurgery**

**Joshua Hornstein, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**

**Kevin F. Law, MD, Critical Care / Pulmonary / Sleep Medicine**

**Marc Levine, MD, Orthopedic Spine Surgery**

**Kenneth M. Liebman, MD, Neurosurgery**

**Matthew Lynch, MD, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery**

**Biagio Manna, DO, Thoracic Vascular Surgery**

**Shivaprasad Marulendra, MD, Gastroenterology**

**Ronniel Nazarian, MD, Orthopedic Spine Surgery**

**John Nolan, MD, Orthopedic Surgery**

**Earl Noyan, MD, Bariatric Surgery**

**Marguerite O'Donnell, BSN, RN, Educator, Community Education**

**Rao S. Pasupuleti, MD, Neurology**

**Val Prokurat, DO, Bariatric Surgery**

**Pamela Randolph, PT, DPT, Director, Rehabilitation Services**

**Adam Redlich, MD, Sports Medicine**

**Donna Reger, MD, Internal & Occupational Medicine**

**Anthony Ricketti, MD, Internal Medicine / Allergy & Pulmonology**

**Reza Shah, DO, General / Vascular Surgery**

**Robert Silverbrook, DO, Internal Medicine**

**Lauren Stabinsky, MSN, RN, Director, Community and Corporate Wellness**

**Kim Zambito, MD, Hand Surgery**





# HEART RACING? IT COULD BE YOUR MEDICATION

## BRIEF PERIODS OF INCREASED HEART RATE ARE COMMON AND HAVE A VARIETY OF CAUSES.

Everyone experiences an increased heart rate at some point. You exercise, and your heart rate increases. You become frightened or stressed, and your heart beats faster. You might experience the increased heart rate as a skipped beat, a flutter or a pounding in your chest.

“A temporary increase in heart rate has many causes,” says David Dobesh, MD, Chief of Cardiac Electrophysiology at Jersey City Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group with offices in Jersey City and West Orange. “Emotional stress, physical stress, psychological stress, even things like caffeine, nicotine, too much alcohol or fever. Your body is performing a complex balancing act with your pulse.”



DAVID DOBESH, MD

A lesser-known but common source of increased heart rate is medication, including some kinds of over-the-counter medicines and certain prescriptions. “People should be aware that some medicines do

briefly increase your heart rate,” says Dr. Dobesh, “and usually those episodes are not something you should be concerned about.”

### POSSIBLE CAUSES

Common medications that may increase heart rate for a short period of time include:

- Decongestants, specifically those that contain pseudoephedrine, a stimulant. “If the decongestant has a capital ‘D’ at the end of its name, it contains this ingredient,” says Dr. Dobesh.
  - Some inhalers for asthma, emphysema or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).
  - Theophylline, an oral asthma medication.
  - Medications for ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).
  - Diuretic medications (used to help prevent fluid retention) could result in dehydration, says Dr. Dobesh.
  - Some blood pressure medications may inadvertently lower blood pressure too much.
- “If your pressure is very low from either dehydration or overmedication, the body will respond by increasing the heart rate to compensate,” he explains.

## WHAT IS TACHYCARDIA?

For most people, a heart rate between 60 and 100 beats per minute (bpm) is normal. When your heart beats more than 100 bpm for reasons unrelated to physiological stress, that’s known as tachycardia, from the Greek words for “swift” and “heart.”

If increased heart rate is a concern, basic testing, such as an electrocardiogram or blood work, can be done to determine whether you should be referred to an electrophysiologist—a cardiologist who specializes in heart rhythms. The electrophysiologist will look for possible types of tachycardia that are caused by an abnormality of the heart itself and can affect how well the heart pumps blood.

Examples include atrial fibrillation (AFib), atrial flutter and supraventricular tachycardia (SVT). A wide range of treatments may be considered, including lifestyle changes, medications and medical and surgical procedures.

“Some medications carry warning labels about increased heart rate but in practice this side effect is unusual,” Dr. Dobesh says. “These include certain antidepressants and also thyroid medications, which will not usually increase heart rate if they’re taken at the recommended dose.”

Similarly, herbal supplements such as ginseng, valerian root and orange bitters should not increase heart rate when taken in normal doses, he says.

While a short-term increase in heart rate from medication or emotional or physical stress is normal, increased heart rate that lasts for a long time is not. “If you’re repeatedly feeling symptoms of a racing heartbeat that make you uncomfortable, tell your doctor,” advises Dr. Dobesh. “Further testing may be appropriate.”

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with one of NJ’s top cardiovascular specialists, call 888.724.7123 or visit [www.rwjbh.org/heart](http://www.rwjbh.org/heart).



# EXPECT OUTSTANDING CANCER CARE

**THE NCI COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER DESIGNATION CARRIES  
A WORLD OF MEANING FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES.**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) Comprehensive Cancer Center designation is the highest credential a U.S. cancer center can attain. But what does it mean for a patient?

“For a cancer patient, the question of where to be treated can be terribly confusing. The NCI designation tells a layperson that the institution is among the top centers in the country for delivering cancer care and performing research,” says Steven K. Libutti, MD, Senior Vice President, Oncology Services, for RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) and Director, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state’s only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center.



STEVEN K. LIBUTTI, MD

Though Rutgers Cancer Institute is located in New Brunswick, the beneficial effects of its research, clinical trials and advanced treatments are felt throughout New Jersey thanks to its

unique partnership with RWJBH.

“The beauty of our partnership is that Rutgers Cancer Institute is fully integrated with each of the healthcare system’s 11 hospitals,” Dr. Libutti explains. “When a patient is being treated at any RWJBarnabas facility, he or she has an entryway to an NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center and will get the same level of care and access to advanced treatments and clinical trials.”

## PERSONALIZED CARE

For all their mastery of technology and treatments, the healthcare providers at RWJBH and Rutgers Cancer Institute never lose sight of the human element. “Our whole goal is to provide personalized care not only for the type of cancer you have, but for you as a

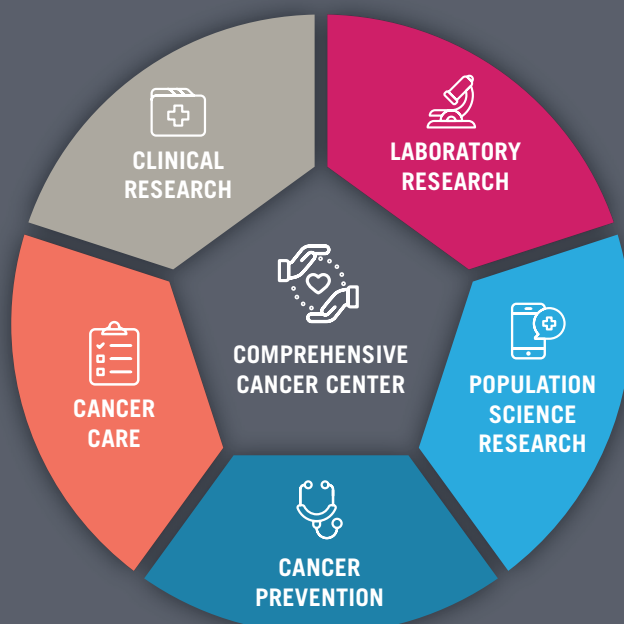
patient,” says Dr. Libutti.

Nurse navigators “reduce the burden of diagnosis,” he explains, by working with the patient throughout treatment, coordinating appointments and ensuring that specialists involved have the information they need. “We wrap the patient in a plan of care created just for him or her,” Dr. Libutti says.

Patients who want to know more about their treatment options through RWJBH and Rutgers Cancer Institute can call the Oncology Access Center at 844.CANCERNJ (844.226.2376), where oncology specialists stand ready to help determine the next steps. “That number is our ‘Easy Button,’ our way to put you on the first step to a successful outcome,” says Dr. Libutti. “We’re only a phone call away.”

## ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

The designation requires the highest level of achievement in five areas:



A Cancer Center Designated by the National Cancer Institute

## BADGE OF HONOR

A Comprehensive Cancer Center designation from the National Cancer Institute places an organization among the top tier of cancer institutions in the country. Rutgers Cancer Institute, together with RWJBarnabas Health, is the only Comprehensive Cancer Center in the state of New Jersey.

## THE DESIGNATION MADE A DIFFERENCE

These survivors are among many who have had the benefit of cutting-edge research, clinical trials and care through the RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute partnership.



### A RARE T-CELL LYMPHOMA

Ling Jin needed treatment for a rare and aggressive form of T-cell lymphoma, requiring high-dose chemotherapy and radiation treatments in preparation for an allogeneic stem cell transplantation, sometimes referred to as a bone marrow transplant. As she underwent chemotherapy, a lymphoma was discovered behind her eye, which was resolved through brief and highly targeted proton beam therapy.

After an extensive database search, an appropriate donor for bone marrow cells was found, and last June, Ling had a successful stem cell transplant at Rutgers Cancer Institute.



### BREAST CANCER WHILE PREGNANT

Breast cancer survivor Liz Tague found out she was pregnant—and soon after, learned that her breast cancer had recurred. After consulting with an oncologist in New York, Liz opted to have her treatment closer to home, guided by Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health.

Following a lumpectomy and chemotherapy, Liz gave birth to a healthy son. Now it was time to consider radiation therapy to prevent further recurrence. Her doctors proposed proton beam therapy, which can be precisely targeted to spare previously irradiated tissues. Three years later, Liz is back to work as a teacher and enjoying family time with her toddler.



### STAGE 4 KIDNEY CANCER

Jim Gritschke was fit and active, but weight loss and sharp pains in his right leg led him to an orthopedic surgeon. The diagnosis: a large tumor on his kidney from metastatic renal cell carcinoma, which had spread to his pelvis.

Jim required major robotic surgery to remove the kidney and tumor, followed by radiation and systemic therapy. He had the benefit of the latest technology and a multi-specialty team at a high-volume center, as well as the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial for immunotherapy. Jim has now returned to his favorite activities.

**“THE BEAUTY OF OUR PARTNERSHIP IS THAT RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE IS FULLY INTEGRATED WITH EACH OF THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM’S 11 HOSPITALS.”** —Steven K. Libutti, MD

## THE PATH TO A PRESTIGIOUS DESIGNATION

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Cancer Act, which established the NCI Cancer Centers program. Out of the thousands of U.S. facilities that have cancer programs, just 51 are NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers. The NCI designation is a grant that brings significant dollars to the Rutgers Cancer Institute and has a positive economic impact on the state of New Jersey.



Submission of a written application between 1,200 and 1,500 pages long

1



A site visit from a variety of national cancer experts, who examine infrastructure, basic research, clinical care, clinical trials and more

2



Scoring to determine rankings

3



After five years, institutions must reapply for the designation.

4



### A PARTNERSHIP FOR PATIENTS

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



# BRAIN ANEURYSMS: WHAT TO KNOW

**BEING AWARE OF  
THE SYMPTOMS  
CAN KEEP YOU OR A  
LOVED ONE SAFE.**

About one in 50 people in the U.S. has a brain aneurysm—a “balloon” of blood protruding from an artery. The majority of these will never burst or even require treatment.

For those whose aneurysms do burst, however—approximately 30,000 people each year—the consequences can be devastating, leading to brain damage, stroke or death.



**ANIL NANDA, MD**

“We want to raise awareness about aneurysms because some studies have shown that almost a quarter of people who have a ruptured aneurysm die because

of misdiagnosis,” says neurosurgeon Anil Nanda, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President of Neurological Services for RWJBarnabas Health and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery, for Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

“We have seen an increase in ruptured aneurysms during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be because people have been less active during this period, perhaps gaining weight or not controlling high blood pressure,” he says.

People who may have warning signs of an aneurysm often neglect them, assuming they’ll simply go away, he says. In addition, many people have avoided seeking care because of fear of going to a hospital during the pandemic.

“The classic symptom is a severe

headache—one that feels like the worst headache of your life,” Dr. Nanda explains. “Not every headache is an aneurysm, of course, and most of the time it’s not anything serious. But if you have this terrible headache along with neck stiffness, and bright light bothers you, you should go to the Emergency Department to have it investigated.”

## **ADVANCED TREATMENTS**

Aneurysms can be diagnosed by a CT (computed tomography) scan, which uses X-rays to determine whether blood has leaked into the brain. Doctors may also order an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), which uses computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of the brain.

Other diagnostic tests include

a cerebral angiography, which is performed by passing a catheter (a long, flexible tube) from the groin artery to inject a small amount of contrast dye into the neck and brain arteries, and a cerebrospinal fluid analysis, which measures chemicals that indicate bleeding in the brain.

“If we do determine there is an aneurysm, whether it’s ruptured or in danger of bursting, we look at the risk factors and determine the appropriate course of action. If surgery is indicated, we’ll get our team together and perform it within 12 to 24 hours,” says Dr. Nanda.

“For years, a procedure called clipping was the only way to fix an aneurysm,” he explains. In this procedure, a craniotomy is performed to create an opening in the skull and then a small metal clip is placed on the aneurysm to stop the blood flow.

“Clipping is still the best solution for some cases,” Dr. Nanda says. “Today, however, the mainstay of treatment is coiling. We can thread the catheter through a groin artery to place a coil on the aneurysm, and there is no need to open the skull.”



## WHAT IS A BRAIN ANEURYSM?

A cerebral (brain) aneurysm is a weak spot on a brain artery that balloons or bulges out and fills with blood. If it bursts, it spills blood into the surrounding tissue, an event that’s called a hemorrhage. Brain cells, deprived of oxygen, begin to die, and the patient may have a stroke.

### TEAM OF EXPERTS

Decisions about treatment are made on a case-by-case basis. “We have a multidisciplinary team at RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers,” says Dr. Nanda. “We have neurologists, neurosurgeons, a neuropsychologist, a neuroradiology team and endovascular specialists, all providing input about what will be most effective for the patient. We’re like a special forces team, able to come together quickly. The patient gets 10 experts for a problem immediately, which is a huge advantage.” Nurse

practitioners, neurology nurses and neurophysiology technologists round out the care team.

“Another benefit of being part of a large system is that we have the advantage of research, clinical trials and education,” Dr. Nanda says. “We can do what we call translational research, meaning we take basic research that’s being done on stroke and translate it into the clinical realm. It’s a bench-to-bedside approach where we can really improve the condition of patients.”



### RISK FACTORS

- Uncontrolled blood pressure.
- Smoking.
- Family history of aneurysms.
- Older age.
- Head injury.
- Substance abuse, particularly cocaine.
- Heavy alcohol consumption.
- Conditions present at birth, including polycystic kidney disease and cerebral arteriovenous malformation, an abnormal connection between arteries and vessels in the brain.



### POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A RUPTURED ANEURYSM

**If you experience these symptoms, call 911:**

- Sudden, severe headache.
- Double vision.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Stiff neck.
- Sensitivity to light.
- Seizures.
- Loss of consciousness, even if brief.
- Cardiac arrest.



### POSSIBLE SIGNS OF AN UNRUPTURED ANEURYSM

**If you experience any of the following, consult your doctor right away:**

- Drooping eyelid.
- Dilated pupil in one eye.
- Pain above and behind the eye.
- Changes in vision or double vision.
- Confusion.
- Weakness and/or numbness on one side of the body.

For more information about neurosurgical services available at RWJBarnabas Health, visit [www.rwjbh.org/neurosurgery](http://www.rwjbh.org/neurosurgery).





# WHY CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS CAN'T WAIT

**DON'T DELAY ROUTINE VACCINATIONS THAT WILL KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE FROM PREVENTABLE DISEASES.**

The rate of routine childhood vaccinations—for diseases like measles, mumps, pertussis and more—has declined significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and pediatricians are worried.

“This decrease in vaccinations is a huge concern to us,” says Uzma Hasan, MD, Division Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Saint Barnabas Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.



UZMA HASAN, MD



PATRICIA WHITLEY-WILLIAMS, MD

“We don’t want to experience a resurgence of vaccine-preventable illnesses that we have previously had very good control over. We don’t want to see our patients develop life-threatening issues like encephalitis from measles or meningitis from Haemophilus influenzae type B, which are prevented by safe, routine childhood vaccinations.”

“Parents have been hesitant to bring their children to doctors’ offices or clinics for fear of exposing them to COVID-19,” explains Patricia Whitley-Williams, MD, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children’s Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Division Chief of Allergy, Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

“However, these offices are following all the recommended guidelines from

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” Dr. Whitley-Williams says. “Offices are sanitized in between patient appointments, plastic barriers are up, patients and visitors are checked for fever and masks are worn.” (For children, wearing a mask is recommended over the age of two years.)

“Pediatricians’ offices have protocols in place to keep well children and sick children apart,” adds Dr. Hasan. “Some set aside special time periods just for vaccinations. Many places require that people check in over the phone and wait outside in their cars. Patients and families then are brought straight into the office, so there’s no exposure to other people in a waiting room.”

Parents who have safety concerns should contact their pediatrician’s office to ensure that proper safety measures are in place, the doctors advise.

### FOLLOW THE SCHEDULE

Timing is important when it comes to childhood vaccinations, Dr. Hasan says. “Please don’t put off having your child vaccinated because you think it’s better to space the shots out,” she says. “The schedule of vaccines has been carefully determined to minimize risk and get the best response for each age.” The recommended schedule for routine childhood vaccinations can be found at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

Expectant mothers should get the Tdap vaccine to protect the baby against pertussis, sometime between the 27th and 36th weeks of pregnancy, the CDC recommends. “That vaccine has been a game changer for protecting vulnerable newborns,” Dr. Hasan says.

One vaccine many parents are eager to explore for their children is the one for COVID-19, Dr. Hasan says. “I can’t tell you how many calls we get about that,” she says. “We’re eagerly awaiting the results of trials so we have safety data for the younger age groups, particularly for vulnerable populations such as those with kidney, heart or lung disease.”

In the meantime, routine childhood vaccinations should proceed as advised by your pediatrician. “Parents and guardians should be assured that these vaccines have been proven to be safe and effective,” says Dr. Whitley-Williams, “and they save lives.”

To find a pediatrician at RWJBarnabas Health, call 888.724.7123 or visit [www.rwjbh.org/doctors](http://www.rwjbh.org/doctors).





Hard work at the Inpatient Chronic Pain Management Program enabled Olivia to compete in triathlons again.

# A RACE AGAINST PAIN

**A COMPETITIVE ATHLETE ACHIEVES HER DREAMS THANKS TO AN INNOVATIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.**



**Children's Specialized Hospital®**

An RWJBarnabas Health facility

Olivia Christmann, 19, had been in pain for months when she came to Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) in New Brunswick.

A competitive athlete, Olivia had been training for the Age Group Triathlon World Championships in August 2015 when she crashed her bike while riding at 27 miles per hour. The impact of the crash left Olivia suffering from a broken nose, a torn gluteus maximus and several strains in her legs.

Though her injuries healed with time, her pain continued and got progressively worse. Finally, Olivia was diagnosed with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a form of chronic pain that develops after an injury but gets worse over time. While CRPS is not well understood, it's thought that high levels of nerve impulses are sent to the affected site.

Olivia tried several outpatient therapies, but her pain persisted, leaving

her unable to do most social or physical activities. Even walking to the car after a therapy session was an ordeal.

After researching other avenues for treatment, Olivia learned about the four-week Inpatient Chronic Pain Management Program at CSH.

"I was searching for a way to get my life back to normal," says Olivia. "During the initial evaluation, they asked me what my goals for the program were, and the first thing that I said was that I wanted to race again." She entered the program in January 2016.

### WILL TO WIN

During her time at CSH, Olivia learned techniques for moving in a way that would help her manage the pain. Her natural competitiveness came out during timed activities like learning how to step in and out of a tub, or going for a walk

outside. "I always strived to beat my time from the day before," she recalls. Swimming, aquatic therapy and group and individual psychotherapy helped her learn to desensitize herself to pain and function normally.

After four weeks, Olivia was feeling more in control of her CRPS—and ready to get back to her senior year of high school. By the end of that year, she had been accepted into a prestigious university and was back to competitive sports.

In 2019, nearly four years after her accident, Olivia competed in the Age Group Triathlon World Championships, the same competition she'd been training for when she crashed her bike.

Olivia recalls the moments before the competition began: "I remember thinking, 'I can't believe I'm actually here!' And that's when it all hit me: There's no way I would have been able to do it if it weren't for my time at Children's Specialized Hospital. The treatment I got there gave me the chance to live out my dreams."

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

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



## THERE'S NOTHING MINOR ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN RWJBARNABAS HEALTH AND THE SOMERSET PATRIOTS.

When two powerhouse organizations combine forces, the result is a big win for the community. Fans and friends of the Somerset Patriots not only get to see great baseball—the team was recently selected as a Double-A affiliate for the 27-time world champion New York Yankees—they also learn new ways to stay healthy.

“Baseball players work at their craft every day to be the best that they can be. Their exercise routines and nutritional habits are rooted in the principles of living healthy. Like our community, they rely on experts to help guide them along the way. That’s why our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health is so important and works so well,” says Steve Kalafer, Somerset Patriots Chairman Emeritus and RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) trustee.

Over the 22-year history of the partnership, RWJBH has hosted regular health fairs, blood drives and food drives, and has provided information on how

community members can get access to key health services and screenings. Somerset Patriots players have benefited, too: RWJBH provides sports medicine services to keep players on the field of play.

For kids, the Somerset Patriots, in partnership with the health system, created the Hit a Home Run Program. Featuring former pitcher Nate Roe, the education program for schools (delivered virtually this school year) is designed to teach young children how to eat healthier, make smarter lifestyle choices, be a good teammate and friend and understand the importance of exercise.

### FRIENDS IN NEED

The Somerset Patriots team has been a stalwart supporter of RWJBH. Last summer, the organization raised more than \$16,000 for the RWJBarnabas Health Emergency Response Fund to help support healthcare professionals as they served communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money was



At left, the Somerset Patriots and RWJBarnabas Health have recently enhanced their longtime partnership. Above, former pitcher Nate Roe delivers health information for area students (photo taken pre-pandemic).

raised in a variety of ways, including online auctions, merchandise sales of T-shirts and face masks, a pop-up shopping event and drive-in movies at TD Bank Ballpark.

“We are so grateful to the Somerset Patriots for their continued support of our hospital and our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, from donations of food for our staff to hosting blood drives and holding events to benefit our Emergency Response Fund,” says Tony Cava, President and CEO of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset, a pillar of healthcare throughout Central New Jersey. “Their ongoing support helps ensure that our community has access to the comprehensive healthcare services they need.”

### A SOURCE OF PRIDE

RWJBH employees, many of whom live locally, take great pride in the partnership, attending games and participating in group events. Players feel that spirit as well.

“We pride ourselves on being active in our community to help make a difference,” says Somerset Patriots President and General Manager Patrick McVerry. “Our fans are always there for us at the ballpark and for all of our efforts. We know that through our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health, we are able to make sure our fans and community are always in good hands where their health is concerned.”

To learn more about the Somerset Patriots and the RWJBH partnership, visit [www.milb.com/somerset](http://www.milb.com/somerset) and [www.rwjbh.org/partnerships](http://www.rwjbh.org/partnerships). To donate to the RWJBH Emergency Response Fund, visit [www.rwjbh.org/giving](http://www.rwjbh.org/giving).





# VIRTUAL FUN

## TWO INNOVATIVE EVENTS RAISED SIGNIFICANT FUNDS FOR RWJUH HAMILTON.

Last fall, the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton Foundation held two successful events: We vs. C™ and the Annual Gala. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both events were virtual.

We vs. C™, which raises funds for the Cancer Center Holistic Program, was held on October 23. Attendees received an email with a link to a video presentation entitled “Beyond the Looking Glass.” RWJUH Hamilton President and CEO Richard Freeman, Cancer Center staff members and the co-chairs of the event, Lisa Freeman and Ilana Gutierrez, were featured in the video. “The purpose of the video was to paint a picture of our Cancer Center and everything it offers—not only the clinical expertise but also all of the Holistic Services and the benefits they provide to patients,” says Jessica Alleman, Director, Foundation and Development. Registration was free, and attendees

were encouraged to donate to the Cancer Center’s Holistic Programming.

The event was a success; it raised more than \$45,000. This year, We vs. C™ will be held in person on June 19 at the Brick Farm Tavern in Hopewell.

### A NEW TWIST ON THE GALA

The innovative “Gala in a Box” was held on Friday, November 6. Attendees purchased boxes, which started at \$250 for dinner for two. Each box included gift cards to a local restaurant and a local liquor store, a bottle of sparkling cider dipped in chocolate, a cocktail menu, coasters and napkins, and Spotify and Pandora playlists. The evening included a brief video presentation.

More than 100 boxes were sold, and 10

A Gala in a Box was delivered to a Foundation board member.



## SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for the following 2021 fundraisers. Note that all in-person events will follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

- All in Good Taste, which is hosted by the Young Professionals Group, will be held virtually on **April 29**.
- The 30th Annual Golf outing will be held on **June 14** at Cobblestone Creek Country Club in Lawrence Township.
- We vs. C™: Tree of Life will be held on **June 19** from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Brick Farm Tavern in Hopewell.
- Family Movie Night, hosted by the Young Professionals Group, will be held on **September 17** at ARM & HAMMER Park in Trenton.
- The Spooktacular Gala in a Box will be held on **October 22**.

*\*All in-person events are subject to change based on the current Executive Order and state of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

For more information on 2021 events, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonevents](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonevents).

volunteers traveled more than 550 miles to hand-deliver them to people’s homes, reports Alleman. Some attendees bought boxes and chose to donate them to hospital staff members, points out Alleman.

### A BIG SUCCESS

There were several levels of sponsorship, up to \$7,500, and the event raised more than \$80,000. The event was so successful that it will be held again this year. Lori Danko, an attendee, summed it up: “How wonderful to be in the safety of your home enjoying all the goodies in the box while celebrating an amazing institution.”

To learn about innovative fundraising events and to support the hospital, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltongivenow](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltongivenow).





# COMFORTING CANCER PATIENTS

**A NEW NONPROFIT IS PROVIDING  
COMFORT CARE PACKAGES TO HELP  
PEOPLE COPE WITH TREATMENT.**



**Top:** The Melissa's Brigade team. **NOTE:** This photo was taken before mask and social distancing recommendations were in place.

**Bottom:** Patient Renee Carroll, the first recipient of a Melissa's Brigade comfort care package, with, from left: Amy German, BSN, RN, OCN, Director, Cancer Services at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton, and Christina Lane, RN, OCN, INS, of the Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton.

## WE ALL NEEDED TO CONTINUE TO HAVE SOME PIECE OF MELISSA, AND WE ALL IDENTIFY THESE CARE PACKAGES AS THAT PIECE.

Amy K. Schuler, RWJUH Hamilton chair, Melissa's Brigade

They called themselves the Breakfast Club: a group of six women from Lawrenceville whose lives happily entwined through their children's schools, Scout troops and sports teams, social gatherings and town events. Their meals together sealed their bond as mothers, community members and friends.

When they lost a member of the group to ovarian cancer in November 2019—warm, spirited and driven Melissa McCormack, who was just 50—the women changed the group's name to Melissa's Brigade. The nonprofit is now the Mercer County chapter of Lisa's Army, an organization that provides personalized care packages to comfort men, women and children battling cancer.

### MELISSA'S LEGACY

The Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton recently began a partnership with Melissa's Brigade. Each month, nurses and doctors at RWJUH Hamilton nominate two cancer patients to receive comfort care packages that resemble the one Melissa cherished during her treatment for ovarian cancer.

Valued at about \$650, each package includes a collection of comforting and useful items, such as inspirational cards, an Apple iPad or Beats headphones, an iTunes gift card, journal and pen, "queasy pops" to help with nausea, shawl, cozy socks, puzzle books and a reusable drink bottle. For Melissa's Brigade, the packages represent the best of the woman who now fuels their efforts. "I feel she's here with us, smiling and saying, 'Alright, girls, you've got this,'" says Melissa's Brigade executive chair Sue Diefenbach.

"We all needed to continue to have some piece

of her, and we all identify these comfort care packages as that piece," says Amy K. Schuler, the group's RWJUH Hamilton chair. "I think Melissa would be proud and honored and would see this as a beautiful way for us to stay together."

### A PARTNERSHIP FOR PATIENTS

Launched in 2020, the Brigade's efforts are closely tied to those of Lisa's Army, which was created in memory of ovarian cancer patient Lisa Loonstyn-Golden. When Melissa received a Lisa's Army comfort care package during her treatment, she swooned over its contents with her Breakfast Club friends on a video call that left a lasting impression. "It was such a bright moment," recalls Schuler. "Melissa was so excited that people had thought of her, and she had all these wonderful items she needed."

Captivated by the group's compassion and generosity, Melissa and her friends attended a Lisa's Army fundraising event in October 2019, just weeks before Melissa's death. Her friends have carried the torch ever since.

The Brigade's formal kickoff event was a 5K walk/run held in October 2020. Afterward, the group decided to partner with RWJUH Hamilton Cancer Center. "As a group, we toured the Cancer Center and felt it spoke to our mission, from the state-of-the-art equipment to the staff members' passion for patients," says Diefenbach.

Cancer Center director Amy German, RN, also considers the partnership a great fit. The Center has a holistic program, which aims to support patients in body, mind and spirit. "The comfort care



Melissa McCormack was grateful for the care package she received during her cancer treatment.

packages will help patients get through their treatment," says German. "2020 was a challenging year, and cancer treatment can be a lonely time.

I think the comfort care packages are exactly what patients are looking for. They're like a hug."

RWJUH Hamilton patients' reactions to the comfort care packages range from smiles to grateful tears. "I've received notes expressing their appreciation," says Schuler. "With the pandemic, patients often can't have anyone in the treatment room with them. This is another way they feel cared for and comforted."

Melissa's Brigade hopes to provide more comfort care packages. "If Melissa had won her battle against cancer, I believe she would have started this movement herself," says Schuler. "We have a lot more comforting to do in Mercer County."

**NATIONAL  
CANCER  
SURVIVORS  
DAY® 2021**  
*a celebration of life*

**SAVE THE DATE:  
JUNE 6**

**RWJUH Hamilton is proud to support cancer patients throughout their treatment journeys and celebrate their survivorship.**

To learn more, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hiltonmelissasbrigade](http://www.rwjbh.org/hiltonmelissasbrigade).

**\*  
RWJBarnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provide close-to-home access to the most advanced treatment options. Call 844.CANCERNJ or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).**



Now that she's had surgery to repair her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), Kelsey Fischer is able to dance again.

# BACK TO THE DANCE FLOOR

## HOW A YOUNG PERFORMER REBOUNDED FROM A SERIOUS KNEE INJURY.

It was 48 hours before the opening night of her high school musical, Broadway's "Newsies," and Kelsey Fischer, dance captain of the show, was performing a high-energy jazz number during rehearsal. Suddenly, she felt and heard an ominous pop in her right knee. "I couldn't feel my knee," recalls Kelsey, 18, of the February 2020 incident. "My leg felt paralyzed, from my hip to my ankle. I had to get off the stage, out of the lights and disconnect from the sound system so no one could hear me cry."

Kelsey's parents took her straight to the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton Emergency Department, where X-rays were taken. It turns out she had torn her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), a structure that stabilizes the knee. She was fitted with a knee brace to stabilize the joint. It would take two weeks for severe swelling—a common side effect of ACL tears—to sufficiently subside for an MRI scan to confirm the diagnosis.

### A WELCOME COMPROMISE

While Kelsey could walk, albeit with a limp, her ability to dance would be jeopardized unless she had ACL reconstruction surgery, says Michael R. Duch, MD, the RWJUH Hamilton orthopedic surgeon who treated her. But Kelsey wanted to put off the procedure until after she'd participated in three milestones—prom, graduation and her senior dance recital. With her parents' blessing, the two struck a compromise: Kelsey could



MICHAEL R. DUCH, MD



**"THIS EXPERIENCE HAS GIVEN ME A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN BODY"**

*Kelsey Fischer*

hold off on surgery as long as she continued to wear a knee brace over the next few months.

Dr. Duch performs between 20 and 40 ACL reconstructions each year and treats patients of all ages. He knew Kelsey could get by with a knee brace in the short term. "I was comfortable with Kelsey's decision," he says. Kelsey was grateful. "Dr. Duch was really understanding," she recalls. "He always called me a rock star. He reassured me that my knee would go back to normal, like nothing had ever happened."

### TIME FOR HEALING

For Kelsey, there was a silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since school and dance classes were held virtually, she had the opportunity to concentrate on healing. It also meant that she could have surgery sooner, since her long-awaited milestone events were cancelled. In a 35-minute, same-day procedure last June, Dr. Duch performed the surgery.

Six months of physical therapy followed. Kelsey walked on a treadmill, rode a stationary bike and did weight and resistance training to restore her range of motion and strengthen the muscles surrounding her knee. She completed therapy in December 2020. Both surgeon and patient are thrilled with Kelsey's recovery. "She can go back to doing whatever she wants," says Dr. Duch.

Now a freshman majoring in psychology at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), Kelsey spent the fall semester learning virtually. She's eager to try out for TCNJ's dance group when in-person auditions are held. "This experience has given me a greater understanding of the human body," she says. "If I don't feel well, I don't try to power through like I used to. I understand this is my body's way of telling me to slow down."

Learn more about The Orthopedic & Spine Institute at RWJUH Hamilton and schedule your consultation. Visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonorthospine](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonorthospine) or call 609.689.7031.



# 4

## WAYS TO OVERCOME SLEEP APNEA

ASK A SPECIALIST IF YOU COULD BENEFIT FROM ONE OF THESE TREATMENTS.



There are 85 different sleep disorders, and people often experience more than one, says Marcella Frank, DO, Director of the Sleep Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. A common disorder is sleep apnea, in which a person temporarily stops breathing many times during the night due to an airway blockage. A CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine increases air pressure in your throat so your airway doesn't collapse while you're sleeping. It's the gold standard treatment for sleep apnea, but there are alternatives, says Dr. Frank. Here are several ways to cope with the condition:

### 1 MANDIBULAR ADVANCEMENT DEVICE

Oral appliance therapy can help prevent the tongue from flopping backward and obstructing the airway. A dentist can create a mandibular advancement device, which covers the top and bottom teeth. Over the course of one to three months, the device moves the tongue and lower jaw forward while you sleep, which opens the airway and prevents snoring and sleep apnea.



MARCELLA FRANK, DO

### 2 ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

A thorough exam of the nose, back of the nose and throat can help identify structural factors that may contribute

to snoring or sleep apnea, says Dr. Frank. These include a deviated septum, large tonsils and nasal polyps. Treating these problems can help reduce the severity of sleep apnea, points out Dr. Frank.

### 3 WEIGHT LOSS

"Weight loss is important," says Dr. Frank. "Fat pushes against the sides of the throat and narrows the airway. Also, abdominal fat pushes against the diaphragm, the only muscle that supports breathing during REM sleep." Studies show that obese people experience severe drops in oxygen levels during REM sleep, explains Dr. Frank. If you lose weight, the airway will open more and the diaphragm will work better. "A 10 percent weight loss can reduce sleep disturbances by 50 percent," says Dr. Frank. For some, bariatric surgery is a good solution.

### 4 INSPIRE

You might have seen the TV commercials for Inspire, a pacemaker-like device for people with sleep apnea. This device is implanted under the skin near the top of the chest. A sensor detects when the tongue is too relaxed and sends an electrical charge to it, preventing it from obstructing the airway. This device also helps to restore tone in the muscle of the tongue, says Dr. Frank. A "sleep endoscopy," in which an ear, nose and throat specialist examines the back of the throat, can determine whether you're a good candidate for Inspire.

Start to sleep better! To schedule a consultation with Dr. Marcella Frank, call **609.245.7430**.





# THE VOICE OF THE PATIENT

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE HELPING RWJUH HAMILTON PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY CARE.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton's goal is to deliver safe, comprehensive and compassionate healthcare. To do this, the hospital needs feedback from the community. So, in 2016, RWJUH Hamilton formed a Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). "We want to keep patients and family members connected with the hospital, informed and respected," says Jill S. Anderson, MBA, MBB, PMP, Vice President, Patient Experience, RWJBarnabas Health.

At RWJUH Hamilton, six PFAC members meet monthly for one hour. All are active volunteers at the hospital and have been patients or have family members who have been patients in the past two years. "We embrace their input," says Anderson. "They provide feedback based on their experiences."

Hospital employees approach PFAC members with specific concerns and ask for their recommendations. For instance, the director of ambulatory surgery attended a PFAC meeting and asked the

group for their recommendations on how to get patients to fill out surveys. Sometimes, PFAC members approach the hospital with their own concerns. For instance, one person said, "I noticed there's no visible sign to the elevator," so a sign was added. Members also pointed out that it was difficult to read the communication boards in patient rooms, so the font was enlarged. Listening and applying recommendations from the voices of our patients and families improve the quality of care and patient experience.

### SERVING ON COMMITTEES

In 2018, all RWJBarnabas Health hospitals instituted their own PFACs. Across the system, members participate in patient rounds, during which they visit hospitalized patients, and provide feedback on patient education. They also serve on quality and safety committees, including Bioethics, Quality, Infection Control, Patient Falls, Safety, Pediatric and Palliative Care. Some PFAC members have joined the LGBTQ Business Group and

The impact of the RWJUH Hamilton Patient and Family Advisory Council can be seen throughout the hospital. **NOTE: This photo was taken before mask and social distancing recommendations were in place.**



## MEETING THE NEEDS OF PATIENTS

Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) members across RWJBarnabas Health have achieved the following over the past few years:

- reduced discharge times by 30 minutes
- helped develop ICU, NICU, inpatient and pediatric brochures
- helped test the central scheduling app
- developed and presented workshops for families
- provided feedback on patient fall signs
- revised communication boards in patient rooms
- provided insights into visitation hours
- developed informational and safety videos for staff and community members

Hand Hygiene Task Force. Last year, PFAC members started to participate in biweekly calls with Epic, the system's new Electronic Health Record vendor. They have been providing input into the marketing plan for MyChart, the new patient portal.

Looking ahead, specialty PFAC groups may form to serve Spanish-speaking patients, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and NICUs.

PFAC members appreciate the fact that their voices are heard. Says one member: "Prior to this, I would send back the patient survey and never know if my comments were addressed. Now I know the hospital administration and PFAC members are...working on issues that affect all of us. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be a member."

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton is recruiting new PFAC members! For more information, call **609.584.6550** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/hiltonpfac**.



# Top Ranked for Quality and Safety.

