

## Annual Patient Symposium Highlights Quality and Safety Improvements From Many Departments

Richmond University  
Medical Center

### 10TH ANNUAL PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYMPOSIUM

📅 April 25, 2024  
🕒 8:00 AM until 12:00 PM  
📍 355 Bard Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10310

Event will be LIVE and VIRTUAL via Microsoft Teams

Keynote Presentation Provided By:

 **Torian Easterling, MD**  
Senior Vice President for Population and  
Community Health; Chief Strategic and  
Innovation Officer for One Brooklyn Health

For More Information Or If You Have Any Questions Please Contact:  
PSCSymposiumCommittee2024@rumcsi.org

The winning poster presentation was entitled “Ensuring Safe Transition: Compliance of the RUMC NICU with Safe Discharge Quality Measures in NOWS/NAS Babies.” The winning poster was submitted by the Pediatrics Department team of Jonathan Caggiano, MD; Naima Latif, MD; Joanna Barretta, PA-C; Elyse Harrell, RN; and Naheed Abedin, MD.

“The impact this annual symposium has on our continued commitment to the safety of our patients continues to be evident year over year,” President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said in his welcome address. “Various projects presented over the past 10 years have had real, tangible, and positive effects on our quality and safety metrics.”

This year’s keynote speaker was Torian Easterling, MD, senior vice president for Population and Community Health, and chief strategic and innovation officer for One Brooklyn Health. Dr. Easterling spoke about improving trust and

identifying bias, providing examples that can be implemented to accomplish both for a better patient experience and overall service delivery.

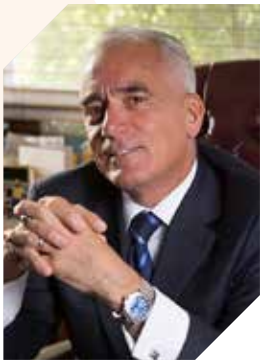
Throughout the day, posters were on display throughout the hospital’s main lobby for staff and visitors to view and meet the teams who submitted the projects for consideration. Judging was conducted in the morning, with the winners announced in the afternoon.

**For more photos from the symposium, see the last page.**

On April 25, the 10th annual Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Symposium was held, showcasing the many improvements made in the areas of patient safety and quality service. Over 20 projects were submitted from several different departments, with winners selected in the categories of oral presentation and poster presentation.

A panel of judges from different departments selected “Initiatives for Reducing Hospital Acquired C.Diff Infections” as the winning oral presentation. The winning presentation was provided by the Department of Internal Medicine team of Cinthya Aviles, MD; Sophia Taik, MD; Sebastian Forsah, MD; Nancelle Ndema, MD; Maria Relente-Santos, MD; Nkafu Ndemazie; Gauvain Kankeu Tonpouwo, MD; and Gian Paolo Piccione, MD.

## From the President & CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE



I would like to take this opportunity to wish a Happy Nurses Month to the over 600 nurses who form the backbone of our hospital. Each May, we celebrate the dedication and compassion of not just our own nurses, but the over five million nurses providing care across our country.

Our nurses here at RUMC represent all walks of life, with ethnic, religious, cultural, and personal diversity as rich as the communities we serve. The unsung heroes of healthcare, nurses provide compassionate care to patients in their most vulnerable moments. As rich as the rewards are for those in the nursing profession, there are also many emotional, mental, and physical challenges faced daily. The increasing complexity of patient care, adapting to new technology, the physical demands placed on the body, risk of exposure, and the possibility of losing a patient are just some of the challenges.

Yet despite these almost universal issues voiced by nurses, nursing is still by far considered one of the most rewarding by those in the profession and in the eyes of the public. The ability to make a real difference in someone's life, direct interaction with patients and families, learning new techniques and technology, and the ability to specialize and advance career-wise makes nursing an attractive pursuit for many looking to become involved in healthcare and are the main reasons why so many remain in the profession until retirement. Studies also show that nursing is one of the most supportive and welcoming communities in the world. This is more critical than you may think because nurses often have long hours and demanding schedules to go along with the challenges I mentioned earlier. Who better to turn to for support than a fellow nurse who can relate to what their colleague is going through? I have seen this firsthand here among our nursing staff, and I've also seen the positive impact that level of comradery

has. It is both moving and powerful. Here at RUMC, our nursing family is without a doubt, a family within our larger RUMC Family.

I have made mention that our recent patient safety and quality metrics continue to improve. This is driven by our nurses and our entire team who call RUMC their home away from home. Our Hospital Acquired C-Difficile reduction has gone from almost double the national average in 2020 to meeting the national average in 2022. Our most recent Patient Safety Indicator composite score has RUMC in the top 20% of New York hospitals in various safety metrics including pressure injuries, post-operative conditions, and falls with injury. We have also continued to steadily improve patient satisfaction in the areas of communication with nurses, responsiveness of staff, and communication about medications. Thank you all for being in lockstep with our medical staff and making these gains possible. There is still work to be done, but there is no better team than ours to get the job done and push our metrics even further in the right direction!

So to all of our nurses, there are not enough words to express the gratitude our community owes to each and every one of you. Happy Nurses Month! Thank you to each and every nurse and to all our employees for your unrelenting commitment to our entire organization! We are on the move because of every nurse and staff member throughout our organization.

### Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

★★★★★ "Good Service"

— A.Z.

"The staff were caring, personable and wonderful to our mother and our family. They checked on us regularly and didn't rush us when we had multiple questions. They made sure that everything was at our fingertips, especially Nikki DeRosa, Nick Gentilella, Alyssa Meeker and Jennie Colon."

— Actual Patient

"If anybody is looking for a place with powerful inclusion, structure, gratitude and positivity, this would be the place to go. A very good team of people for those who need good influence. Ask for Anthony, he is the GOAT! Thanks Silberstein Clinic!"

— A.A.

"My son got hurt at a party close to another SI hospital. No one would give a definitive answer as to what happened. They just sent him out with an ace bandage. The following day we went to RUMC. He was treated very quickly. He had a broken ankle which was addressed immediately. The nurses and doctors were very attentive and caring. My son is eight years old and was in a lot of pain and very scared. Highly recommend going right to RUMC for issues and not wasting time in any of the other Staten Island hospitals."

— S.S.

"Thank you so much for being so kind as we welcomed our baby girl into the world. XOXO."

— G. and D. C.

## Students from Michael J. Petrides School Show Support for Richmond University Medical Center

Students and faculty from The Michael J. Petrides School invited Richmond University Medical Center President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, to their school last month to present him with care packages for patients, free libraries, and a donation of \$750 to support hospital services.

"I want to thank all of you for thinking of our hospital and our patients," Messina said to the students. "It is very touching when our community comes out to show their love and appreciation for what we do, especially when it is young people like yourselves. It's our honor to be able to help people in our community and you are helping us do just that very thing. I hope you all get an A on your next exams."

The care packages will be distributed to patients receiving treatment, including chemotherapy, in the hospital's Infusion Center. The packages contain skin lotion,



*Students from The Michael J. Petrides School are joined by RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE as they load care packages into one of the hospital's ambulances.*

hats, socks, blankets and puzzles, among other items. The free libraries, painted by the students and stocked with books provided by Amazon, will be located in RUMC's Pediatrics Unit, the Infusion Center, and the Surgical Pavilion family waiting area. The check donation was a result of a movie night the students organized last month to raise support for the hospital as a way to say thank you to the staff for taking care of the health and well-being of the community.

Coming to the school, Messina was joined by EMTs Victoria Morano and Victoria Gonzalez, as well as Jennifer Morris, RN,

and Joanne Rizzuti, RN, from the hospital's Infusion Center.

The care packages, libraries and donation were all organized by Jamie's LILAC Foundation; John Cucuzza, a teacher at Petrides, co-founder of Jamie's LILAC Foundation and husband of the organization's namesake, Jamie Moltisanti Cucuzza; the Moltisanti family; the kindergarten class of Claudia Kamboris; Petrides Principal Anthony Tabbitas; the school's Habitat for Humanity Club; High School Council for Unity; and Middle School Council for Unity.

## President and CEO Honored by Alma Mater for Contributions to the Community

On April 18, RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, was presented with the College of Staten Island President's Medal in recognition of his contributions to the health of the community over a career that has spanned nearly four decades.

Messina received his AS in Liberal Arts and Sciences from the College of Staten Island in 1977. During his tenure as president and CEO of RUMC, Messina has continued to expand the hospital's primary acute and behavioral care networks and the integration of associated services. He is board certified

in healthcare management as an ACHE Fellow. He has also taught as an adjunct professor at several local universities and has been the recipient of many awards from local, state, and national organizations.

Presenting Messina with his medal was CSI President Timothy G. Lynch, PhD. In accepting his award, Messina thanked his family, RUMC's board of trustees and entire staff for their dedication to the hospital and to the people of Staten Island. He dedicated the award to his late parents Rose and Sal.



*College of Staten Island President Timothy G. Lynch, PhD, (left) presenting the President's Medal to RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.*

# Groundbreaking Clinical Trial at RUMC Offers Hope for Head and Neck Cancer Patients

Data from the National Library of Medicine reveal that head and neck cancers rank sixth among the most common cancers in the U.S. today and results in nearly 70,000 new cases diagnosed each year. Conventional treatments have typically involved an invasive and/or toxic combination of surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy, but thanks to the vital role Richmond University Medical Center is playing within a groundbreaking new clinical trial involving the use of nanomedicine in the treatment of head and neck cancers in older individuals, an effective and less toxic protocol may be right around the corner.

According to Christopher Lisi, MD, chief of the Division of Otolaryngology and director of the hospital's Center for Advanced ENT, Sinus, and Voice Care, smoking and alcohol use are the two main risk factors for head and neck cancer — a particular concern on Staten Island, which has the highest rate of cigarette smoking among the five New York City boroughs. At the same time, he said, “the survival rate from head and neck cancers, which commonly involve cancers of the mouth, throat, and voice box, has remained virtually unchanged over the past 25 years because of late diagnosis and limited treatment options.”

But there's hope on the horizon. Below, Dr. Lisi discusses the breakthrough international clinical trial involving nanomedicine that Richmond University Medical Center's Division of Otolaryngology is participating in and what it could mean for the future of head and neck cancer treatment in seniors.

## What is “nanomedicine?”

**Dr. Lisi:** Nanomedicine is a newer branch of medicine that involves the delivery of drugs by way of injectable nanoparticles, or small particles that carry drugs to a specific part of the body. While some nanoparticles are naturally occurring in the body and some are synthetically

engineered in a lab, these spherelike carrier molecules get beyond the body's natural inclination to destroy medication before it gets delivered and can therefore get inside of tumor cells in a more efficient manner.

## Why is the use of nanoparticles being investigated for head and neck cancers?

**Dr. Lisi:** As part of ongoing advances in medicine and cancer care, we're trying to treat cancer effectively while preserving patients' quality of life. In this case, we're trying to avoid administering systemic chemotherapy to older patients who would get very ill from that approach and instead deliver medication specifically to a tumor so that radiation will be more effective in elderly patients and avoid their need for chemo. Nanoparticles have been investigated in clinical trials for several years, and, while this trial is focused on examining their effectiveness in treating tumors of the neck and throat, nanoparticles can be applied to other oncological situations as well.

## When did this clinical trial start and how has Richmond University Medical Center been participating?

**Dr. Lisi:** The trial started at our hospital almost two years ago and will continue for several years. Though we're part of a large international study, we're extremely proud to have been the first U.S.-based hospital to be enrolled as a clinical trial site and to also have enrolled the trial's very first patient in the U.S. Based on the very specific enrollment criteria and the niche patient population that would be a fit for this trial, we're screening patients continuously.

## What is the goal of the trial?

**Dr. Lisi:** This prototype treatment can hopefully show the applications of nanoparticle therapy for treating cancers and create a paradigm shift in how we look at cancer treatment — away from toxic approaches like chemo and towards less-invasive modalities. Along with such advances as hormonal therapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and

now “precision medicine” techniques such as nanomedicine, nanoparticle delivery stands as another exciting tool along the spectrum of advanced oncological care.

## How does this investigation position RUMC for other such trials?

**Dr. Lisi:** RUMC is and always wants to be at the forefront of research. We have a dedicated research team that evaluates trials that would fit our institution and community and we were able to coordinate our participation with the company developing this nanoparticle drug because we were a strong candidate. We're also delighted to have recently expanded our team with the addition of Dr. Priya Sivarajah, a head and neck cancer surgeon who specializes in treating tumors of the mouth, throat, thyroid, neck, face, and skin. In addition to being a tremendous asset to the RUMC and Staten Island communities, Dr. Sivarajah has been instrumental in spearheading and overseeing our participation in this trial.

## Finally, what is your hope for this clinical trial?

**Dr. Lisi:** We're proud of what RUMC has accomplished as part of an international team and trial and are honored to have been chosen for this opportunity based on our robust research team and desire to make a positive contribution to cancer treatment in New York City and worldwide. We hope to be able to bring advances in cancer care to the Staten Island community, both to help ensure that our area's diverse population is properly represented in these clinical trials as well as to provide access to the cutting-edge treatments that our area residents deserve.

Richmond University Medical Center's Center for Advanced ENT, Sinus, and Voice Care is located at 1855 Richmond Ave. For more information or to make an appointment, call 718-818-1855.



*Christopher Lisi, MD, chief of the Division of Otolaryngology*

## Watch New Episodes of RUMC Vital Signs

### ▶ EPISODE 10: ALL ABOUT RUMC'S SILBERSTEIN CLINIC & HOW TO ADMINISTER NARCAN



To watch this episode and others covering a range of health-related topics, scan the QR code.



Airing on Community Media of Staten Island Chanel 34 and available at [www.RUMCSI.org](http://www.RUMCSI.org), each episode of RUMC Vital Signs covers the latest trends in medicine and provides in-depth information on the services provided at Richmond University Medical Center.



## Catch Up on the Latest Episodes of RUMC Connections Podcast

### ▶ SEASON 2, EPISODE 8: WOMEN'S INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Women experience unique medical concerns throughout their lifetime that may require specialized imaging and diagnostic testing. In this episode, Sujoy Menon, MD, chair of Radiology, discusses how interventional radiology has impacted women's health issues.



To listen to these episodes and others covering a range of health-related topics, scan the QR code.



[rumcsi.org/RUMCCpodcast](http://rumcsi.org/RUMCCpodcast)

## Public Relations and Marketing VP Honored For Supporting Cancer Awareness Organization



Alex Lutz (center) with his colleagues from RUMC.

On April 20, Alex Lutz, vice president for Public Relations and Marketing, was honored by Jamie's LILAC Foundation, a Staten Island based organization that provides care packages for cancer patients and raises support to help medical institutions provide services, treatment, and research in the battle against the disease.

Lutz was presented with the organization's Medical Professional of the Year award. In the six years Lutz has been with RUMC, he has helped coordinate the delivery of care packages to the hospital and its Center for Cancer Care. He has also worked with the organization's board to promote the organization and its mission. Founded in 2014, Jamie's LILAC Foundation is named for Jamie Moltisanti Cucuzza, who lost her battle with lung cancer at the age of 38. Jaime's family and friends wanted to honor her memory, creating the Foundation to help others battling cancer. In addition to being Jamie's favorite color, LILAC stands for Laughter, Inspiration, Love, Against Cancer.

## May Observances

Please join us in acknowledging the following health-related observances for the month of May:

### Month-Long:

ALS Awareness Month  
Arthritis Awareness Month  
Better Hearing and Speech Month  
Better Sleep Month  
Bladder Cancer Awareness Month  
Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness Month  
Brain Cancer Awareness Month  
Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month  
Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome Awareness Month  
Food Allergy Awareness Month  
Global Employee Health and Fitness Month  
Healthy Vision Month  
Hepatitis Awareness Month  
High Blood Pressure Awareness Month  
Huntington's Disease Awareness Month  
Lupus Awareness Month  
Lyme Disease Awareness Month  
Maternal Mental Health Month  
Mental Health Awareness Month  
National Asthma and Allergies Awareness Month  
National Celiac Disease Awareness Month  
National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month  
National Nurses Month  
National Osteoporosis Awareness Month  
National Physical Fitness and Sports Month  
National Stroke Awareness Month  
National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month  
National Teen Self-Esteem Month  
National Women's Health Month  
Necrotizing Fasciitis Awareness Month  
Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month  
Older Americans Month  
Preeclampsia Awareness Month  
Skin Cancer Awareness Month  
Tourette's Awareness Month

### Week-Long:

May 5-11: North American Occupational Safety and Health Week  
May 5-12: Children's Mental Health Awareness Week  
May 6-12: National Nurses Week  
May 12-18: National Hospital Week  
May 12-18: National Women's Health Week  
May 13-19: National Stuttering Awareness Week

### Recognition Days:

May 2: International Scurvy Awareness Day  
May 5: World Hand Hygiene Day  
May 6: World Ankylosing Spondylitis Day  
May 7: World Asthma Day  
May 8: World Ovarian Cancer Day  
May 10: National Lipid Day  
May 10: World Lupus Day  
May 12: International Awareness Day for Chronic Immunological and Neurological Diseases  
May 12: International Nurses Day  
May 12: ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia International Awareness Day  
May 13: National Women's Checkup Day  
May 15: Hyperemesis Gravidarum Awareness Day  
May 17: World Hypertension Day  
May 18: HIV Vaccine Awareness Day  
May 19: Hepatitis Testing Day  
May 19: National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day  
May 19: World IBD Day  
May 20: World Autoimmune and AutoInflammatory Arthritis Day  
May 22: World Preeclampsia Day  
May 24: World Schizophrenia Day  
May 25: World Thyroid Day  
May 29: World Digestive Health Day  
May 29: National Senior Health and Fitness Day  
May 30: World MS Day  
May 31: National Heat Awareness Day  
May 31: World No Tobacco Day

## Richmond Health Network AVP Named to SIEDC's 20 Under 40 Class of 2024



*Humroy Mendez presented with his 20 Under 40 award by RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.*

Every year the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation (SIEDC) recognizes 20 rising stars under the age of 40 making their mark on Staten Island's economy and quality of life. Recipients represent all business sectors ranging from non-profit to small and medium businesses as well as corporate and government. A member of the SIEDC 20 Under 40 Class of 2024 was Humroy Mendez, MS, assistant vice president for Informatics and Population Health for the Richmond Health Network.

Mendez has assisted in increasing the public's access to healthcare by helping to expand the Richmond Health Network. The network consists of primary care offices, OBGYN, ENT, endocrinology and many other specialty sites. Thanks to Humroy, the network, which launched in 2019, has grown to over 20 sites across Staten Island and employs over 100 medical professionals and support staff.

## New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Antonio Amato — *Transporter*  
Miriam Ancheta — *Guest Rep*  
Kayla Baptiste — *Unit Clerk*  
Victoria Bellu — *Nursing Assistant*  
Alexa Cardinuto — *Ultrasound Tech*  
Kasandra Castro — *Paraprofessional*  
Peterson Desir — *Respiratory Therapist*  
Hannah Douglas — *Support Staff*  
Shkelqime Duka — *Cook*  
Mariam Ebid — *RN*  
Johuna Elsayy — *Classroom Substitute*  
John Fuchs — *Security Guard*  
Nicholas Galeno — *Program Compliance Coordinator*  
Kathleen Giovansanti — *EMT*  
Albert Gonzalez — *Peer Counselor*  
Gabrielle Grieco — *Registrar*  
Isabelle Iannizzotto — *EMT*  
Needa Iqbal — *Receptionist*  
Sharmaine Johnson — *Pharmacy Tech*  
Rose Kamry — *Receptionist*  
Cherie Kirkland — *Peer Counselor*  
Elisabeta Kodra — *Building Service Worker*

Anna Lamanna — *Food Service Worker*  
Domnic Lamarco, Jr — *Receptionist*  
Brian Lewis — *Security Guard*  
Bianca Lugo — *EMT*  
Alexandra Lynn — *RN*  
Demetrius McFadden — *Engineer*  
Yolanda McIntosh — *Nursing Assistant*  
Ronn Megnath — *Engineer*  
Nina Mema — *Nursing Assistant*  
Megan Metcalf — *RN*  
Finesa Morina — *RN*  
Javiar Pizarro — *Security Guard*  
Michel Polovetsky — *Nurse Educator*  
Babby Ray-Hart — *Food Service Worker*  
Matthew Ready — *Engineer*  
Floriana Resiti — *Paraprofessional*  
Daniel Salzillo — *Engineer*  
Ibrahim Samoura — *Mental Health Tech*  
Saul Siller — *RN*  
Magdalena Skowron-Muco — *Physician Assistant*  
George Spivey — *Mental Health Tech*  
Elizabeth Yakobashvili — *Physician Assistant*

## Employee of the Month

Congratulations to our employees of the month for April:



**Andrew Barone**  
Public Safety Officer

**Nicholas Bellman, RN**  
Emergency Department

**Robert Harris, RN**  
Emergency Department

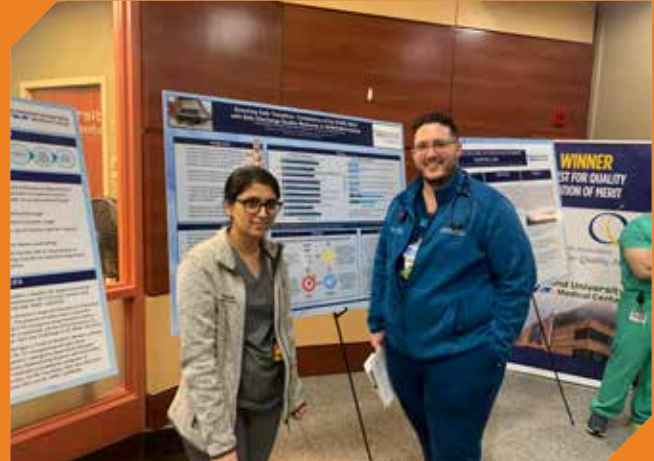
**Marek Mazur**  
Public Safety Supervisor

**Deandre Robinson**  
Public Safety Officer

# Annual Patient Symposium Highlights Quality and Safety Improvements From Many Departments



Staff tour the various poster submissions in the main lobby.



Johnathan Caggiano, MD, and Naima Latif, MD, in front of their winning poster from the Department of Pediatrics.



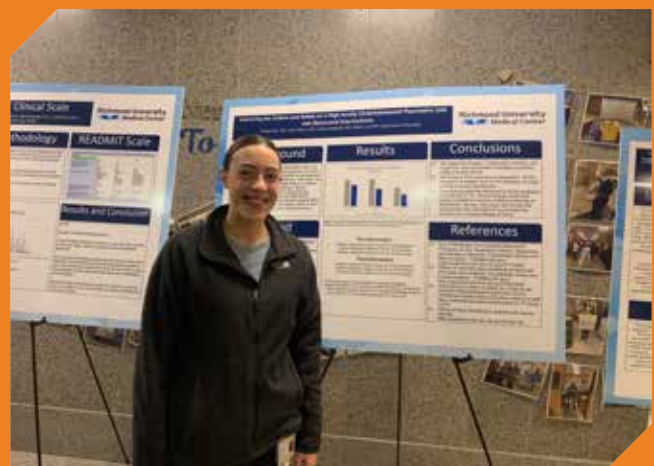
Several of the judges examine one of the submissions.



The poster for the winning oral presentation.



President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, delivering his welcoming remarks.



Lindsay Appleman, MD, with her team's submission from the Department of Psychiatry.