

Richmond University Medical Center Welcomes Its First Baby of 2025



Lucas Pereida arrived at RUMC at 3:32 AM to first-time parents Destiny and Jayson.

Just a few hours into 2025, Richmond University Medical Center welcomed its first baby of the new year, Lucas Pereida. The bundle of joy arrived at 3:32 AM to proud parents Destiny Hiraldo and Jayson Pereida of Port Richmond. Lucas weighed 7 pounds, 13 ounces and was 20 inches in length. He is the couple's first child.

"It's amazing, I'm still getting used to it," Pereida said when asked about being a new father. "But it's amazing." He went on to say that mom and little Lucas were fine and resting comfortably.

Following his birth, Lucas and his parents stayed in the two-floor Richmond County Savings Foundation Mother/Baby Unit at RUMC. The unit features multiple birthing rooms; a labor and delivery triage center; multiple nurse stations; and

newly renovated maternity suites. Many of the Mother/Baby Unit's maternity suites were recently redesigned to enhance the post-birth family bonding experience and feature larger single-beds, in-suite bathrooms, showers, and new flooring and windows, among many other amenities. Each suite also has larger space for family and visitors. Nearly 3,000 newborns are welcomed into the world each year at RUMC.

RUMC is also home to a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) that has one of the highest survival rates in the country. Providing advanced care to over 600 newborns annually, newborns weighing a little as one pound have been cared for by the NICU team and "graduated," going home to the care of their families.

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



As we step into 2025, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude as I reflect on the extraordinary achievements and milestones we've reached together at Richmond University Medical Center. Our journey over the past year has been nothing short of inspiring, and it is thanks to your unwavering commitment, expertise, and compassion that we continue to thrive and break new ground in healthcare.

2024 was a year of transformation and growth. We unveiled the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion, a state-of-the-art facility equipped with cutting-edge robotic technology, empowering our surgeons to perform minimally invasive procedures with unmatched precision and care. Our research team made groundbreaking contributions to diabetes management, publishing findings that are already influencing best practices nationwide. These accomplishments reflect your tireless dedication and innovative spirit.

But we know that success is not just about facilities and research—it's about people. That's why we are so excited to finalize our expansion plan for adult in-patient psychiatric services. This is a critical step in addressing the growing mental health needs of our community. Together, we will offer compassionate, specialized care to those who need it most, helping to heal and uplift our neighbors in their most vulnerable moments.

We are also broadening our impact through deeper connections within our community. By working with a consultant from Project Hospitality for North Shore outreach, we are ensuring that healthcare access reaches beyond our walls and into the neighborhoods that need it most. Our collaboration with local faith-based organizations, including Reverend Demetrius Carolina and The Central Family Life Center, will help us build stronger, more resilient communities—where healthcare is not just a service, but a shared commitment to each other's well-being.

None of this would be possible without the collective strength and dedication of our incredible team. Whether it's the compassionate

nurses providing bedside care, the environmental services team maintaining a welcoming and safe environment, or our administrative staff ensuring smooth and efficient operations, every role is vital in our mission. Your hard work and unwavering support make RUMC the exceptional institution it is.

As we look toward 2025, we are not only committed to deepening our impact in mental health, but also to expanding access to care in new and innovative ways. This spring, we will launch a mobile health unit to bring essential services directly to underserved neighborhoods. We will also continue to prioritize mental health resources for both patients and staff, recognizing that well-being is the foundation of everything we do. Together, we will continue to lead with compassion, dedication, and excellence.

The road ahead is filled with endless possibilities, and together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. By continuing to lift each other up and embracing new opportunities with open hearts and minds, we will continue to cement RUMC's role as a beacon of hope and leadership in healthcare. Your resilience, creativity, and commitment make all of this possible, and I am truly honored to work alongside such an extraordinary team.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our mission, for the countless ways you contribute to our success, and for the transformative impact you have on the lives of the people we serve. Let's make 2025 another groundbreaking year for Richmond University Medical Center, as we inspire positive change, foster stronger communities, and continue to provide exceptional care to all who need it.

Wishing you and your loved ones a year filled with health, happiness, and fulfillment.

Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!

Sincerely,



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

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to our employee of the month for January:

Emmanuel Campbell
Security Officer
Department of Public Safety



Celebrating a Legacy of Service: William “Bill” Amaniera Retires After Nearly 40 Years



William “Bill” Amaniera waves goodbye after nearly 40 years of service at RUMC.

On December 20, Richmond University Medical Center honored one of its most beloved staff members, William “Bill” Amaniera, with a heartfelt “clap out” ceremony to celebrate his retirement. This emotional send-off reflected not only his nearly four decades of dedicated service, but also the deep admiration and respect he has earned from his colleagues, the Staten Island community, and beyond.

The celebration began with an intimate luncheon held at the hospital, attended by staff, Bill’s family, and special guests,

including New York State Assembly Member Charles Fall. The Assembly Member personally commended Bill for his unwavering commitment to RUMC and the Staten Island community, presenting him with a certificate of recognition for his extraordinary service.

Following the luncheon, the hospital held a moving clap-out ceremony, where well over 100 colleagues and friends lined the hallway leading to the main entrance, applauding Bill as he made his way through. The sound of bagpipes filled the air, adding a solemn and

dignified tone, while members of the military veterans motorcycle group, Rolling Thunder, stood in tribute. Representatives from NYPD and FDNY also joined the gathering, highlighting Bill’s lasting impact on first responders and the community they serve.

Before leaving with his family, a brief ceremony was held outside the main lobby. In attendance was New York State Assembly Member Sam Pirozzolo, Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon, and RUMC Board Chair Emeritus Kathryn Krause Rooney. A representative from Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella’s office presented a proclamation declaring December 20 as William Amaniera Day in Staten Island and a certificate of merit was presented by the office of New York State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton.

In addition to his professional contributions over his long tenure at RUMC, Bill has been instrumental in organizing RUMC’s annual 9/11 ceremony, a heartfelt tradition that ensures the memories of that day are preserved and honored.

Tree Lighting Ceremony Held to Remember Beloved Colleague



Staff along with Trustees, and Laura Gajda’s daughter, Jackie, gather around the tree decorated in Laura’s memory.

Friends, family, and colleagues gathered on December 19 to honor the memory of Laura Gajda, former vice president of Development for Richmond University Medical Center. As she was responsible for many of the holiday celebrations held at RUMC during her tenure, a tree planted earlier this year at a memorial on the hospital’s front lawn was decorated and lit. Among those in attendance were RUMC Foundation chair and trustee Robert Urs, Foundation member Brian Gomez, and Laura’s daughter, Jackie. Laura passed in January of 2024.

“My mom loved RUMC and her time working here,” Jackie said. “Thank you for thinking of her and holding this ceremony in her honor.”

RUMC Radiologist Named to Prestigious 40 Under 40 Class



Richmond University Medical Center is proud to announce that Soham Patel, MD, program director of the Radiology Residency Program, has been named to the 2024 40 Under 40 Class by Radiology Business, an online publication that highlights emerging leaders in the field.

Dr. Patel, who specializes in musculoskeletal radiology, expressed his gratitude, saying, "I am extremely honored and humbled to be included on this list. This recognition is a testament to the collective commitment of my colleagues here at RUMC to improve the lives of our community."

In addition to his leadership role in the residency program, Dr. Patel co-chairs RUMC's Patient Safety Council and contributes to the hospital's quality improvement initiatives. He has also authored numerous articles on radiology quality improvement.

"Dr. Patel embodies the values of compassion, leadership, and continuous improvement," said Kathryn Giovinazzo, vice president for Clinical Operations at RUMC. "He inspires aspiring medical professionals and reminds us that true success lies in making a positive difference in the lives of others."

This month's question: What is your New Year's resolution



Amanda Waage

PI Coordinator, Trauma Services

"My resolution is to stop drinking sugary drinks."



Nancy Tricorico

Executive Assistant, Administration

"My resolution is to be more patient, don't get angry, be humble, speak your truth more, and to be in the moment."



Deborah Rodriguez

Associate Director Cancer Services

"My resolution is to establish a better work, life balance."



Gisselle Almazo

Clerk, Oncology

"My resolution is to eat healthier."



James Corrigan

Transporter, Radiology

"My resolution is to be financially successful."



Nichol Yodice

Administrative Assistant, Medicine

"My resolution is to eat better and healthier in 2025."



Diane Duffy

Clerical, Nursing

"It's a continuous resolution from last year that I lost forty pounds, very slowly, but it's coming off, and this year I hope to continue losing more weight"



Kimberly Smith

Manager, ACO/POP Health

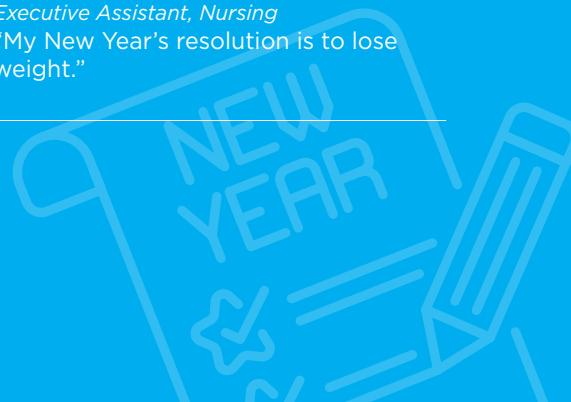
"My resolution is to continue to be kind and patient with people that I know and that I don't know, because you never know what someone is going through."



Francine Reyes

Executive Assistant, Nursing

"My New Year's resolution is to lose weight."



RUMC Celebrates the Opening of Spa-Like Obstetrics and Gynecology Center on Staten Island's South Shore



Photo: Dr. Inna Tubman and RUMC and Richmond Health Network leadership officially open the new Obstetrics and Gynecology Center in the Charleston section of Staten Island.

Richmond University Medical Center marked an exciting milestone with the grand opening of its new Obstetrics and Gynecology Center on Staten Island's South Shore. Designed with patient comfort and care in mind, the state-of-the-art facility offers a spa-like atmosphere and comprehensive women's health services, further expanding RUMC's commitment to the community. The new center is located inside the South Shore Commons Shopping Center at 2935 Veterans Road West.

The center will be the primary office for Inna Tubman, MD, whose previous office was located at 4360 Hylan Boulevard. Dr. Tubman has been a practicing board certified OBGYN physician since 2008. Dr. Tubman will be joined in the new center by several of her colleagues, providing a wide range of OBGYN

services, including routine examinations, cancer screenings, menopause management, and infertility care, among others.

"This beautiful new space is not just a medical office, it's a sanctuary for women to feel supported and cared for during every stage of life," RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "Dr. Tubman and her team are true leaders in their field, and we are proud to expand our services to the South Shore community."

The center features spacious exam suites equipped with the latest technology, private consultation rooms, and a comfortable waiting and reception area. The center is also home to a specially designed, fully equipped in-office procedure room, which provides a

sterile and convenient location for patients to have minimally invasive procedures performed on-site.

"This new office allows us to provide exceptional care in a setting that prioritizes patient comfort and well-being," Dr. Tubman said. "I'm thrilled to continue serving my patients in this beautiful facility and couldn't do it without the help of my incredible team."

The new center is part of the Richmond Health Network, an affiliate of Richmond University Medical Center. The Richmond Health Network was launched in 2020, providing Staten Islanders with improved access to quality primary care and specialty medical services through private offices and centers across the borough.

Managing Diabetes: Exploring the Latest Advances in Treatment and Prevention at RUMC



Philip Otterbeck, MD

With nearly 40 million adults in America suffering from diabetes — 20% of whom don't even know they have it — diabetes is a national epidemic that continues to be on the rise.

“While the national incidence of Type 2 diabetes is 11%, over 14% of residents on Staten Island have some form of diabetes,” shared Philip Otterbeck, MD, chief medical officer, chair of medicine, and chief of endocrinology at Richmond University Medical Center, of the prevalence of the disease.

Following, Dr. Otterbeck shares important facts about the causes and symptoms of diabetes, treatments for the disease, and preventative measures that can reduce the risk of developing this serious condition.

▶ **Causes of Diabetes** — According to Dr. Otterbeck, diabetes does not discriminate. “We used to think that Type 2 diabetes was a disease of the overweight and elderly, but due to dietary habits and a lack of physical activity, we're seeing Type 2 diabetes emerge even in children and adolescents,” he said. “There's a genetic component to obesity, but we also live in a society focused on food, especially fast food, so part of the cause is genetic, but part is driven by lifestyle choices that we can control.”

• **Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes** — “In early stages of diabetes, people may be asymptomatic and feel nothing,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “In more acute presentations, patients may experience excessive urination, thirst, and weight loss, as high blood sugar can overwhelm the kidneys and lead to excess sugar and

water coming out in the urine. They may also experience fatigue, severe abdominal pain, and vomiting.” If left untreated, he added, “diabetes can lead to neuropathy (nerve damage), kidney damage, vision problems, stroke, heart attack, and peripheral vascular disease and prove fatal.”

▶ **Risk Factors** — “Obesity, especially around the stomach and gut, is often a telltale sign that a person is insulin-resistant and can be a sign of overt or developing diabetes,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “Other risk factors include a sedentary lifestyle with a low level of physical activity, a diet high in carbohydrates like white bread and rice, and a family history of the disease in a first-degree relative (such as a mother, father, sister, brother, or child). Age is also a factor, as the older you get the higher the chances of developing diabetes, and women who previously had gestational diabetes are at higher risk of developing permanent Type 2 diabetes.”

▶ **Conventional Treatments** — In addition to diet and exercise modification, “our arsenal of medications to treat diabetes has expanded significantly over the past decade; while there were only two to three classes of drugs to use in the past, we now have a whole toolbox of drug options — each of which has a benefit, risk, and cost associated with it,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “The foundation of diabetes management is the drug Metformin, which sensitizes the liver to insulin and turns off its abnormal production of glucose.” He confirmed that the choice of diabetes medication for each patient is determined through an assessment of each patient's unique situation, goals, and co-morbidities. “It's a complex discussion centering around the A1C reduction they're targeting and any cardiac, renal, or other issues they need to prevent,” he explained. “For example, a class of drugs known as SGLT2 Inhibitors (represented by such brand names as Farxiga and Jardiance) lower A1C while protecting the kidneys from the progression of kidney disease and preventing a cardiac event.”

▶ **New Treatments** — According to Dr. Otterbeck, a class of diabetes drugs known as “GLP-1 Receptor Agonists” (represented by such brand names as Ozempic and Mounjaro) has become extremely popular because they also

help patients lose up to 10% to 15% of their weight by impacting the body's satiety center. Though a recent shortage of these drugs proved challenging for patients and doctors alike, “these drugs are now available the vast majority of the time to patients struggling with both obesity and Type 2 diabetes,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “Though they can trigger stomach upset and vomiting, constipation, diarrhea, and/or other gastrointestinal issues in a small percentage of patients, this class of drugs has been around for over 20 years with scant evidence of long-range safety concerns when prescribed to the appropriate patients.”

▶ **Preventative Measures** — “Eating well (e.g., consuming fewer processed and sugary foods like regular soda and fruit juices, and eating more green vegetables, lean meats, chicken, turkey, and fish), managing stress, staying active (e.g., walking instead of driving when you can and taking walks with the family), making work meaningful to you, and refraining from smoking are key to reducing your risk of developing diabetes,” he said. “You don't have to give up anything, just have less of it. It's all about portions and frequency.”

▶ **RUMC Can Help** — “At Richmond University Medical Center, we have an outstanding team of primary care physicians who diagnose and treat diabetes as well as five exceptional full-time endocrinologists who specialize in diabetes and work with patients when a case is beyond the primary care physician's scope,” Dr. Otterbeck said.

▶ **Knowledge is Power** — “Everyone should see a doctor and get checked for diabetes or pre-diabetes, which are treatable conditions and for which diagnosis can be made through a simple blood test,” said Dr. Otterbeck, who confirmed the importance of addressing diabetes sooner rather than later. “If you're diagnosed with diabetes, you can begin treatment to manage it, and if you're diagnosed with pre-diabetes, you can proactively intervene before it progresses to clinical diabetes.”

To make an appointment with Dr. Otterbeck, you can call 718-727-1366. His office is located at 1366 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY 10301.

January Observances

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

Month-Long:

Cervical Health Awareness Month
Integrative Health Month
International Quality of Life Month
National Birth Defects Awareness/Prevention Month
National Blood Donor Month
National Glaucoma Awareness Month
National Radon Action Month
National Winter Sports Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month
Thyroid Awareness Month

Recognition Days:

January 23: Maternal Health Awareness Day
January 25: IV Nurse Day
January 26: World Leprosy Day



Richmond University Medical Center Holds Annual Adopt-A-Family Program



Jennifer Dominguez and Lucille Forlenza, Vice President of the RUMC Auxiliary, with some of the gifts for this year's families.

For the 27th consecutive year, Richmond University Medical Center held its annual Adopt-A-Family program. Over 50 families received clothing, books, toys, and gift cards for the holiday season. Donations were collected throughout November and early December. The

donations were handed out to the families on December 18.

"We can't give families everything, but we make sure they have something to open on Christmas morning," said Jennifer Dominguez, RUMC's CME coordinator and administrator of the Adopt-A-Family program.

The Adopt-A-Family program supports more than 50 families, schoolchildren, and Head Start participants each year. Families are identified through RUMC's Family Health Center, located at 800 Castleton Avenue, where RUMC staff work with the local community partners to find families in need during the holiday season. Once identified, RUMC staff begins pairing families with donors to the program. Every child receives a book, every child under 12 gets a toy, every family member gets an article of clothing, and families also receive

donations from ShopRite and additional local supporters that supply gift cards for distribution.



Gifts are laid out for distribution to local families.

Holiday Toy Donations Spread Cheer to RUMC Pediatric Patients



Throughout December, many local organizations donated toys and other items to be distributed to pediatric patients receiving care at Richmond University Medical Center. Among them

were Holy Name Society, Make A Dream Come True Foundation, New Jersey Police Italian Society, NYPD Cops Care for Kids, New York City Department of Sanitation, and St. George MGOCSM.

Our thanks to these organizations for remembering our youngest patients during this past holiday season.

