

## RUMC Earns National Honors for Exceptional Cardiovascular Care

Richmond University Medical Center's comprehensive cardiovascular care services have earned national recognition for quality care and patient safety. For the third consecutive year, RUMC has been named a "High Performing Hospital" by U.S. News & World Report for its care of patients experiencing congestive heart failure. Of 6,000 hospitals evaluated, RUMC is one of only 1,090 hospitals nationwide to earn the designation. RUMC also received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines — Coronary Artery Disease STEMI Receiving Center Gold award in recognition of its commitment to offering rapid, research-based care to people experiencing a specific type of heart attack known as an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), known to be more severe and dangerous than other types of heart attacks.



"This is an incredible achievement for our team," said chief of the Cardiovascular Department, Francesco Rotatori, MD, FACC. "Earning these awards involves many players. Each one of these medical professionals has shown an unmatched dedication to their patients and are truly deserving of praise for achieving these wonderful recognitions."

This latest recognition from U.S. News & World Report marks the third consecutive year that the "High Performing Hospital" award has been bestowed on RUMC for its cardiovascular services. Over 6,000 hospitals across the United States were evaluated and eligible hospitals received one of three ratings: high performing, average, or below average. A hospital's congestive heart failure score is based on multiple data categories, including patient outcomes, volume, advanced heart programs, and more. Hospitals that earned a "High Performing



*Francesco Rotatori, MD, FACC, Chief, Cardiovascular Department*



*Johnathon LeBaron, DO, MBA, FACEP, Chair, Emergency Medicine Department*

Hospital" rating were significantly better than the national average.

The "High Performing Hospital" designation was earned by 1,090 hospitals, including RUMC. A total of 1,666 hospitals received an average rating and 1,316 hospitals below average. The balance of hospitals did not receive a rating either because they either do not offer congestive heart failure services or treat too few patients to be rated.

Each year, about 285,000 people in the U.S. experience a STEMI heart attack, caused by a complete blockage in a coronary artery. Like all heart attacks, this requires timely treatment to restore blood flow as quickly as possible. Recognition by the American Heart Association as a STEMI Receiving Center showcases RUMC's 24/7 support for STEMI patients. The STEMI Receiving Center award is earned by hospitals that demonstrate a commitment to treating patients according to the most up-to-date research-based guidelines for STEMI care as outlined by the American Heart Association.

"The American Heart Association award highlights the incredible, lifesaving work we provide here at RUMC," Johnathon LeBaron, DO, MBA, FACEP, chair of the hospital's Emergency Medicine Department, said. "Our STEMI award serves to show that the countless hours of work we put in coordinating nursing and physician care, and collaborating across specialties, is working to ensure patients receive the best care."

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



August is National Eye Exam Month as well as Children's Eye Health and Safety Month. Nothing is more important than the eye health of you and your family. The health of your eyes has a major impact on every area of your life, from work and education to enjoying time with family and recreation. Fortunately, our hospital provides comprehensive vision and eye care in our full service

Ophthalmology Center, located on the fifth floor of our hospital.

The importance of eye care, how to care for ocular emergencies, and understanding glaucoma, a disease that damages the optic nerve causing visual impairments or blindness, were the topics of conversation in two episodes of our informative podcast series, RUMC Connections. The episodes, which feature optometrist Joseph Muscente, OD, can be found on our website, RUMCSI.org, and on several streaming services.

When it comes to glaucoma, it is startling to know that half of people with glaucoma do not know they have it because it presents almost no symptoms. About 3 million Americans have glaucoma, which has no cure. Anyone can get glaucoma, but certain groups are at higher risk. These groups include African Americans over age 40, all people over age 60, people with a family history of glaucoma, and people who have diabetes.

Our Ophthalmology Center features skilled experts who can diagnose and treat changes in vision, uveitis, glaucoma,

cataracts, and many other conditions and diseases that affect our eyes. Led by our board certified chair of Ophthalmology, David Mostafavi, MD, our team, including Dr. Muscente, features experienced optometrists and ophthalmologists who treat adult and pediatric patients, providing routine and diabetic eye exams and glaucoma screenings, while also performing cataract surgery, corneal transplants, retinal detachment repair, and minimally invasive glaucoma stents (MIGS).

So please use August as National Eye Exam Month and Children's Eye Health and Safety Month to schedule an eye exam for you and your family. To schedule an appointment and for more information on eye and vision care, contact our Ophthalmology Center at 718-818-4848. Along with an annual physical and dental checkup, make having an eye exam a priority to ensure continued good health. And as always, thank you for your continued commitment to providing exceptional patient care.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. Messina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

## Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

★★★★★ "Excellent office, Dr. Akbar is kind and so very helpful. Thank you for such a pleasant experience."

— M.H.

"My mother-in-law was admitted for 8 days. I can't put into words how great the entire team of nurses, social workers, case managers, etc., are on the 4th floor. My mother-in-law raved about how great and friendly everyone was, took their time with her (she is a fall risk) and managed her care until she was well enough to go home. They arranged for her to have a walker

and recliner (which arrived the next day) when she got home and made sure her after-care with VNASI was coordinated and ready to go. At discharge her aftercare program, medications, and scheduled appointments were carefully explained to her and as she said to me on the ride home, "they treated me with such dignity and were so friendly." I wanted to especially single out Kiara Lorenzana, Catherine Rodriguez, and Ievgenia Cherkes for all their help. They truly went above and beyond! My wife, mother-in-law and I are deeply grateful for the team on the fourth floor!"

— A.L.

# City Council Allocates over \$12 Million for Projects and Services at RUMC



*New York City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams (center) and the Staten Island City Council Delegation pose with medical staff, employees, administration, and trustees.*

As part of the Fiscal Year 2025 city budget, the Staten Island City Council Delegation and Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams have allocated \$12.8 million in capital funds to continue renovations and purchase critical equipment at Richmond University Medical Center. The Speaker and Delegation made the announcement at RUMC to an audience of medical staff, employees and hospital trustees.

“We’re proud to have secured \$12.8 million for Richmond University Medical Center, which will allow it to continue renovations and purchase new life-saving equipment,” Speaker Adams said. “We remain unwavering in our commitment to funding improvements that serve Staten Island residents and I am grateful for the partnership of the Staten Island Delegation members for their tireless advocacy on behalf of the borough.”

The latest round of funds will help modernize the CAT Scan/Radiology Department, renovate a 30-bed inpatient

psychiatric unit, improve security and patient access, and purchase critical diagnostic equipment including MRI, PET Scan, CAT Scan, X-Ray, and ultrasound machines.

“The funding that we are announcing continues this unprecedented public investment in our borough’s healthcare infrastructure and stands as a testament to the City Council’s continued commitment to the well-being of all Staten Islanders,” Minority Leader Joseph Borelli said.

In addition, the Council will provide RUMC with more than \$600,000 to provide cancer screenings and education, early intervention programs to improve maternal and child health outcomes, mental health and addiction services, and compassionate care for sexual assault victims through the hospital’s Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) program.

“Access to high-quality healthcare is not

a North Shore or a Mid-Island or a South Shore issue — it’s a Staten Island issue. And that is why my colleagues in the City Council and I have worked together, across the borough and across party lines, to solve this problem,” said Council Member David Carr. “Once again, Speaker Adams has shown she is a true friend to our borough by partnering with us in this unprecedented financial commitment.”

Since Fiscal Year 2017, the Staten Island Council Delegation, along with the Council Speaker, have allocated more than \$66 million in capital funding to RUMC, including money for the new James P. Molinaro Emergency Department, which opened in 2023.

“This investment is critical for enhancing healthcare services and outcomes for the Staten Island community. I want to thank Speaker Adams and my Council Delegation colleagues for their support in making this possible,” said Council Member Kamillah Hanks.

## Annual Procedures Day Held for New Interns



Felicia Roseto illustrating how to take an Arterial Blood Gas (ABG) test.



Arnold Onana showing an airway intubation.

As a teaching hospital, Richmond University Medical Center is proud to be a cornerstone for young medical professionals beginning their careers. Each year, the hospital's Department of Medicine holds a Procedures Day. The

focus is on providing new interns with an overview of procedures and tasks they will come across during their residency to minimize personal risk while increasing quality of care. Staff from different departments of the hospital volunteer

to explain and instruct the new Interns in a variety of areas including intubation, stitching and suturing, infection control, sepsis, and catheter insertion.

## Philip Otterbeck, MD, Named Chief Medical Officer

Richmond University Medical Center has appointed Philip Otterbeck, MD, as its new chief medical officer. Dr. Otterbeck assumes the new role while also continuing to serve as RUMC's Department of Medicine Chair and Chief of Endocrinology.

As Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Otterbeck's primary focus will be to assess institutional and community needs with the goal of expanding and enhancing clinical services both on the hospital campus and throughout Staten Island. He will also focus on enhancing the hospital's graduate medical education programs, ensuring that students, residents, and fellows are exposed to the best available evidence-based medicine and cutting-edge technology.

"Richmond University Medical Center is synonymous with clinical excellence delivered with compassion. We treat our patients like family because they are our families, friends, and neighbors," Dr. Otterbeck said. "Working alongside our clinical and administrative partners, I will work with the medical staff to construct quality and performance improvement

initiatives to achieve institutional targets in publicly reported data such as Star Ratings and Leapfrog. With a comprehensive interdepartmental focus and meticulous attention to eliminating barriers to discharge, we have seen improvements in both throughput and length of stay, despite increases in patient volume. Success in these areas requires teamwork and I am so delighted to be part of this team in this expanded role."

A native Staten Islander who was born when RUMC was known as St. Vincent's Hospital, Dr. Otterbeck graduated from New York University with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in Russian and Slavic Studies. He earned his doctor of medicine degree from SUNY-Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, where he also completed a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in diabetes, endocrinology, and metabolism.

"Dr. Otterbeck has been serving the healthcare needs of Staten Island for many years and has earned the trust and respect of his patients, our medical staff and our entire community," RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina,

PhD, FACHE, said. "Our board of trustees and entire leadership team are excited to be working alongside Dr. Otterbeck as we navigate the growing and ever-changing healthcare market."

In addition to maintaining a large private practice, Dr. Otterbeck is also a clinical assistant professor of medicine at SUNY-Downstate Medical Center and an adjunct associate professor of medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai, St. George's University, and American University of Antigua.

"Dr. Otterbeck is a true gentleman, a passionate physician and a great advocate for the community of Staten Island," Francesco Rotatori, MD, FACC, president of the RUMC medical staff, said. "There is no better person than Phil to embody the values and skills necessary to be our chief medical officer."

Dr. Otterbeck continues to call Staten Island home along with his wife Victoria and their two children, Ava Grace and Philip Thomas.



# Q&A at RUMC

This month's question:  
**What is your favorite movie or TV show of all time**



**Ronald**  
*Telecommunications Specialist*

"*The Dark Knight*. Heath Ledger, and his performance as The Joker is my favorite aspect of the film. He does an amazing job portraying the villain."



**Lauren**  
*Nurse Case Manager*

"My favorite movie is *Toy Story*. Watching it brings me happy emotions and it is a very nostalgic movie for me."



**Elizabeth**  
*Security*

"My favorite movie is *Blended* with Adam Sandler. I am a big comedy fan and love Adam Sandler".



**Keisha**  
*Housekeeping*

"My favorite movie is *Training Day* with Denzel Washington. It was the first movie he won an Oscar for — his role as a corrupt police officer training a rookie officer — and he did very well in his role. The movie brings awareness to the idea that justice always prevails and living your life honestly with strong ethics is very important."



**Nancy**  
*Executive Assistant, Administration*

"*Now Voyager* with Betty Davis is definitely a top 5 for me. It's set during the late 1800s early 1900s, about the transformation of a woman named Charlotte who came from an aristocratic family in Boston. She felt unwanted in the setting of her family and their home, and struggles with her confidence and self-esteem. However, upon leaving home and removing herself from under the thumb of her mother, she blossoms and falls in love. The most beautiful aspect of the film was Charlotte helping the daughter of the man she loves navigate the same feelings Charlotte felt as a young girl."



**Chris**  
*Information Technology*

"My favorite movie is *Into the Spiderverse*. I think the comic book style of animation is very unique, and its soundtrack consists of original songs made by popular music artists."

## August Observances

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

### Month-Long:

Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month  
Digestive Tract Paralysis Awareness Month  
Gastroparesis Awareness Month  
National Breastfeeding Month  
National Eye Exam Month  
National Immunization Awareness Month  
Psoriasis Action Month  
Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month  
Summer Sun Safety Month

### Week-Long:

August 1 to 7: World Breastfeeding Week  
August 4 to 10: National Health Center Week  
August 18 to 24: Contact Lens Health Week

### Recognition Days:

August 1: National Minority Donor Awareness Day  
August 1: World Lung Cancer Day  
August 3: Cloves Syndrome Awareness Day  
August 18: World Breast Cancer Research Day  
August 19: World Humanitarian Day  
August 30: National Grief Awareness Day  
August 31: International Overdose Awareness Day

## Peer Advocacy Program Welcomes New Graduates



*Members of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences with some of the new Peer Advocates following their graduation ceremony.*

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences welcomed nine new peers to its Peer Advocacy program. The program connects individuals struggling with addiction with a peer who helps them find the motivation to begin their journey to recovery. Peers also act as

bridges between sponsors and counselors working with individuals and their families by providing one-on-one support, connecting them with recovery services, and teaching them how to sustain a recovery-based lifestyle. The graduation ceremony marked the conclusion of a

comprehensive training designed to equip each peer with the skills necessary to effectively help others. The graduation ceremony was held at the College of Staten Island.

## New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Faderera Adewole — *Resident*  
Zubair Ahmed — *Resident*  
Dunia Ali — *RN*  
Sarah-Brittany Altreach —  
*RN Extern*  
Aishwarya Ashwinee — *Resident*  
Tin Mee Mee Aung — *Resident*  
Vahak Bairamian — *Resident*  
Madison Barahona — *Receptionist*  
Ahmed Bayoumy — *Resident*  
Asmeret Berhane — *Resident*  
Amanda Billingsy — *Guest Rep*  
Taylen Blake — *Transporter*  
Marcus Bonoan — *Resident*  
Kaitlin Brennan — *RN*  
Jill Calendrillo — *Clinic Registrar*  
Jacqueline Campbell — *Resident*  
Kristofer Candella — *Resident*  
Gabrielle Chirico — *RN*  
Madysen DeCanio — *Nursing*  
*Assistant*  
Jalal Dildar — *Resident*  
Ricki Ehrenfeld — *Resident*  
Ana Engracia — *Building Service*  
*Worker*  
Francisco Javier Enriquez —  
*Resident*  
Dinamarie Farrice — *Nursing*  
*Assistant*  
Gina Franza — *Admin Assistant*

Sarah Gbinigie — *Resident*  
Michael Guiry — *Associate VP of*  
*RHN*  
Abdul Aziz Habib Ullah — *Resident*  
Basant Hamed — *Resident*  
Diana Hayes — *Program Supervisor*  
Patrick Hayford — *Dir. Professional*  
*Billing*  
Christopher Jedel — *Resident*  
Alex Jung — *Resident*  
Denis Karabach — *Resident*  
Edip Katayifci — *Resident*  
Sudip Khadra — *Resident*  
Yukthi Kodali — *Resident*  
Hannah Kovach — *Resident*  
Miray Kurtca — *Resident*  
Radzhesh Laptev — *Resident*  
Rachel Leifer — *Resident*  
Megan Levkovich — *RN - Psych*  
Silva Lleshi — *Resident*  
Christian Lopez — *Guest Rep*  
Mayra Malik — *Resident*  
Supriya Maramreddy — *Resident*  
Megan McShea — *RN*  
Caroline Meurer Da Cunha —  
*Resident*  
Meghana Muppuri — *Resident*  
Crystal Njoku — *Resident*  
Uchenna Obeka — *Unit Clerk*

Celene Olivas Altamirano —  
*Resident*  
Arnold Onana — *Resident*  
Aakriti Parajuli — *Resident*  
Sheenali Patel — *Resident*  
Mya Pennisi — *Occupational*  
*Therapist*  
Dulce Romero — *Classroom*  
*Substitute*  
Antonio Saenz — *Junior Analyst*  
Max Sanginaro — *Resident*  
Danielle Savastano — *Resident*  
Michelle Senerchia — *RN Extern*  
Salar Shazad — *Resident*  
Sally Shobair — *Resident*  
Eric Silva — *Security Office*  
Grace Stella — *RN*  
Trimnell Stephen — *Resident*  
Pawel Szurnicki — *GI Hospitalist*  
Khanh Ta — *Resident*  
Amethyst Touver — *Registrar*  
Ayesha Usman — *Resident*  
Shamyr Vega — *Building Service*  
*Worker*  
Sarina Vo — *Clinical Analyst*  
Kevin Wang — *Resident*  
Dikshya Yadav — *Resident*  
Soroush Yazdani — *Resident*  
Nan Zhao — *Resident*  
Ali Ali Zuwayng — *Resident*

## RUMC Receives Donation of Blankets for Cancer Patients



RUMC staff accepting new blankets donated by Subaru of America, Island Subaru, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Cancer patients currently being treated at Richmond University Medical Center can now feel a little more comfortable. Subaru of America, Island Subaru, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society have donated new blankets to the hospital's Center for Cancer Care and the Ambulatory Infusion Center

"We can always count on Subaru

of America, Island Subaru, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to prioritize the well-being of our patients." RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "The gift of a blanket has more meaning than just keeping our patients warm, it reminds them that they are supported no matter what. The lasting friendship and loyalty we have received

from our community partners is integral to our operations here at RUMC."

The donation of over 80 new blue and white heart-shaped blankets was brought into the lobby of the hospital, where staff from the oncology program and Ambulatory Infusion Center expressed their gratitude.

"On behalf of the hospital, I want to thank Subaru for donating these blankets. I know that our patients in chemotherapy and in the Ambulatory Infusion Center will be very happy to have them," Lori Gargiso, RN, nurse manager at the Ambulatory Infusion Center, said.

RUMC's Center for Cancer Care treats thousands of patients each year with different types of cancer in various stages. It is common for patients under treatment such as chemotherapy to experience chills, which is often due to a heightened sensitivity to temperature and/or iron deficiency.

## Employees of the Month

Congratulations to our employees of the month for July:



**Stephanie Basile**  
Unit Clerk  
Emergency Department

**Gladys Donnelly**  
Materials Manager  
Emergency Department



**Pilar Brzyski**  
Family Peer Advocate  
Staten Island Mental  
Health Society

*18<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
**Richmond University  
Medical Center**  
Foundation

*Gala*

SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, November 2, 2024**

Hilton Garden Inn • Staten Island, New York

For more information, please visit [rumcsi.org/gala](http://rumcsi.org/gala)  
or contact Gina Ferreri 718.818.2106

Formal  
Invitation  
to Follow

