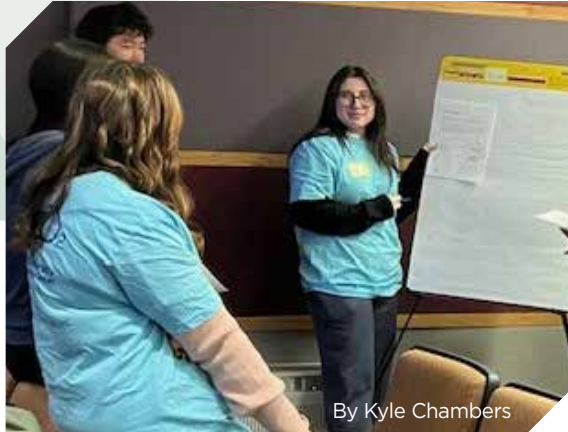


RUMC Trains Local Students to be Anti-Vaping Ambassadors



By Kyle Chambers

Students designing an anti-smoking poster based on information shared during the ambassador training.

On November 15, Richmond University Medical Center hosted nearly 50 students from local high schools for its first annual Staten Island Vaping Prevention Ambassador Training. The students learned about the dangers of vaping and cigarette use, and how they can advocate among their peers to eliminate e-cigarette use in their community as “anti-vaping ambassadors.” The training was provided in partnership with Public Health Solutions.

“The number of Staten Island teens who smoke is greater than any other borough with 1 in 5 Staten Island teens smoking a pack or more a day, and nearly 1 in 4 teens in our borough are using e-cigarettes,” RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.

Several medical professionals spoke with the students, sharing their experiences dealing with the medical effects of tobacco use. The students represented many of the borough’s high schools including Curtis High School, McCown High School, Michael J. Petrides High School, Moore Catholic High School, New Dorp High School, Notre Dame Academy, Port Richmond High School, St. Joseph Hill Academy, St. Peter’s Boys High School, and Staten Island Academy. Students received community service credits for attending.

Dr. Keith Diaz, Director of RUMC’s Lung Screening Program shared images of the contents inside a

vape cartridge, and how it affects a person’s body. He emphasized the “juice” inside a vape device contains artificial flavoring with chemical ingredients such as Cinnamaldehyde and Benzaldehyde. Dr. Loren Harris, Chair, Department of Surgery, and Chief of Thoracic Surgery, presented statistics on lung cancer, illustrated the rise of lung cancer cases, and shared images of a person’s lungs after years of tobacco use.

Lung Nurse Navigator, Nancy Sayegh-Rooney, RN, encouraged the students to advocate in their schools and communities as “anti-vaping ambassadors.” To provide a visual for the students, Rooney handed out party streamers and asked the students to blow into the streamers to demonstrate what healthy lungs allow them to do. She also told the story of a man in need of a lung transplant. He received a new lung from a young boy in Puerto Rico who had been murdered. Following the surgery, the mother of the slain child came in person to tell the man while he recovered in the hospital, “not one puff...ever.”

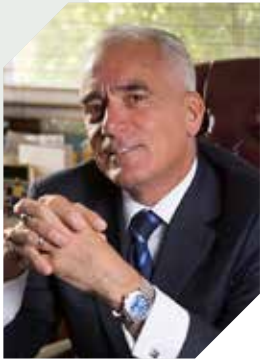


RUMC’s Lung Nurse Navigator, Nancy Sayegh-Rooney spoke about having the importance of being an anti-vaping ambassador.

To wrap up the daylong training, the students separated into color-coded groups and designed “smoke-free” advertisement posters based on information from the training. Rooney described the posters as the highlight of the event. “The kids were incredible; they were so engaged at the end and really learned something,” she said.

The second session, which completes the training for this first group of student ambassadors, will be held in Spring of 2025.

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



Looking back on the past year, we accomplished many things together and played host to many memorable community moments, now forever part of our RUMC history.

In January, we welcomed our first new arrival of the year at exactly 5:05 AM when little Makah Galal arrived to proud parents Neenaah and Ahmed Galal.

In February, we welcomed Omar Abukwaik, a 4-year-old boy who lost his entire family and sustained severe injuries during the fighting in the Middle East. As part of his care in the United States, our medical professionals examined Omar's ear structure and hearing as well as provided a full behavioral health assessment to help him cope with his trauma.

In March, we raised awareness of colorectal cancer, providing the public with free at-home colorectal cancer test kits to help screen for one of the more prevalent forms of cancer on Staten Island.

In April, nearly 500 individuals took part in our Arnold Obey 5K Run/Walk. Proceeds went to the family of Rory DeCristoforo, a 7-year-old girl tragically killed in a house fire on New Year's Day.

May saw our Bariatric and Metabolic Institute earn reaccreditation as a Comprehensive Center with Adolescent and Obesity Medicine Qualifications, as well as become a Center of Excellence in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and in Obesity Medicine.

In June, we performed our first surgical procedures inside our new state of the art Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion and our patients and procedures continue to grow every month.

July we welcomed the Staten Island City Council Delegation and Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams as they announced

\$12.8 million in city capital funds to continue renovations and support of critical equipment for our hospital.

In August, our NICU staff celebrated the discharge of Miracle Murray. Born premature on April 2, she was born weighing only 1 pound. She went home with her mom, Tiffany, at a healthy 8 lbs., 3 ounces.

September we celebrated "a true warrior in our Hematology Oncology Department." Yanebelkis Mora, a pediatric cancer patient, was presented with an all-expenses paid vacation for her and her family thanks to the "Make A Dream Come True" program.

In October, a significant turnout from our RUMC family walked in the annual American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, as we celebrated breast cancer survivors and remembered those lost to the disease.

Finally, last month, nearly 50 students from local high schools attended our inaugural Staten Island Vaping Prevention Ambassador Training. The students learned about the dangers of vaping and cigarette use, and how they can advocate to eliminate e-cigarette use as "anti-vaping ambassadors."

As this year comes to close, I wish to express my gratitude for all you have given to our community, our patients, and our institution. I also want to thank our Board of Trustees, Foundation Board, and the Auxiliary for their support these past 12 months. May this holiday season be one of joy and celebration.

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

"My newborn had jaundice and then his labs were not satisfactory. Dr. K. McDonough was amazing, explaining everything throughout the process. When my son's labs were not getting back to normal, he took it upon himself and arranged for immediate appointments with related specialists. He took so much burden off my shoulders. It meant a lot, and I'm very grateful."

— H.B.

"If it wasn't for Dr. (Dara) Fedele with the Breast and Imaging Center, I would have ended up with a SECOND unnecessary surgery. She recommended a prone table and my biopsy took 20 minutes, tops. The techs were also great and the front desk was fantastic."

— G.A.

"This is our family's second experience with a C-section birth. From the minute we stepped in, the security guard wanted to help us with our bags and everyone we encountered was pleasant and helpful. Dr. Benson and staff were flawless in their execution. The post operation nurses and doctors were professional and accommodative. We had specific issues that needed extra care and I believe everyone went above and beyond to help us. Thank you RUMCSI!"

— J.L.

"It is always a pleasure talking to Dr. Faravash. She listens to us and it is very pleasant to see a doctor that makes you feel confident and comfortable. I would definitely give her a 10!"

— L.G.

New Surgical Pavilion Wins Building Award

RUMC's new Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion was honored with a 2024 Building Award for Internal Design and Construction from the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce. The award was presented at a ceremony on November 13 at the St. George Theatre.

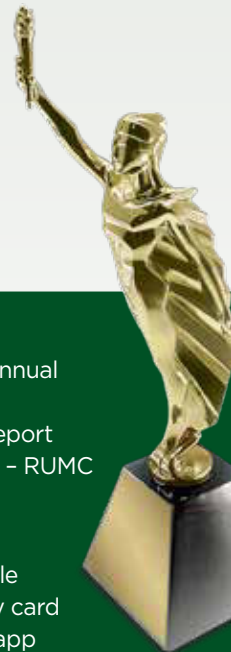
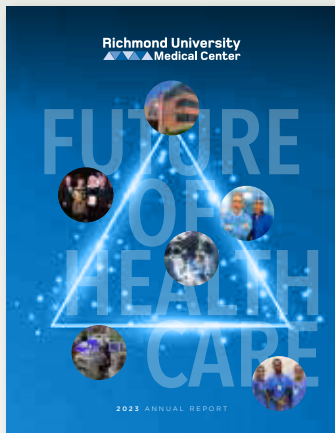
On hand to accept the award was President and CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, Chair of Surgery, Loren Harris, MD; Assistant Vice President, Peri-Operative Services, Amelia M. Piccione, RN; and Vice President for Public Relations and Marketing, Alex Lutz.

Located one floor above the James P. Molinaro Emergency Department, the \$42 million, 40,000 square foot pavilion opened in June of this year. It includes 23 pre- and post-operation bays for patients, 11 new technologically-advanced surgical rooms, robotic surgical systems, larger nursing stations, a family waiting area, and spacious hallways created to improve staff and patient flow.



RUMC leadership accepting the award for Internal Design and Construction from Staten Island Chamber of Commerce President Linda Baran (second, left).

PR and Marketing Department Wins 13 Awards at International Competition



At the 2024 MarCom Awards, Richmond University Medical Center's Public Relations and Marketing Department earned 13 awards, including three platinum awards, the top honor, for ads, campaigns and publications produced in 2023. It is the first time that all of the entries submitted by the department earned recognition.

Since its inception in 2004, the MarCom Awards have evolved into one of the largest creative competitions in the world. Each year over 6,500 print and digital entries are submitted from dozens of countries. The MarCom Awards are presented by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, an

international organization of several thousand marketing, communication, advertising, public relations, digital, and web professionals.

RUMC has collaborated on a majority of its creative projects with David Henry Marketing and Media, a New Jersey based company, for nearly 10 years. RUMC's Public Relations and Marketing Department includes Vice President Alex Lutz; Senior Public Relations and Marketing Specialist Meredith Gaskins; and Public Relations and Marketing Specialist Cheryl Garber.

Here are the 2024 MarCom awards won by the Public Relations and Marketing Department by category:

Platinum:

- ▶ Publications: 2023 cancer annual report
- ▶ Publications: 2023 annual report
- ▶ Ad Campaign: 100 years ad – RUMC timeline version

Gold:

- ▶ Newsletters: RUMC Chronicle
- ▶ Holiday Cards: 2023 holiday card
- ▶ Mobile App: RUMC mobile app
- ▶ Special Event: 2023 golf outing invitation

Honorable Mention:

- ▶ Ads: Behavioral health
- ▶ Ads: Colon cancer awareness
- ▶ Ads: Veterans ad
- ▶ Bench/shelter/mass transit: RUMC new facilities
- ▶ Ad Campaign: 100 years –grid version
- ▶ Poster: RUMC service line series

Richmond University Medical Center “Shines A Light” to Raise Lung Cancer Awareness

Richmond University Medical Center hosted its annual “Turquoise Takeover” on November 20, uniting Staten Island in the fight against lung cancer. The event is part of a national campaign intended to raise lung cancer awareness, encourage early detection, and honor those who have been impacted by the disease. This year marked the 10th consecutive year that RUMC has held the event which was also a celebration of the hospital’s lung screening program, which launched a decade ago.

A key moment of the daylong event was a “Shine a Light” ceremony, held at 1 PM. The lobby lights dimmed as staff and guests lit flashlights and held a moment of silence to remember lives lost to the disease.

“Today, we remember the people we know and love who are not here with us. We show our continued support for survivors and send encouragement to those in treatment,” RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said before the moment of silence.

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States with more than 125,000 lives lost annually, surpassing deaths from colon, breast, and prostate cancers combined.



Photo: Staff and guests observe a moment of silence for those lost to lung cancer while lighting small flashlights during a “Shine the Light” ceremony.

The American Cancer Society estimates over 234,000 new cases will be diagnosed this year.

Locally, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the premature death rate from lung cancer on Staten Island’s north shore exceeds both the rest of Staten Island and New York City overall. Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of premature death in the borough, with smoking being a significant contributing factor. Among Staten Island adults who smoke, over 64% began before the age of 18, compared to 52% citywide, and Staten Island teens have the highest rates of smoking and e-cigarette use across New York City.

“The importance of lung screenings

cannot be stressed enough,” Dr. Keith Diaz, Director of RUMC’s Lung Screening Program, said. “Early detection significantly improves survival rates, and here at RUMC, we are dedicated to saving lives through innovative care and comprehensive support.”

“Lung cancer doesn’t just impact patients, it affects their families, loved ones and communities,” said Nancy Sayegh-Rooney, RN, ONN-CG, CTTs, Lung Nurse Navigator. “At RUMC, we are committed to being with our patients every step of the way, from early detection to treatment and beyond. Events like Turquoise Takeover remind us how important it is to come together to raise awareness and save lives.”

This month’s question:

What is your favorite holiday tradition and why



Nicholas Ernst, *Junior Network Analyst*
“I love visiting Rockefeller Center during Christmas time. The tree has always been fun for me to go to since I was a kid.”



Nancy Rooney, *Lung Nurse Navigator*
“Christmas Eve dinner with the family, because we eat seven different fish and they’re delicious.”



Ardit Koti, *Desktop Analyst IT*
“I love Christmas Eve dinner, because the kids open one gift early.”



Angela Caliph, *Clerk, Endocrinology*
“My favorite tradition is eating great food at Christmas dinner like eggplant parm and lasagna. Also, I love being around my family for the holidays.”



Renee Fishler, *Volunteer, Pre-Operation*
“Watch Christmas movies. I have been doing that every year with my family since I was little.”



Sach Perera, *Registrar, Laboratory*
“Setting up the Christmas tree and decorating the house with my family, it takes a long time but is very fun.”

RUMC Sponsors 2024 SIEDC Health & Wellness Expo



Louise Steward (center, left) with her award for being a 2024 Community Healthcare Hero.

Richmond University Medical Center was a proud sponsor of the 2024 Health and Wellness Expo, held on Nov. 8. The event is provided annually by the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation. In addition to distributing information on hospital services, RUMC staff provided over 100 free health screenings including EKGs, glaucoma tests, and lung capacity monitoring.

Throughout the day, informative seminars were held on a variety of topics. Chief Medical Officer and Department of Medicine Chair, Philip Otterbeck, MD, discussed managing Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Debunking some of the myths around cardiovascular health was the topic for a panel that included Cardiovascular Department Chief Francesco Rotatori, MD, and Chief of Women's Cardiovascular Health, Fiona Shehaj, MD.

During the morning keynote breakfast, Chief of Ambulatory Pediatrics, Ana Veronica Mendez, MD, was honored as one of two 2024 Healthcare Heroes for her years of service to the community. Dr. Mendez is Board Certified in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. She has worked with the community in Staten Island for nearly 30 years. For the last decade, she has also worked closely with multiple

community-based organizations to address social determinants of health, equity initiatives, and healthcare access.

Later in the day, the SIEDC honored several individuals as Community Health Heroes. These individuals were selected for their dedication and “unsung” commitment to ensuring the health and wellbeing of others. Among the honorees was Louise Steward, Nurse Manager in RUMC's Labor and Delivery Unit. Louise participates in collaboratives with New York City and New York State agencies to improve outcomes and works to increase breastfeeding rates consistent with Healthy People 2030 goals. This year, she is celebrating her 50th year at RUMC.



Dr. Ana Veronica Mendez was recipient of the 2024 Healthcare Hero Award.



A conference attendee takes a lung capacity test from a member of RUMC's Respiratory Department.

How RUMC's lung capacity screenings are helping detect COPD, asthma and more



Keith Diaz, MD, board certified pulmonologist and Director of RUMC's Lung Screening Program

People breathe nearly 25,000 times during a normal day, but studies show that tens of millions of Americans struggle with this critical function and fail to get the oxygen necessary to support optimal health. The ability to breathe is essential to life itself and Richmond University Medical Center has long been providing programs to help enhance community members' lung health and functionality — especially given the higher-than-national-average rate of smoking on Staten Island.

Towards that end, the hospital's free Lung Capacity Screening program is just one of many initiatives designed to help residents assess and improve their lung health.

"Our free lung capacity screenings look at the function of the lungs by measuring a person's lung capacity relative to what their norm should be when compared to others of the same age, height, gender, etc.," said Keith Diaz, MD, Chief of the Pulmonary Department at Richmond University Medical Center and Director of the hospital's Lung Screening Program.

"We measure an individual's lung capacity using a small, hand-held computer with a little mouthpiece; people just need to take a full deep breath in and then blow out as hard and as fast as they can for at least six seconds," he said. "Through that action,

we can measure the extent of the full breath they both took in and blew out as well as how much they can blow out in one second. All of these measures are important because they can reveal any signs of an obstruction caused by such conditions as COPD, asthma and more."

Dr. Diaz said that the lung capacity test assesses the following three standard measures:

▶ **Forced Vital Capacity (FVC)**, or the full amount of air someone can blow out after an inhalation. "If someone's FVC is low, it can suggest any of a number of conditions that might limit lung capacity, such as lung scarring or fibrosis, which would require additional testing to conclude," Dr. Diaz said. "Other conditions that could limit someone's lung capacity include severe scoliosis or another spinal issue, obesity, heart failure (which causes the lungs to fill with fluid), or muscular problems that impact the strength of someone's diaphragm (a condition which could cause both low FVC and low FEV1)."



▶ **Forced Expiratory Volume (FEV1)**, or how much air someone can blow out in the first second, which may reveal an obstruction or a narrowing of the airways or bronchioles. "Low FEV1 is often associated with smokers, whose airways may lack structural integrity and collapse from the pressure in their chest when they blow out fast, making it more difficult for them to exhale," he said, noting that low FEV1 can also occur in individuals with asthma that's not well-controlled.

▶ **FEV1/FVC**, or the ratio of the previously mentioned two measures.

"We offer lung capacity screenings at most of the health fairs we participate in throughout the year," said Dr. Diaz. "We can also coordinate with organizations who want to set up screenings for their employees at any time."

Should short lung capacity be identified through a screening, "there are many treatments for conditions like fibrosis, asthma, and COPD," Dr. Diaz confirmed. "It's very important to get proper treatment for asthma or it could get worse. COPD is more progressive, and while there's no way to reverse lost lung function, effective treatment will help improve symptoms and functionality so that patients can be more active and enjoy better overall health. According to a new study just published in the European Respiratory Journal, 23% of people who smoked for less than 10 years still developed COPD later in life, so even people who only smoked for a brief time can benefit from getting their lung capacity checked."

As part of Richmond University Medical Center's complete service offerings, "we also do lung cancer screenings and that program is very dear to us," Dr. Diaz said. Recommended for anyone ages 50-80 who has or had the equivalent of a "20 pack-year" habit (measured by smoking a pack a day for 20 years, two packs a day for 10 years, etc.), "many area residents aren't aware that lung cancer screenings are an important part of standard care, like getting a colonoscopy or a mammogram. There's often a stigma associated with smoking and many smokers aren't willing to share that they smoke(d) as much as they do (did) or for as long as they have (had), but they shouldn't be embarrassed about their past or present habit. We hope that more people will utilize our lung cancer screening program because it can improve their health in the long run and potentially save their life.

New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Ilona Aimuradeva — *EMT*

Timothy Bellerice — *Registered Respiratory Therapist*

Joseph Broadbent — *EMT*

Megan Brown — *Receptionist*

Paul Camarada — *Respiratory Therapist*

Allison Capponie — *Teacher*

Lauren Coffey — *Guest Rep*

Danielle D'Agostino — *RN*

Demetrius Carolina — *Community Relations Consultant*

Joseph Diaz — *Security Officer*

Jadd Dolah — *EMT*

Aurora Nancy Evans — *Mental Health Tech*

Arielle Feldman — *LMSW*

Brigit Gardner — *LMHC*

Kaitlynn Gonzalez — *Substitute*

Kairon Grady — *Building Service Worker*

Matthew Hall — *RN*

Calvin Han — *Chief of Oncology*

Deidre Innamorato — *RN*

Samantha Lamirata — *RN*

Susan Markman — *RN*

Stephanie McCann — *RN*

Julie Monta-Enrique — *RN*

William Murphy — *Maintenance*

Ramon Perez — *EMT*

Gregory Perez — *Support Staff*

Jose Pichardo — *Paramedic*

Karis Robichaud — *Chronic Care Manager*

Christian Rodriguez — *Paramedic*

David Rudich — *Dir. Corporate Compliance*

Gianna Ruggiero — *RN*

Nichole Savillo — *EMT*

Allon Scheyer — *Occupational Therapist*

Daniel Shteynvarts — *Paramedic*

Janet Valena — *RN*

Najair Williams — *Paramedic*

Kyle Williams — *Building Service Worker*

December Observances

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

Month-Long:

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

National Safe Toys and Gifts Month

Week Long:

December 1 to 7: Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week

December 2 to 8: National Handwashing Awareness Week

December 4 to 8: National Influenza Vaccination Week

Recognition Days:

December 1: World AIDS Day

December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities



RUMC Auxiliary: Providing Support for Over A Century

First established in 1903, the Richmond University Medical Center Auxiliary is composed of a dynamic group of people who devote their free time to supporting our hospital. The Auxiliary's tireless energies are demonstrated by their numerous fundraising efforts and events that they hold each year.

Recently, the auxiliary members donated books to the Chol J. Lee, MD Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, held a Fall scratch off wreath raffle and sponsored ice cream carts for staff appreciation days.

To become a member, visit:

www.rumcsi.org/patients-visitors/get-involved/rumc-auxiliary



Announcing the RUMC Auxiliary 2024 Grant Recipients

Each year the RUMC Auxiliary awards grants to departments that submit requests for assistance with programs and services that benefit patients. This year's grant recipients are:

- ▶ **Respiratory Care Department** for the purchase of a Hillrom vest system to aid with airway clearance.
- ▶ **Cardiac Cath Lab** to acquire a blanket warmer with cart and Bluetooth speaker for patients to listen to their favorite music while having a procedure done to promote relaxation.
- ▶ **Emergency Department** for a Giraffe Blue Spot PT to provide high intensity phototherapy for hyperbilirubinemia.
- ▶ **Medical Intensive Care Unit** for a Butterfly iQ3 hand held portable ultrasound with advanced technology package.