

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

Summer 2022

healthy *together*

**CANCER
CARE
FOR MIND
AND SPIRIT**

**OBESITY
AND YOUR
IMMUNE
SYSTEM**

**CLEARING
CLOGGED
ARTERIES**

**HEALING HEARTS:
IT TAKES A TEAM**





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

BARRY H. OSTROWSKY | Chief Executive Officer, RWJBarnabas Health



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

MARK E. MANIGAN | President, RWJBarnabas Health



“Our recent approval to perform elective, or non-emergent, angioplasty procedures, sometimes referred to as percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI), increases our ability to continue to provide the highest level of care, and our cardiac specialists are experts in interventional cardiac procedures like PCI.”

RICHARD FREEMAN | President and Chief Executive Officer, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton

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

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

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- www.linkedin.com/company/rwjuh-hamilton

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At a recent award ceremony are (standing from left) Marc Levine, MD, Director, Center for Orthopedic and Spine Health; Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer; Lasanta Horana, MD; Atif Siddiqi, PA; and Edward Wingfield, MD, along with (seated from left) Sofia Dasti, MD; Diane Grillo, MSM, Vice President, Health Promotions; Asima Arslan, MD; and Joan Bercari, MSN, RN, Vice President, Quality.

HONORED FOR PANDEMIC LEADERSHIP

Seth D. Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton, and Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, was selected to receive the 2022 Leadership Award from Middlesex and Mercer Counties Medical Society of New Jersey.

The award recognizes and honors Dr. Rosenbaum for his critical leadership, expertise and contributions to help to protect, serve and educate patients; families and loved ones; medical staff; and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Rosenbaum received the honor at an April 27 event called “Leadership in Medicine: Empowering Physicians to Lead and Improve Healthcare” at the Hyatt Regency Princeton. Dr. Rosenbaum is board-certified in infectious diseases and is a fellow in the Academy of Physicians in Wound Healing. Proceeds from the event go toward sponsoring students and medical students, and help support further medical society leadership activities.



PHOTO: MICHAEL A. SABO

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EVENT SUPPORTS CANCER CARE

The Young Professionals Group (YPG) of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton hosted its 16th Annual All in Good Taste Beer and Wine Mixer on April 27. The event honored Tyrell Smith of the Smith Family Foundation, and funds raised supported the YPG’s \$50,000 pledge to the Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton.

healthy *together* contents

SUMMER 2022



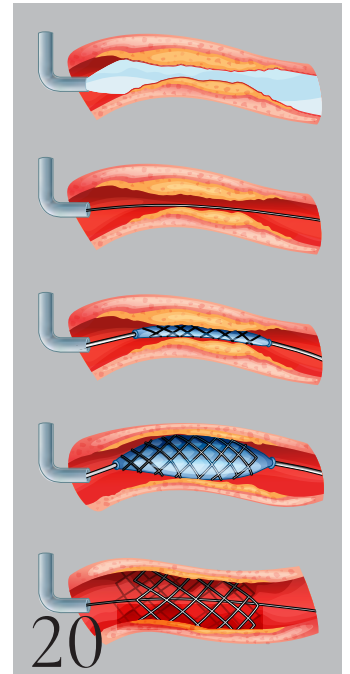
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2. WELCOME LETTER.

A community update from our leadership.

4. CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING.

A roundup of health, education, screening and support programs.

8. OBESITY AND YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.

Reducing weight can save your life in the age of COVID-19.



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9. HEALING HEARTS.

A team approach to coronary artery disease.

10. NEW WAYS TO TREAT SKIN CANCER.

Advanced treatment options, clinical trials and greater access to expert care.

12. A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN PLAY. The RWJBarnabas Health Field of Dreams is open to kids of all abilities.

14. RETHINKING WORK. What to ask yourself before you retire.

16. THE VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE. How Opportunity Project innovates to help adults recover from brain injury.

17. PROVIDING A LIFT. How an assistance fund helps qualifying patients with transportation and other needs.

18. A HEALING BOND. Two women connect through the Cancer Center's innovative Holistic Program.

20. CLEARING CLOGGED ARTERIES. An advanced procedure allows blood to course freely. Plus: How to protect your heart.

22. 'SHE TRUSTED OUR NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM.' A nurse in need of spine surgery chooses care close to home.

CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

All programs are IN PERSON unless otherwise noted. In-person classes will be limited in size and held at the RWJUH Hamilton Fitness and Wellness Center. Attendees will be required to bring a mask and to practice social distancing to help ensure the safety of everyone present. For more information or to register, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at RWJBH.org/events.



The AARP Driving Course

Mon., August 1, September 12 & October 3; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Be a safer, better driver. Most insurance companies will lower your premium with a completion certificate. Bring your NJ or PA driver's license. Fee: \$25 for nonmembers; \$20 discount for AARP members (cash or check only).

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

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

Choosing the Right Bariatric Surgery

Wed., August 3; 7 to 8 p.m.
Lora Melman, MD, FACS, FASMB, discusses how bariatric surgery treatment options for obesity and lifestyle modifications are effective and long term.

50+ Bridge Club

Fridays, noon to 3 p.m.
Join us if you have basic knowledge of the game and point system.

Hearing Aids: Do They All Work the Same?

Tue., August 16; 11 a.m. to noon
Join us as we work our way through a difficult-to-navigate topic and understand the world of hearing

aids. Learn what you need to know before buying your first or next hearing aid. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Orthopedics Open House: Joint Replacement

Tue., August 16; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Discover the latest advances in knee and hip replacement surgery, including robotic-assisted surgery. Learn how the Center for Orthopedic and Spine Health and our rehabilitation team prepare you for a successful joint replacement. John R. Schnell, MD, orthopedic surgeon, fellowship-trained in sports medicine, along with RWJUH Hamilton physical therapists Maureen Stevens, PT, DPT, GCS, Cert MDT, and Courtney Fluehr, PT. Light dinner

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

Come discover the Abbott Marshlands with a knowledgeable guide. Each 1st Saturday Walk will explore a different part of this rich and diverse natural area. Guides and locations will vary so that all marshland trails will be explored during the year. For meeting times, location, trails and cancellation information, go to <https://abbottmarshlands.org>.

RWJBarnabas Health: Audiology Department Open House Event

Tue., Wed. & Thu., September 13 to 15; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Discover better hearing solutions for your needs. Learn about the new advances in hearing technology. Qualified patients will receive free hearing screenings and trials. The event will be held at RWJ Balance & Hearing Center, 2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton. Call 609.245.7390 to schedule an appointment. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Lunch and Learn: Dive into the Innovations of Wound Care

Mon., September 19; noon to 1:30 p.m.
Reza Shah, DO, FACS, FACS, FAPWA, CMET, Co-Medical Director, will guide you through the latest services and technology provided at the RWJUH Center for Wound Healing, hyperbaric oxygen therapy unit. Lunch will be provided.

Fall Prevention Awareness Day 2022

Thu., September 22; 10 to 11:30 a.m.
In honor of Fall Prevention Awareness Week, join physical therapist Maureen Stevens, PT, DPT, GCS, Cert MDT, and occupational therapist Sarah Masco, OTD, OTR/L, CLT-LANA, for an informative lecture on the many risk factors that contribute to falls, how they can be prevented and what you can do to stay safe in your home.

Safety and Security Awareness in Today's World

Wed., September 28; 1:30 to 3 p.m.
Learn about cybersecurity, internet scams and how to protect against identity theft, as well as about personal safety at home, in the community and in the workplace. Robert "Bob" Field Jr., Assistant Vice President of Support Services, Safety and Security at RWJUH Hamilton, is a respected security professional with over 35 years of military, federal law enforcement and private security experience. He has extensive knowledge and practical experience in physical and personal protection.

Tinnitus Sound Therapy: How Does It Work?

Tue., October 4; 11 a.m. to noon
Many people suffer from noises they hear in their ears/head that no one else can hear. Join us as we demystify the problem of tinnitus and discuss whether sound therapy is for you. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Chronic Lung Problems Post-COVID

Thu., October 6; 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Are you still experiencing a cough, tightness in your chest, fatigue or shortness of breath? Are you wondering if your symptoms are

Fall Mini Medical School: An 8-Week Series

Tuesdays, September 13, 20 & 27; October 4, 11, 18 & 25; and November 1; 6 to 7 p.m.

RWJUH Hamilton physicians teach this eight-week course. Fee: \$20; refundable with attendance of all eight sessions

- **Week 1 (September 13): Opening Address and Travel Medicine.** F. Javier Villota, MD, Medical Director, Occupational Medicine, Corporate Health and Medicine, Medical Director of Mini Medical School
- **Week 2 (September 20): Surgery.** Lora M. Melman, MD, FACS, FASMB, Director of The Hernia Center of New Jersey, bariatric and weight loss surgery specialist, hernia and abdominal wall reconstruction specialist, groin pain disorders specialist, reflux surgery specialist, endoscopic surgery specialist
- **Week 3 (September 27): Orthopedics.** Michael Duch, MD, board-certified orthopedic surgeon,

fellowship-trained in sports medicine

- **Week 4 (October 4): Gastroenterology.** Shivaprasad Marulendra, MD, board-certified in internal medicine, fellowship-trained in gastroenterology
- **Week 5 (October 11): Peripheral Artery Disease.** Honesto (Sto) Poblete, MD, board-certified in general and vascular surgery, specializing in treatment of arterial and venous disorders
- **Week 6 (October 18): Infectious Disease—"Superbugs."** Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Medicine, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- **Week 7 (October 25): Why Time Matters—An ER Perspective.** Lasanta Horana, MD, Chair and Medical Director of Emergency Services
- **Week 8 (November 1): Neurology.** Erol Veznedaroglu, MD, FACS, FAANS, FAHA, professor and Director of Drexel Neurosciences Institute at Drexel University's College of Medicine, Robert A. Groff Chair in Neurosurgery at the Global Neurosciences Institute

related to having had COVID-19? Pulmonologist Anthony Ricketti, MD, and infectious disease specialist Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, will address the pharmacotherapy, vaccine and issues around long COVID-19.

Wisdom for Your Bosom

Wed., October 12; 6 to 7 p.m.
Matthew J. Lynch, MD, is widely recognized as one of New Jersey's top breast surgeons for cosmetic, reconstructive, augmentation and reduction procedures. Join Dr. Lynch for a discussion on these topics.

The Specialty of Family Medicine

Mon., October 17; 10 to 11 a.m.
Likhitha Musunuru, MD, a provider

with RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, specializes in family medicine for ages 4 and up. Connect with Dr. Musunuru as she discusses the importance of establishing a good relationship with your primary care provider.

Breast Cancer: Facts and Myths

Thu., October 20; 5 to 6 p.m.
Are you unsure of what is a fact and what is a myth when it comes to breast cancer? Find the truth and debunk those myths with Firas G. Eladounikdachi, MD, FACS. Dr. "Eladou" brings high-quality care and clinical trial opportunities from Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and has a special interest in breast cancer.

Hamilton Oktoberfest 2022
Veterans Park, Hamilton, NJ
Sun., October 16; 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Rain date: Sun., October 23; 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

All are invited to this community event, for which RWJUH Hamilton is a sponsor. Enjoy a fun-packed day with a multitude of activities.

FREE
Admission



BODY

NUTRITION, FITNESS & WELLNESS

What's in the Box?

Tue., August 2, September 20 & October 4; 6 to 7 p.m.

Oh my gourd! Harvest season is upon us. Jersey Fresh tomatoes, corn, eggplant and squash are here! Each session will cover a star seasonal ingredient and demo a plant-based recipe or two to make it shine, featuring produce from Snipes Farm and Education Center. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

Kids: Fit in the Kitchen—A Series

Cook up some fun and sample healthy foods in new ways! This series includes one class per month

for 3 months for children ages 5 and older with parent/caregiver. Register early; class size is limited. Fee: \$15 per child/\$15 per parent/caregiver (covers all three classes). Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

• **Tue., August 9; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

The Banana Stand. The dog days are here! Cool off and get energized with frozen bananas dipped in all kinds of fun—chocolate, yogurt, coconut and more. Topic: My Plate

• **Tue., September 6; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

Cobbler Craze. It's National Apple Month! Apples, pears and peaches are all falling off the trees. Let's catch them and make something special to eat. Topic: Food Labels

• **Tue., October 11; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

Oktoberfest. Learn a few German comfort foods done right, followed by dancing and fun for everyone. Topic: Healthy Bodies + Happy Mind

Film Screening: "How Not to Die: The Role of Diet in Preventing, Arresting, and Reversing Our Top 15 Killers"

Wed., August 17; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

In this "best of" compilation of his last four year-in-review presentations, Michael Greger, MD, explains what we can do about the No. 1 cause of death and disability: our diet. Light refreshments will be served. Virtual option available. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

Metabolic & Bariatric Nutrition Support

Wed., September 28; 6 to 7 p.m.

Common complaints after surgery include nausea, GI problems, and dizziness and headaches. The struggle to get enough protein, vitamins and water is real. Wherever you are in this journey, come and hash out your concerns with a dietitian and leave with a plan. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Film Screening: "How Not to Die: The Role of Diet in Preventing, Arresting, and Reversing Our Top 15 Killers"

Wed., August 17; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

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Honor Your Taste Buds

Fri., August 19; noon to 1 p.m.

What's healthier than kale? A healthy relationship with food! Join Rachyl Garinger, RD, CEO of Nutrition 4 Results, to learn about nutrition for optimal wellness, intuitive eating and how to honor your taste buds without strict "food rules."

Eat with Kindness

Fri., September 16; 11 a.m. to noon

Health is not just diet and exercise. Learn about the importance of being kind to yourself in an effort to support a healthy mind and body with psychotherapist Caitlin Siekerka, MA, LPC, of The Better You Institute.

Festive & Fun

Sun., October 30; 2 to 3 p.m.

Learn new ways to keep the spirit in Halloween and support your health with a little more green! Focusing on fruit as fun isn't as hard as it may seem. Only one way to find out ... come on and see! Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM



SPIRIT

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Reiki "Refresher"

Thu., August 11; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Have you been Reiki certified, but it's been so long since you've used it that you wonder if you still "have it"? Yes, you do! Reexplore Reiki energy with those in the same boat. Fee: \$20.

Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Private Reiki Sessions

Tue., August 16, September 20 & October 18; 1 to 5 p.m., by appointment only

Enjoy the profound relaxation of a private Reiki session. Reiki is a form of energy medicine to help relax the

body and soothe the soul. Fee: \$60/hour. Clients are fully dressed in a chair or on a massage table. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Create Your Own Vision Board

Tue., August 16; 6 to 7:30 p.m.

What are your hopes and dreams? Create a visual representation of your goals. Bring scissors; all other supplies provided. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Mindfulness Meditation for Beginners

Wed., August 17, September 21 & October 19; 1 to 2 p.m.

Learn the simple (but not always easy) art of calming your busy mind with meditation. No experience necessary. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

HealthRhythms® Drum Circle

Wed., August 17, September 21 & October 19; 7 to 8 p.m.

Drum away your worries with this evidence-based program to help reduce stress and blood pressure. Drums provided. Fee: \$15. Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP

The Link Between Social Media and Anxiety

Tue., August 23; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Cell phone use, social media and being constantly "plugged in" have been shown to greatly increase stress and anxiety, especially in young people. Learn the facts and explore simple ways to decrease screen time. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Reiki Share

Wed., August 24, September 28 & October 26; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Have you been Reiki certified

(at any level)? Come share the gift of Reiki with other certified practitioners. Bring a sheet and small pillow. \$5

Using Crystals for Emotional Well-Being

Thu., September 22; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Crystals are a gift from Mother Earth and hold sacred healing properties. Learn about crystals that offer soothing energy to help regain emotional balance and support positive well-being. Fee: \$15. Donna Sweeney, Integrated Energy Therapy Master/Teacher, Reiki Master

Reiki Level 1 Certification

Sun., October 2; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Reiki means "universal life force," which is a noninvasive gentle touch that accelerates the body's natural healing processes, supports mental and emotional healing, and gives an overall sense of well-being. Learn this

powerful technique and be able to practice on yourself, friends and pets. You will find out about the history, learn proper hand placement and have lots of time for practice. Fee: \$180; manual included. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Integrative Therapies Nurse, Reiki Master/Teacher

Chakras 101: Understanding Your Energetic Anatomy

Mon., October 3; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

This workshop explores the chakras—energy centers within the body that interact with physical and emotional well-being. You will come away with an understanding of this energy system and the ways it can help you lead your best life. Fee: \$15. Michelle Gerdes, RYT-200, of Princeton Doula Center

CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING



YOU SUPPORT GROUPS

Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program

Mondays & Wednesdays, 1 to 5 p.m.

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

Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program: Group Session Counseling

Thursdays, 5 to 7 p.m.

Group counseling; other groups available, including a Spanish option. For information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416, or email quitcenter@rwjbh.org.

Peripheral Neuropathy

Call 609.587.7215 for assistance or information.

Breast Cancer Support Group

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

Please call 609.584.2836 to confirm that the program is available. This group meets at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, 2575 Klockner Road, Hamilton.

Adult Children Caring for Parents

Mondays, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

- **August 1:** Community Resources
- **August 15:** Coping with Memory Loss
- **September 12:** Exploring Types of Dementia
- **September 26:** First Steps for Caregivers
- **October 3:** The Importance of a Living Will
- **October 17:** Dementia: Communication Tips & Techniques

An Oaks Integrated Care caregiver specialist will conduct these interactive workshops on crucial topics as well as facilitate a supportive group experience.

Caregiver Series: Caring for Loved Ones with Chronic Conditions

Mondays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

- **August 1:** Coping with Memory Loss
- **August 15:** Exploring Types of Dementia
- **September 12:** Dementia: Communication Tips & Techniques
- **September 26:** Strategies for Keeping Your Loved Ones Engaged
- **October 3:** First Steps for Caregivers

- **October 17:** The Importance of a Living Will. Caring for a chronically ill senior can take a physical and emotional toll on family members. An Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-Being Specialist will moderate.

Caregiver Support Group

Wed., August 3, September 7 & October 5; 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Supportive discussion group for those caring for a loved one who is aging or has a chronic illness—shared experiences can be healing. An Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-Being Specialist will moderate.

Grief & Loss Support Group

Thu., August 4 & 18, September 1 & 15 and October 6 & 20; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

If you have lost a loved one or been separated from your support system, you can find comfort and begin to cope better by interacting with others. An Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-Being Specialist will moderate.

Letting Go of Clutter

Tue., August 9, September 13 & October 11; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

This support group explores how our emotional ties to our “stuff” can create clutter and affect our mood. An Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-Being Specialist will moderate.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Wed., August 17, September 21 & October 19; 6 to 7 p.m.

Support and information for family and friends of people with Alzheimer's disease. An Oaks Integrated Care Specialist will moderate.

Wise Women

Thu., August 25, September 22 & October 27; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

As we age, the twists and turns of life challenge us to remain positive, stay engaged in life and find new meaning. Discussion group format. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN
August 25: The Trap of Perfectionism
September 22: An Attitude of Gratitude
October 27: Keeping Your Mind Sharp

Bariatric Weight Loss Support Group

Tue., September 13; 6 to 7 p.m.

Call 609.584.5900 to register.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Hearing Screening

Wed., August 10, September 14 & October 12; 9 a.m. to noon

**2 Hamilton Health Place
Hamilton Township, NJ 08690**

Call 609.245.7390 to register. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Fall Prevention/Balance Screening

Wed., August 10, September 14 & October 12; 9 a.m. to noon

**2 Hamilton Health Place
Hamilton Township, NJ 08690**

Call 609.245.7390 to register. Jin-Bo Jung, DPT

Ask the RD & Body Fat Screening

Tue., August 23, September 6 & October 25; 9 to 11 a.m.

Do you have a question about diet and nutrition? Join Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM, for a one-on-one Q&A and receive an optional body fat screening. Registration required.

RWJBarnabas Health: Audiology Department Open House Event

Tue., Wed. & Thu., September 13 to 15; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Discover better hearing solutions for your needs, and learn about the new advances in hearing technology. Qualified patients will receive free hearing screenings and trials. The event will be held at RWJ Balance & Hearing Center, 2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton. Call 609.245.7390 to schedule an appointment. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

Osteoporosis Screening

Wed., September 14; 10 a.m. to noon

Ultrasound of heel and personalized information. Appointment and registration required.

Take-Home Colorectal Screening

Tue., September 20; 10 to 11 a.m.

Learn how to use a simple take-home test to detect early colon cancer. Registration required. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN

Memory Screening

Thu., September 22; 1 to 3 p.m., by appointment

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.

Cholesterol Lipid Profile/Glucose/Blood Pressure & Stroke Assessment

Tue., October 18; 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Testing these key health parameters can help control individual risk factors. Simple finger stick; fast 12 hours prior. Appointment and registration required. Fee: \$10

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL CLASSES.

Visit www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth or call 609.584.5900.

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

THE BETTER HEALTH PROGRAM AT RWJUH HAMILTON

Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement
Better Health Program
Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old



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's mantra is "Rediscover your mind, body and spirit in retirement." Members meet like-minded people and learn from doctors and other professionals who make your well-being a priority.

The programs listed below are exclusively for Better Health members. Registration is required for each one. To become a Better Health member or register for a program, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth.

Must be a Better Health member to attend. Registration required.

Tai Chi

Thu., August 4 & 18, September 8 & 22 and October 6 & 20; 10 to 11 a.m.

Sifu Tony Jackson of DAO Concepts leads this program. Tai chi is a series of gentle physical exercises and stretches. Each posture flows into the next without pause, ensuring that your body is in constant motion and improving balance and strengthening legs. Beginners welcome.

Yoga Classes

Wed., August 10 & 24, and Tue., September 13 & 27 and October 11 & 25; 10 to 11 a.m.

Charu Chaudhry, Certified E-RYT with Yoga Alliance, shares her broad experience in multiple yoga disciplines. This class will include traditional postures, simple breathing exercises and meditation techniques, as well as how to modify the poses for your body so that you can confidently participate. Beginners welcome.

Meditation

Fri., August 12 & 26, September 16 & 30, and October 14 & 28; 11:30 to noon

Sifu Tony Jackson of DAO Concepts leads this program. Meditation can wipe away the day's stress, bringing with it inner peace. See how you can easily learn to practice meditation whenever you need it most. Beginners welcome.

Put It There: The Daunting Task of Organizing & Downsizing

Wed., September 7; 10 to 11 a.m.

Stacy Matticola, Certified Organization Specialist and Certified Senior and Specialty Move Manager, shares her expert tips on getting organized, downsizing and approaching these often-overwhelming tasks.

Sara I. Ali, MD: Goals of Care

Thu., September 15; 1 to 2 p.m.

Dr. Ali will lead a gentle, kind and compassionate conversation about your care options as we tackle illness and aging. Explore your options without the emotion that a crisis often brings.

For Women Only: Kunali Dalal, MD, OB-GYN

Tue., September 20; 10 to 11 a.m.

Can we speak frankly? We can and we will in an educational conversation about the symptoms and challenges that occur not just after menopause but also as women age. Learn about treatments and procedures designed to help reduce symptoms so you can continue to live your best life.

Lunch and Learn: Jill Giordano Farmer, DO, MPH

Wed., September 28; 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Dr. Farmer will be speaking on the latest treatments, medications and advancements in Parkinson's and movement disorders. Dr. Farmer is Assistant Professor of Neurology and Director of the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Program at Global Neurosciences.

Lunch and Learn with Sara I. Ali, MD: Stroke Prevention

Thu., October 13; 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Stroke symptoms? Don't ignore the signs. Learn how to identify stroke risk factors and adopt a healthy lifestyle to help prevent strokes.

Grounds for Sculpture Textiles Class

Wed., October 19; 10 a.m. to noon

Join us at Grounds for Sculpture for an individualized experience using your hands and fine motor skills. Availability is limited.

Soundtrack of Your Life

Wed., October 26; 2 to 3 p.m.

Sheli Monacchio, CDP, HSAC, ADLS, Senior Vice President of Angelion Mobility and a singer/songwriter, shares her expertise on creating a personal soundtrack. A song can take you back to a time and place—imagine having an entire soundtrack of your life to bring you smiles and comfort when needed most.

OBESITY AND YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM



RAGUI SADEK, MD, FACS

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT HOW REDUCING YOUR BODY MASS INDEX CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Although physicians and scientists are still collecting and analyzing data about people who suffered most severely from COVID-19 infections, a clear correlation between high body mass index (BMI) and grave illness from the virus emerged early in the pandemic.

Often referred to as an epidemic in the U.S., obesity is known to worsen serious health issues like heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Ragui Sadek, MD, FACS, Director of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton and RWJUH in New Brunswick, explains how excess weight affects infection risks.

Why is obesity connected with serious illness from infection?

There's a significant link between fatty tissue and immune cells, with overweight people being prone to experience an increase in the body's inflammatory response. A certain amount of inflammation helps the body heal injuries and fight infections. But too much inflammation or inflammation that continues for extended periods can lead to numerous health problems—

and being overweight or obese is a hyperinflammatory state.

Hormonal changes associated with obesity can affect important immune system components such as infection-fighting T cells. Deregulation of certain hormones due to obesity weakens the immune system and makes the body more susceptible to infection.

Why are overweight people more likely to get seriously ill from a viral infection?

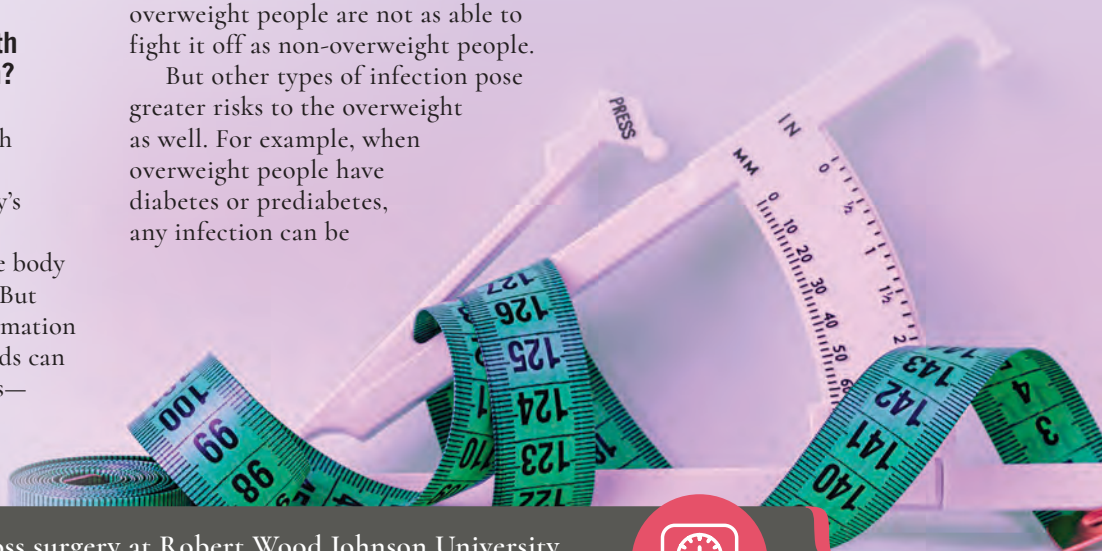
When obese people experience a major respiratory infection, for example, they may lack cardiopulmonary strength in the heart and lungs to battle it. COVID-19 is a perfect example in that overweight people are not as able to fight it off as non-overweight people.

But other types of infection pose greater risks to the overweight as well. For example, when overweight people have diabetes or prediabetes, any infection can be

significantly worse. Bacterial skin infections in the extremities can occur from something as simple as a pinprick or scratch.

How can a bariatrics program and weight loss surgery help?

Losing weight improves overall health and helps the body fight infection. Bariatric surgery changes the digestive system in ways that foster weight loss and can lower blood sugar, improve or even cure diabetes, and boost cardiopulmonary function.



To learn more about weight loss surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, call **888.724.7123** or visit www.rwjbh.org/weightloss.



HEALING HEARTS

A TEAM APPROACH TO CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE



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

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

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



BRUCE HAIK, MD

MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAKING THE CALL

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

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

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

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



NEW WAYS TO TREAT SKIN CANCER

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

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

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



ADAM BERGER, MD



SARAH WEISS, MD

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

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



MELANOMA: WHAT TO KNOW

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

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

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

A

A IS FOR ASYMMETRY:

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



B

B IS FOR BORDER:

The edges are irregular, ragged, notched or blurred.



C

C IS FOR COLOR:

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



D

D IS FOR DIAMETER:

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



E

E IS FOR EVOLVING:

The mole is changing in size, shape or color.



Source: American Cancer Society

ADVANCED TREATMENTS

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

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

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

Patients may be eligible for one of

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

MANY MINDS

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

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

Physicians throughout Rutgers

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

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

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

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





A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN PLAY





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUTSIDE THE BOX

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

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

anything to help him get better.”

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

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

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

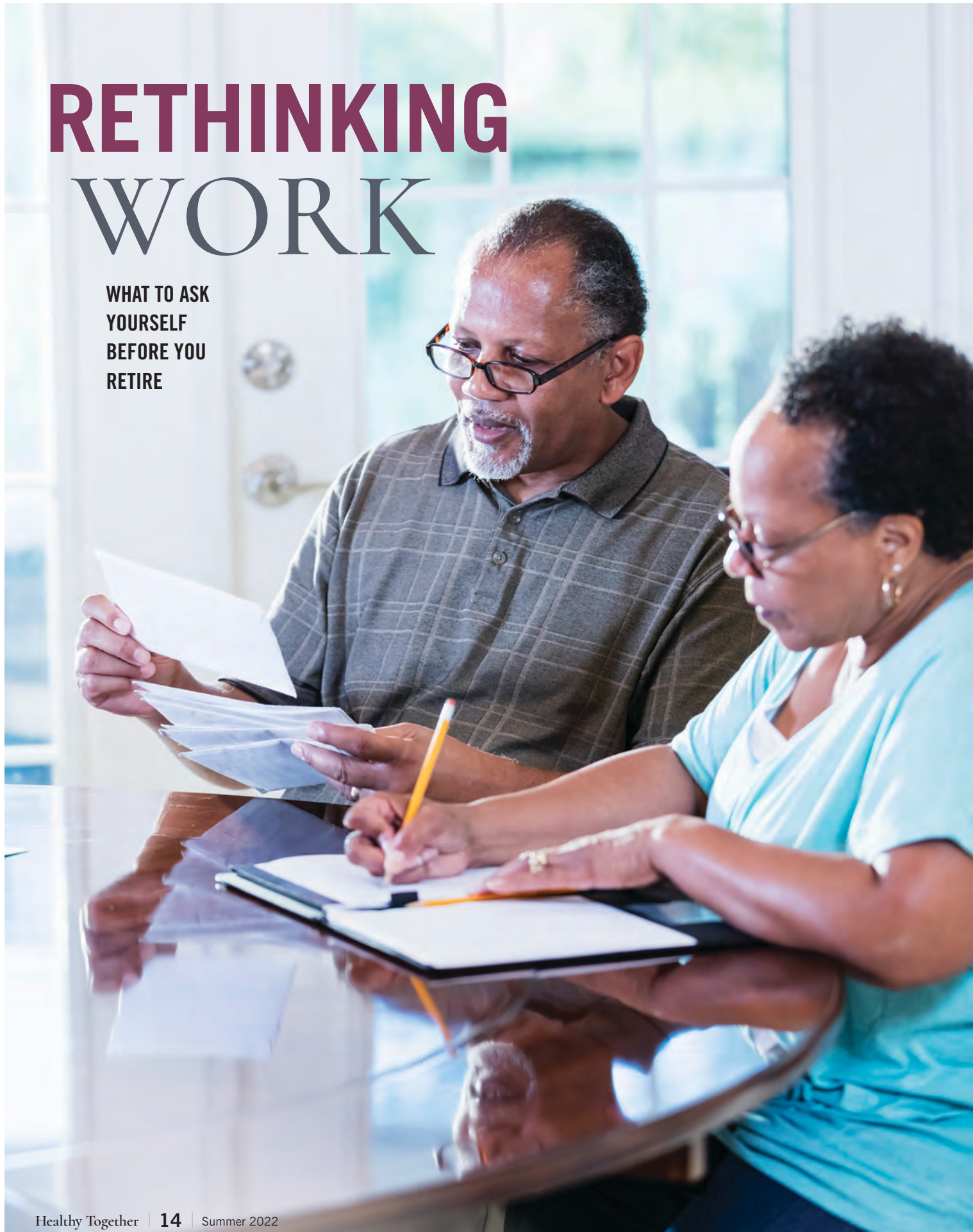
“Gavin is extremely excited,” says Kane. “Now he can play with his friends and meet new people.”

To learn more, visit
www.rwjbhfieldofdreams.com.



RETHINKING WORK

WHAT TO ASK
YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU
RETIRE



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

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

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

REASONS TO LEAVE

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

"Also, many individuals began



FRANK A. GHINASSI, PHD

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

"Then, as the

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

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

AND THEN WHAT?

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

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

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

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

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

8 QUESTIONS TO ASK

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



- How are you going to cover medical costs?



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

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

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





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

THE VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE

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

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

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

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

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

A NEW MODEL

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

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

Richard Freeman, *President and CEO*

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

Javier F. Villota, MD, *Internal & Occupational Medicine; Chair, Medical Advisory Committee*

Diane Grillo, MSM, *VP, Health Promotion*

Joan Bercari, *VP, Quality*

Sara Ali, MD, *Internal Medicine / Geriatrics*

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

Anjali Bhandarkar, MD, *Internal Medicine*

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Edward Wingfield, MD, *Cardiology*

Kim Zambito, MD, *Hand Surgery*



RWJUH Hamilton patient Trudy Mohrman receives free transportation to her rehab appointment.

PROVIDING A LIFT

**AN ASSISTANCE FUND HELPS
QUALIFYING PATIENTS WITH
TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER NEEDS.**

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton is helping to safely and comfortably transport qualifying patients to their medical appointments free of charge thanks to funding from the RWJUH Hamilton Foundation Patient Assistance Fund.

The program, in partnership with the community-based, nonprofit transportation service Greater Mercer RideProvide, offers door-to-door transportation in private vehicles with professional drivers Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

“I’ve been using the transportation program for about a year,” says Trudy Mohrman, an 85-year-old RWJUH Hamilton patient. “It’s been very helpful since I need to go to rehab twice a week after I fell and broke my leg. I can’t drive due to my injury, and I don’t have family in the area to drive me to my appointments. The program has allowed me the independence to get to my appointments and back home until I can start driving again.”

RWJUH Hamilton patients can sign up to use the RideProvide service for RWJUH Hamilton medical appointments at no cost if they are seniors 65 and over or visually impaired adults.

“The program not only offers a safe and convenient service to area residents in need, but also ensures vulnerable members of the community have access to vital medical care while allowing them to maintain their mobility and independence and

reducing their risk of isolation,” says Diane Grillo, Vice President, Health Promotion, RWJUH Hamilton. “In 2021, we provided transportation to over 900 medical visits for seniors and visually impaired patients and are looking forward to growing that number in the years to come.”

REMOVING CARE BARRIERS

RideProvide is just one way in which the Patient Assistance Fund supports patients. The fund also helps those in need cover costs for appointments, medications, therapies and equipment. Staples such as gas and groceries are often covered as well.

“Many times, there are financial constraints and barriers that prevent patients from accessing treatments,” says Jason Collier, Manager, Case Management, RWJUH Hamilton. “The foundation’s financial assistance creates a pathway for our patients to overcome these obstacles and provides access so they can transition to the next level of care and progress in their recovery.”

Each year, RWJUH Hamilton has supported over 100 patients to ensure discharge and continued care at home. “It’s a real positive experience to tell a patient who is struggling to pay for their medications that they no longer need to worry about the cost and can now focus on getting well because the Foundation has provided payment for the treatments,” Collier says. “The relief on their faces is worth a thousand words.”

To learn more about RideProvide at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, call 609.452.5144, email info@rideprovide.org or visit www.rwjbh.org/transport.

“Sometimes something wonderful happens unexpectedly just when you need it,” says Linda Martin (left) of the friendship she and Lucinda Longo (right) began after randomly meeting at the Cancer Center.



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.



A HEALING BOND

TWO WOMEN CONNECT THROUGH THE CANCER CENTER’S INNOVATIVE HOLISTIC PROGRAM.

Can a chance encounter that leads to friendship help someone battle cancer? Lucinda Longo and Linda Martin bet yes.

Longo, a Hamilton resident, was diagnosed with bladder cancer in April 2021 and chose treatment at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. She knew the hospital’s Cancer Center provided advanced treatment options close to home.

The Cancer Center also features a Holistic Program that focuses on healing the whole person by addressing a range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental influences on health. As part of the Holistic Program, Martin, a Ewing resident with a background in fashion

and merchandising, volunteers to create fashionable displays at the Cancer Center to help lift patients’ spirits.

The two women met in the Cancer Center lobby in November 2021 as Longo waited for a ride and Martin grappled with a mannequin. They struck up a conversation. Then Longo learned in a subsequent meeting that Martin once owned a clothing store called Flutter Boutique.

Both women, it turned out, had an affinity for butterflies. “I see butterflies as a metaphor for a woman,” Martin says. They bonded over the notion that, like a woman, a butterfly can seem delicate yet is able to break out of its cocoon and take flight. “Like the butterfly, women are much stronger than we’re given credit for,” Martin says. “I couldn’t help but

think that she might see herself in that metaphor as she battles her disease.”

FINDING WHAT SOOTHES

“Holistic therapies empower individuals to improve health by tapping their inner healing abilities through things like relationships, art, music, environmental interaction and nature,” says Diane Grillo, Vice President, Health Promotion, RWJUH Hamilton. “The Holistic Program teaches you to know yourself in ways you might not have known before and find what soothes and heals.”

Ahead of its time when it started 20 years ago, the program engages patients not only through activities and services but also through facilities. A fireplace greets



SUPPORTING HOLISTIC CARE

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton supports its Cancer Center's Holistic Program through an annual dedicated fundraiser called We vs. C. The immersive event includes interactive guest experiences, diverse cultural performances, art creation stations, spiritual practices, live entertainment and creative culinary and beverage offerings for sponsors and guests.

visitors as they arrive. The RWJ Fitness and Wellness Center provides a venue for programs. And the Cancer Center features a private Grounds for Healing garden space with water features and sculpture that infusion center patients can gaze at through large windows.

“The Holistic Program creates a warm, friendly environment,” Grillo says. “Anything we can do to make patients feel safer, more comfortable or more relaxed helps in the healing process.”

AN ONGOING BOND

The program also makes encounters like Longo and Martin's possible. After bonding over butterflies, Longo gave Martin a butterfly pin to thank her for her kindness and volunteer work. “I was touched by her gift,” Martin says.

The friends offer each other support and a sense of community. For Longo, whose family lives in the Midwest, this has meant added local support during a challenging time. For Martin, Longo's positive attitude has provided perspective on difficulties like the pandemic. The two try to talk at least once a week and often get together for lunch.

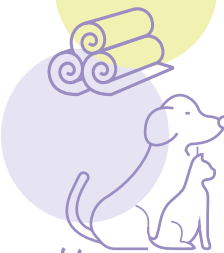
“I have her butterfly pin on the table next to my bed as a constant reminder to stop dwelling on what is wrong in the world and let in the light,” Martin says. “And as I learned recently, the name Lucinda means ‘light.’”

HEALING THE WHOLE PERSON

The Holistic Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton's Cancer Center offers features and programs such as these at no cost to patients and families.



Grounds for Healing®: A private garden in the Cancer Center provides natural landscaping including water features and a wisteria-covered trellis, along with sculptures to create a calming outdoor space.



Reiki and massage: Reiki, a whole-body energy healing experience, and massage both can be beneficial to health and well-being. Sessions with licensed professionals are offered in various settings, including infusion rooms.

Pet therapy: Visits with certified pet therapy animals can provide comfort and help patients and loved ones cope with cancer and other conditions.



Aromatherapy and gazing therapy: Taking in scents or visually focusing on an object or image can be soothing or meditative.



Yoga and meditation: Both help clear the mind and induce relaxation. Chair yoga and meditation sessions allow patients going through treatment to participate while seated.



Spiritual care: A chaplaincy team is available to provide emotional support and assist patients and loved ones grappling with spiritual questions and thoughts that illness can raise regardless of faith, tradition or culture.



Boutique services: Collaborations with local aestheticians and salon professionals allow patients to receive hair, wig and makeup services tailored to the unique needs of people undergoing cancer treatment.



Music and singing: Live performances, recordings and, in some cases, lessons allow patients to experience calming sounds from instruments such as cello, violin, ukulele, flute, piano and bedside harp.



Art: Facilities feature various creative displays, and live demonstrations of art forms such as painting and sculpting are offered periodically.



Other services: These may include activities such as meditative coloring, cooking demonstrations and special events such as art festivals.

To learn more about the Holistic Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton's Cancer Center, call **609.584.2827**.

CLEARING CLOGGED ARTERIES

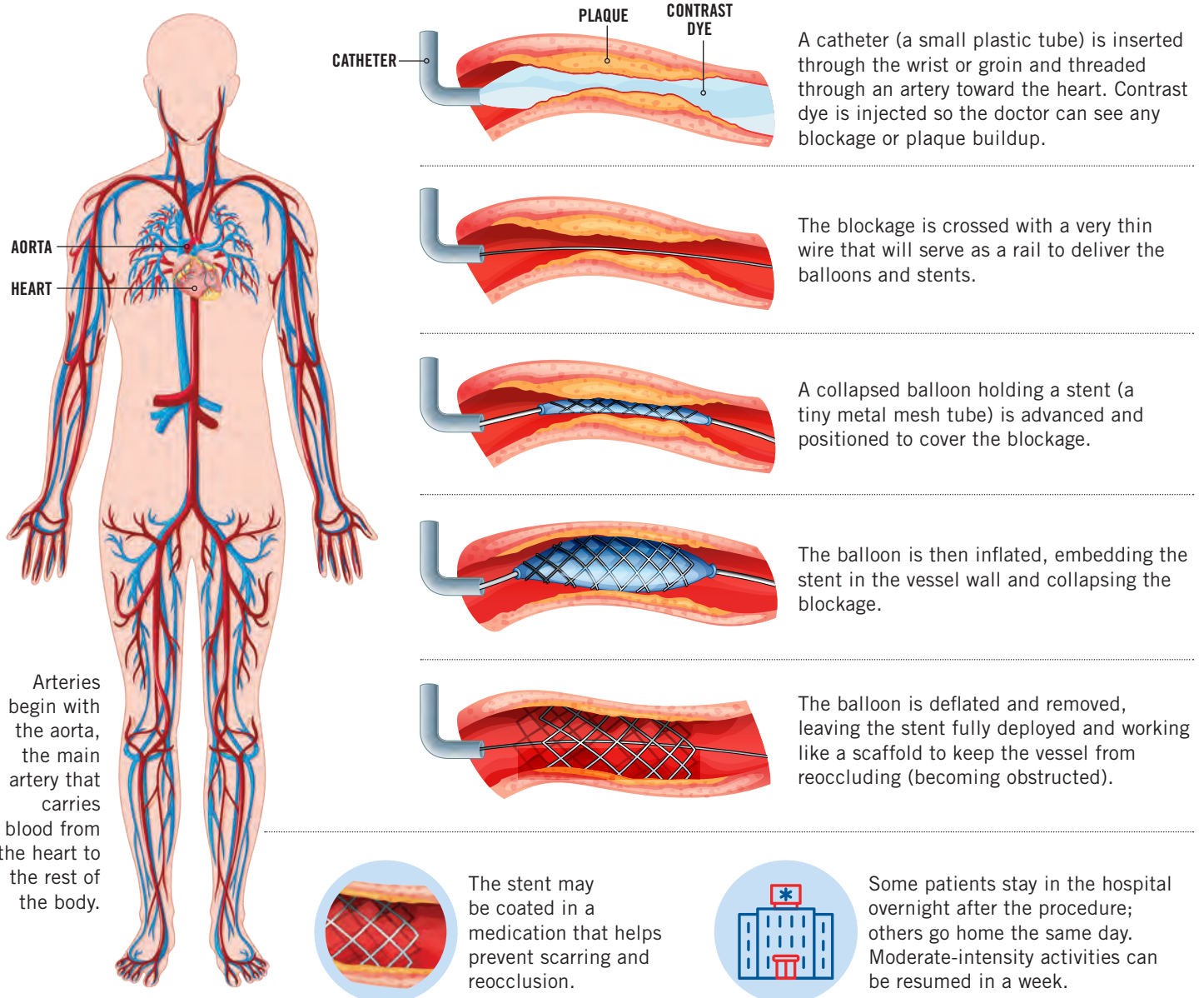


MAHMOUD GHUSSON, MD

HOW AN ADVANCED PROCEDURE ALLOWS BLOOD TO FLOW FREELY TO THE HEART

A procedure called angioplasty—sometimes referred to as percutaneous (meaning “through the skin”) coronary intervention, or PCI—opens clogged coronary arteries to restore blood flow to the heart. This minimally invasive procedure, which is usually performed in a cardiac catheterization lab, allows treatment of heart attack and chest pain syndromes.

The state of New Jersey recently certified Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton to perform nonemergency, elective angioplasty in addition to emergency angioplasty. Mahmoud Ghusson, MD, a cardiologist at RWJUH Hamilton, explains how a basic balloon angioplasty with stent procedure works:



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEART

Angioplasty can be lifesaving, but healthy practices that keep your heart healthy can help you avoid treatment in the first place or maintain treatment benefits after a procedure. Key steps include:

MAKE SMART LIFESTYLE CHOICES



GET PHYSICAL:

Aim to exercise each week for at least 150 minutes at moderate intensity or 75 minutes at vigorous intensity (or a combination).



EAT HEALTHY FOODS:

Get a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, poultry, fish and nuts. Eat small portions and try to avoid red and processed meats, sugar, salt and saturated fat.



QUIT SMOKING



TRACK RISKS:

Schedule regular checkups with your doctor to keep tabs on factors like weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, calcium score and sleep quality.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a heart attack. Know what to watch for—and realize that warning signs may be different for a woman than for a man. It's common for women to experience more subtle angina (chest pain), as well as shortness of breath and upper back pain prior to having a heart attack.

Call 911 as soon as you think you or someone you're with may be having a heart attack.

TYPICAL WARNING SIGNS IN MEN

- Squeezing chest pressure or pain
- Jaw, neck or back pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Indigestion

TYPICAL WARNING SIGNS IN WOMEN

- Chest pain, but not always
- Jaw, neck or upper back pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the lower chest or upper abdomen
- Fainting
- Indigestion



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



Neurosurgeons
Kenneth Liebman,
MD (left), and
Zakaria Hakma,
MD (right), are part
of a collaborative
neuroscience team.



‘SHE TRUSTED OUR NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM’

A NURSE IN NEED OF A ‘VERY BIG’ SPINE SURGERY CHOOSES CARE CLOSE TO HOME.

Marcia* of Burlington didn’t know what to make of the pain she felt in her neck.

It started mild but gradually got worse. Was it an injury from lifting? As a 61-year-old neurology nurse working in New York City, Marcia often needed to assist patients on the job. Doctors she consulted offered different opinions. One thought she had a pinched nerve, another arthritis.

“Then one day around the holidays in 2021, the pain got really bad,”

Marcia says. “I thought something was definitely wrong, and it was more than what anybody had been saying.”

She decided to go to a hospital for a comprehensive workup. Familiar with healthcare throughout the region, she opted to seek treatment at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. “I did part of my nursing training there in 2013,” Marcia says. “I knew RWJUH Hamilton was one of the best hospitals in New Jersey.”

A DIFFICULT DIAGNOSIS

Team members at the Center for Neurosciences and The Orthopedic and Spine Institute at RWJUH Hamilton quickly diagnosed Marcia’s true problem.

The news wasn’t good: Marcia had a cancerous tumor toward the base of her neck’s cervical spine, at vertebrae C5 and C6.

“It was traumatic,” Marcia says. She had a history of breast cancer, including a double mastectomy to remove her breasts in 2014. “I had thought that was the end of

cancer,” she says. “I knew it was possible for cancer to come back, but I didn’t expect it.”

She consulted Zakaria Hakma, MD, Director of Neurosciences and Chief of Neurosurgery at RWJUH Hamilton, and a member of Global Neurosciences Institute, about what to do next.

“We went over details of my extensive workup,” Marcia says. The two brought Marcia’s sister into the conversation by phone for another perspective. “We decided I definitely had to do surgery,” Marcia says. “I felt safe with Dr. Hakma.”

“It speaks volumes that she’s a neurology nurse and, when diagnosed with a serious problem, had informed confidence in the expertise and capabilities available at RWJUH Hamilton,” Dr. Hakma says. “She trusted our neuroscience program with a complex surgical procedure and didn’t feel the need to travel anywhere else.”


REMOVING CANCER

In January, Dr. Hakma performed what Marcia calls “a very big surgery.” It involved both a corpectomy, in which the diseased vertebrae were removed, and spinal fusion, in which remaining vertebrae were stabilized and joined with help from a cage-like implant.

The surgery was successful, and after six days in the hospital, Marcia went home wearing a neck brace that facilitated healing. Outpatient physical therapy in the weeks that followed helped her recover and improve functions such as walking. She continued being treated for cancer with both radiation and ongoing chemotherapy.

Marcia says her care was everything she had hoped for. “My incisions healed well, with no signs of drainage or infection,” she says with trained perspective. “I’m walking, and my gait is steady. I felt my care was great.”

* Marcia chose to use only her first name for this article.


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.

COMPREHENSIVE, CONVENIENT CARE FOR NEUROLOGICAL ISSUES

“Neuroscience services at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton have the clinical expertise and tools to provide advanced care close to home,” says Zakaria Hakma, MD, Director of Neurosciences and Chief of Neurosurgery. Enhancing the hospital’s neurosciences care are:

- **Sophisticated technology:** Tools include GPS-like intraoperative navigation that maps the brain and helps guide procedures more precisely; single-plane angiography that helps image arteries during procedures to restore blood flow to the brain; a state-of-the-art microscope that allows surgeons to perform more delicate operations; and a wide range of other advanced imaging technologies.
- **Highly specialized doctors:** “Our comprehensive services cover virtually every neurologic specialty,” Dr. Hakma says. These include general, spinal and cranial surgery along with subspecialties like functional neurosurgery to treat disorders such as Parkinson’s disease; neuropsychology to care for cognitive problems such as dementia or deficits after stroke; cognitive neurology treating Alzheimer’s disease and dementia; and neuromuscular neurology.
- **A diverse, expert team:** “In addition to a deep roster of doctors, we have specialized staff such as physician assistants trained in neuroscience along with neuropharmacists who are tremendously helpful for complex patients who can sometimes take more than a dozen medications,” Dr. Hakma says.
- **Advanced rehabilitation:** Rehab services are integral to comprehensive neurosciences care provided in a single location at Pennington. “This is the greatest concentration of neurology services in the area,” Dr. Hakma says. “Having services in one place is more convenient for patients, and they feel at ease when doctors can walk over and personally introduce them to physical and occupational therapists.”
- **Collaborative care:** “We don’t work in silos but work hand in hand across subspecialties,” Dr. Hakma says. “It’s rare to see that kind of collaboration, but it improves care and makes things easier for patients.”

“We have a truly patient-centered approach to groundbreaking therapies and new surgical techniques,” says Richard Freeman, President and Chief Executive Officer, RWJUH Hamilton. “Our innovative team of neurosurgeons, specialty neurologists and neurologic researchers, coupled with specially trained nurses, therapists and other allied health professionals, work together to provide a world-class, integrative, multidisciplinary approach to complete patient care.”

To learn more about the Center for Neurosciences at RWJUH Hamilton or to schedule an appointment, call **888.724.7123** or visit www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonneuro.



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