

CARE

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INSIDE

NEW EXHIBIT PAYS TRIBUTE TO
HEROES OF THE PANDEMIC (PG. 8)

Richmond University
 **Medical Center**

A Message from the President & CEO



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fall edition of *Care Magazine*. Inside these pages, you will find stories that reflect both the spirit of innovation and the compassion that define Richmond University Medical Center. We are proud to share our ongoing partnerships with Project Hospitality and the College of Staten Island, as well as a feature on the exceptional work taking place within our cardiovascular program. You will also read about our new COVID-19 exhibit, and the exciting growth of our hospital's podcast and television series, which continue to engage and educate our community in meaningful ways.

Much continues to unfold across our campus. This summer, we began construction on our new Joan and Alan Bernikow Cardiovascular Institute, which will bring together advanced cardiology and neuroscience services under one unit. Powered by a cutting-edge hybrid catheterization laboratory, this center will support highly complex cardiac procedures and advanced neurovascular treatments, including immediate care for stroke and heart attack patients.

This fall, we will celebrate the opening of our new cogeneration plant, a state-of-the-art facility designed to provide reliable and sustainable electrical power. Cogeneration produces electricity and thermal energy from a single fuel source, dramatically increasing efficiency, reducing waste, and ensuring our hospital has uninterrupted energy even in times of crisis.

In addition, we will soon begin expansion of our Adult Inpatient Psychiatry Department, adding 10 new beds and creating a more supportive, home-like environment for our behavioral health patients. Following that project, we will also expand our Level III Wayne Zenna Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, continuing our mission to care for the most fragile members of our community with outcomes that rival the nation's top medical centers.

As we grow our facilities and programs, one thing remains constant: the unwavering commitment of our physicians, nurses, support staff, and governing bodies, who place our patients at the heart of every decision every day. Together, we are shaping a future where Staten Islanders no longer need to leave their community for the most advanced treatment. With confidence, I can say the best is yet to come.

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

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Richmond University Medical Center

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Executive Leadership

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Chief Medical Officer

Editorial

**ALEXANDER P. LUTZ, JR., CHERYL GARBER,
DARIA MAGILL**

**Richmond University
Medical Center**

Stroke Care Garner's National Accolades, New Designation



Allan Perel, MD,
Director, Department of Neurology

Earlier this year, Richmond University Medical Center achieved certification from both the American Stroke Association and The Joint Commission for its expertise and high-quality care performing thrombectomies for patients who suffered a stroke. This certification officially designates RUMC as an Advanced Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Center.

A thrombectomy is a minimally invasive procedure where a hair-thin catheter is inserted into a stroke victim to remove a blood clot from a vein or artery, restoring normal blood flow. Richmond University Medical Center launched its thrombectomy program in 2019.

"We are very proud of our certification as a Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Center by the Joint Commission. This designation assures stroke patients and our community that we are providing the absolute best care that opens blockages and preserves brain function," Executive Vice President of Medical Affairs, Chief Physician Executive, John Evanko, MD, said.

To achieve certification, RUMC underwent an unannounced on-site review. During the visit, reviewers evaluated compliance with numerous certification standards, including program management and patient care. The reviewers also conducted on-site observations and interviews.

RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, MPA, said, "Achieving this certification marks a significant milestone in our continuous commitment to delivering advanced stroke care."

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in healthcare. The American Stroke Association was created in 1998 as a division of the American Heart Association and is recognized as the leader in the latest evidence-based information on stroke, post-stroke recovery, caregiver information, and resources for health care professionals.

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States. According to the American Heart Association, in 2022, over 165,000 deaths were due to stroke and someone in the United States suffered a stroke every 3 minutes, 11 seconds.

RUMC GETS WITH THE GUIDELINES

Less than two months after being accredited as an Advanced Thrombectomy Capable Stroke Center, RUMC also earned the Get With The Guidelines Stroke Gold Plus quality achievement award from the American Heart Association and was named to the Association's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll for its special care of stroke patients who also have Type 2 diabetes.

RUMC earned the Gold Plus award, the highest level possible, for its continuous commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines. It is the seventh consecutive year that RUMC's stroke program has earned Gold Plus distinction.

Patients diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes may be at higher risk for complications after suffering a stroke. RUMC also earned its spot on the American Heart Association's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll for continuously demonstrating specialized care for diabetic stroke patients. This year's Honor Roll award marks the fourth consecutive year RUMC has earned this specialized award.

The Get With The Guidelines program helps ensure patient care is aligned with the latest research- and evidence-based guidelines. Get With The Guidelines Stroke is an in-hospital program for improving stroke care by promoting consistent adherence to these guidelines.



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to learn
more about
our Stroke
services*



RUMC Enters Collaborative Partnerships with Advocacy Organization and College of Staten Island



RUMC and Project Hospitality senior leadership and board members met to discuss a new collaborative partnership between their organizations.

Richmond University Medical Center recently signed partnership agreements with two well-known institutions on Staten Island: Project Hospitality and CUNY-College of Staten Island.

The partnership with Project Hospitality strengthens the full continuum of care provided at RUMC and its ambulatory sites for clients of Project Hospitality, who are among the borough's most vulnerable. The agreement with CUNY-College of Staten Island formalizes an agreement to combine resources that expand educational, clinical, and community health initiatives between both institutions.

"By partnering with Project Hospitality, we look forward to improving health equity and removing some of the social barriers preventing the well-being of our community," RUMC President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, MPA, said. "At the same time, our agreement with the College of Staten Island outlines the shared vision of both institutions to create new opportunities that will enhance the educational, healthcare, and social landscape of our community."

COORDINATED CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Project Hospitality offers care, advocacy, and support to individuals experiencing homelessness, hunger, and other hardships. The partnership with RUMC aims to enhance continuity of care for Project Hospitality clients following their discharge from the hospital and its

affiliates, including the Richmond Health Network. The partnership will also implement a clinical integration strategy to improve care coordination, ensuring better communication during hospital stays and discharge for Project Hospitality clients.

Additionally, the agreement will focus on streamlining outpatient services by speeding up intake and appointment scheduling for medical and behavioral health care. Project Hospitality clients



RUMC President & CEO Daniel J. Messina and CSI President Dr. Timothy Lynch after signing an agreement between the two organizations.

will also have the opportunity to enroll in RUMC's Chronic Care Management program for ongoing support. The organizations will work together to tackle food insecurity as part of their broader commitment to community well-being.

"I think it's a wonderful opportunity for us to be at the table and share our insights and our experience of caring for people, which is for us integrated on a continuum, because we see people from the street to the shelter to supportive housing to independence," Project Hospitality

Executive Director Rev. Terry Troia said.

She added that by working directly with the hospital, patients with conditions like diabetes, neuropathy, kidney disease, and dementia can receive regular care, preventing emergency room visits and ensuring a better quality of life.

EXPANDING CLINICAL AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CUNY-COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND

The agreement with CUNY-College of Staten Island sets forth a number of initiatives. Among them are expanded training programs to create a pipeline for CSI students enrolled in courses such as social work, nursing, information technology, finance, management, engineering, and community health to complete practicums and clerkships at RUMC. In addition, RUMC will work with CSI leadership to create new post-graduate employment opportunities.

CSI President Dr. Timothy Lynch emphasized the wide-ranging impact of the partnership. "Not just the students and employees here at the College of Staten Island, but the broader community through family engagement and partnerships, is going to be critical and I think a real game-changer for community health here on the island."

Other key areas outlined in the agreement with the college are the development of sports medicine coverage for the school's athletic programs, and expansion of on-campus student health services.

Cardiovascular Team Celebrates Ten Years of Saving Cardiac Patients Through Its STEMI Response Program

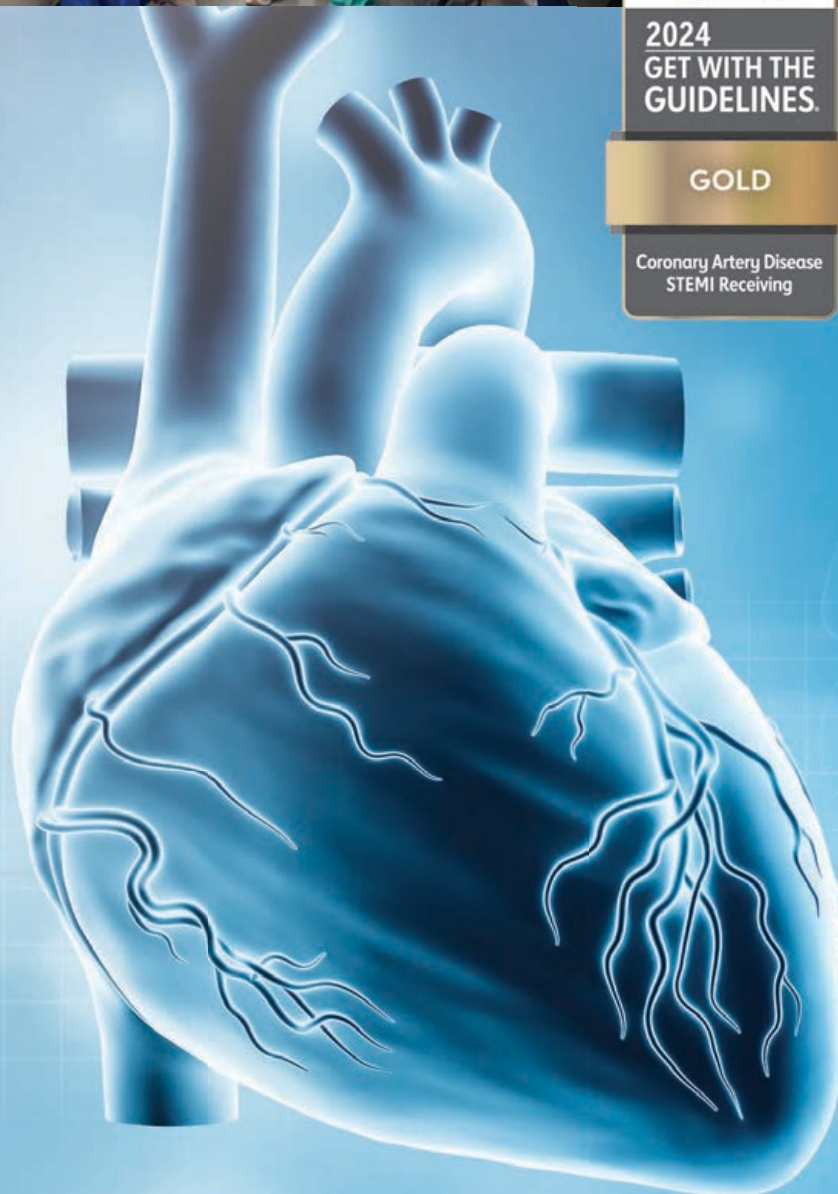
In April, Richmond University Medical Center's Cardiovascular Department celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its STEMI program. STEMI is an ST elevation myocardial infarction, or heart attack, known to be more severe and dangerous than other types of heart attacks.

The program was created a decade ago because data showed that residents living along the north shore of Staten Island were experiencing a high incidence of STEMI heart attacks and the only hospital that could treat them through angioplasty was on the other side of the island at the time. RUMC's program was developed in less than a year and certified by the New York State Department of Health. Today, the cardiovascular team cares for over 50 STEMI patients annually.

Since its inception 10 years ago, RUMC has maintained the designation from New York State as well as earned several national accreditations, including 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 STEMI.

During the 10-year anniversary celebration, the team presented plaques to the founders of the program: Chief of the Cardiovascular Department, Francesco Rotatori, MD, and Srinivas Duvvuri, MD. The team also recognized Iwona Gargala, PA, for her dedication and commitment to patients being cared for the hospital's Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory.

Each year, about 285,000 people in the U.S. experience a STEMI heart attack, caused by a complete blockage in a coronary artery.



Scan here to learn
more about our
Cardiovascular services

Richmond University Medical Center Welcomes Trio of New Trustees

Richmond University Medical Center welcomed three new Trustees to its board, all with terms that began July 1. The new Trustees are Anne M. Boyle, Heather M. Butts, and Rev. Lester J. Figueroa.

The new Trustees will help guide the hospital's strategic direction and focus on innovation, equity, and compassionate service. Chair of RUMC's Board of Trustees, Timothy C. Harrison, said, "It is an honor to welcome Heather, Anne, and Lester to the Board. Each possesses skill sets and experiences that are of vital importance to RUMC, as we navigate challenges that all hospitals, particularly safety net hospitals, now face."



Anne M. Boyle is a human resources professional with 35 years of experience in HR leadership. She earned her A.A.S and B.S. degrees in business management and finance from CUNY and pursued her M.S. Ed from Brooklyn College. Anne also received her M.S. in HR from Cornell University. Currently, she is HR senior executive and EVP at Wells Fargo, leading HR for the Chief Operations Office. She also serves as president of the Pride (LGBTQ+) Employee Resource Network at Wells Fargo.

"Quality medical care is critical to our community in Staten Island," Boyle said. "As a lifelong Staten islander who has seen the population growth on Staten Island, continued expansion of health care and trauma care are front and center to our needs. I am proud to join the board of a Level One Adult and Level Two Pediatric Trauma Center that has attracted strong leadership, doctors, nurses, and a board of distinguished members of our community to further RUMC's mission."



Heather M. Butts JD, MPH, MA, is an accomplished academic and professional with extensive experience in public health, law, and ethics. She received her B.A. from Princeton University, where she was a history major, concentrating in American and African American Studies. She received her J.D. from St. John's University School of Law; her master's in public health from Harvard University and her master's in education from Columbia University's Teachers College.

Currently, Butts serves as an assistant professor in the department of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. She is also co-founder of the non-profit H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths, Inc. The organization partners with close to 100 programs each year to help more than 7,000 students achieve their dream of going to college.

"It is an honor to have been selected to be a Trustee of Richmond University Medical Center," Butts said "As a public health professional and professor, I have long followed the innovative work at RUMC and am eager to contribute to the efforts of this vital institution."



Rev. Lester J. Figueroa was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and studied at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, where he completed his undergraduate and post graduate degrees in political science, international relations, public and private administration and law. He is a graduate of ministerial studies at Global University and is an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God.

Figueroa began practicing law in 1984 and in 1990 became a partner at Borah, Goldstein, Altschuler, Nahins & Goidel, P.C., where he has been employed since 1984.

In 1993, Lester helped establish the Latino Civic Association, a not-for-profit that services the growing Hispanic community on Staten Island.

In 2008, Lester became Lead Pastor of Calvary Assembly of God. Today, Calvary holds four services every Sunday, and holds mid-week classes and a prayer and healing service every Friday. Calvary also hosts a food pantry serving more than 300 families from across the borough.

"I am honored to be a member of a team where its members are dedicated to making us all better," Figueroa said. "Healthcare is a vital component of the life of a community, and this position will allow me to employ my resources and talents to serve RUMC in its efforts to continue to serve Staten Island with excellence."

Scan here to meet our
Board of Trustees



Bariatric and Metabolic Institute Achieves National Designation

Richmond University Medical Center's Bariatric and Metabolic Institute has earned the title of "Blue Distinction Center" by Blue Cross Blue Shield for consistently providing high quality patient care and results leading to fewer complications and readmissions.

Blue Distinction Centers are determined by a panel of reviewers and awarded to specialty programs that demonstrate quality care, treatment expertise, and better overall patient results. For bariatric, or weight loss, surgery, institutions must demonstrate a high level of expertise and commitment to care across a full range of bariatric services, including surgical care, post-operative care, outpatient follow-up, and patient education. In addition, they must have a history of lower complications from surgery and fewer readmission of patients following bariatric surgery.



Alex Barkan, MD
Vice Chair of
Surgery and Chief
of Bariatric Surgery

This designation is just the latest for the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute. Last year, the Institute earned reaccreditation as a Comprehensive Center with Adolescent and Obesity Medicine Qualifications, as well as a Center of Excellence in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. To complement these reaccreditations, the Institute also earned a new designation: Center of Excellence in Obesity Medicine. These national designations were awarded through the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), a joint quality program of the American College of Surgeons and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.

"This Blue Cross Blue Shield designation is another feather in our cap," said Alex Barkan, MD. "Not only are we accredited by the American College of Surgeons, we are now also recognized by individual insurance companies, like Blue Cross Blue Shield, as their preferred center to refer patients who are seeking experienced and effective bariatric care close to home." Dr. Barkan is RUMC's vice chair

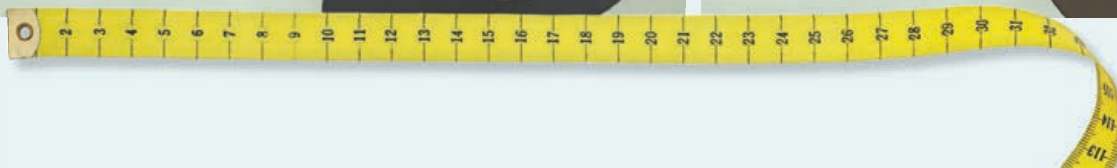
of surgery, metabolic and bariatric surgery director, obesity medicine director, and founder/director of the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute.

Established in 2018, the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute provides a diverse range of surgical and support services, including sleeve-gastrectomy and gastric bypass. After surgery, the Institute offers support groups to help ease the surgical recovery process by connecting patients with others who have shared similar experiences with obesity and bariatric procedures.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates about 93 million adults in the United States are affected by obesity and that number continues to increase. According to the CDC, the proportion of Staten Island adults with obesity increased from 2015 to 2019. While lower than the national average, Staten Island has the second highest obese adult population in New York City behind the Bronx. Obesity among Staten Island youth increased from 2013 and as of 2019, the proportion of Staten Island youth considered to be obese exceeds the New York City average.



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Bariatric services





RUMC Unveils Exhibit Commemorating COVID-19 Pandemic Response

On June 25, Richmond University Medical Center unveiled its new exhibit memorializing the hospital's response to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. The exhibit, located on the main floor, adjacent to the lobby, shines a light on RUMC's frontline workers who worked tirelessly to provide continuous care to its patients, as well as on the generosity and support the hospital received from the community.

"One of the amazing things was the work ethic put forth by the team. Amazing, amazing stuff," RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, MPA, said at the exhibit's ribbon cutting ceremony.

A timeline of dates and events captures pivotal moments from the pandemic on a global, national, regional, and local level. Visitors are also able to view videos about staff and patients, see artwork sent during the pandemic from local schools, and read letters received from a grateful community.

"We witnessed something truly remarkable: a team that never once said 'that's not my job,'" Chief Medical Officer Philip Otterbeck, MD, said. "Your humanity, most importantly, will never be forgotten."

A "hotbed" for COVID-19 positivity in New York City, RUMC admitted its first COVID-19 positive patient on March 14, 2020. Less than three weeks later, over 200 patients were admitted, many in need of advanced care, some placed almost immediately on ventilators to assist their breathing.

"We were applying our knowledge to cure people," Francesco Rotatori, MD, chief of the Cardiovascular Department and president of the RUMC Medical Staff, said. "But we are also human beings, so I get very emotional when I recall that time and what we did for people."

The exhibit also pays special tribute to three RUMC employees who passed away during the pandemic due to COVID-19: William Langley from the Dietary Services Department, Mary Ellen Porter, a longtime nurse and

nurse administrator, and Margaret Venditti from the Medical Records Department.

The exhibit was designed in partnership with the Staten Island Museum, and DavidHenry Marketing & Media, with support provided in part by the Richmond University Medical Center Auxiliary.

"I know this content is difficult to revisit," Executive Director Janice Monger of the Staten Island Museum said. "There was such tremendous loss, but there was also so much coming together."

"It was a true honor for our team to be able to participate in the creation of this heartfelt tribute," David Fink, president and chief communications officer for DavidHenry Marketing & Media, said. "Working with RUMC and the Staten Island Museum to bring this special initiative to life, to help educate and present the events that occurred and the lives that were saved at the hospital, makes this project a treasured moment for us at DavidHenry Marketing & Media."

A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE

RUMC Heroes and the COVID-19 Pandemic

William “Bill” Langley Dietary Cook

Bill was a longtime member of the Richmond University Medical Center family with 45 years of service under his belt. He started as a cook at Bayley Seton Hospital. When that location closed, he transferred to RUMC. Anyone that knew Bill knew that he was a flashy dresser, exceptional dancer, and very into fitness. He was a strong family man and the relationships that he created at the hospital were an example of how he managed his personal and family life, all about connections with people. Bill was dedicated to his hospital and had a heart of gold.



Mary Ellen Porter, RN Nurse Manager

Mary Ellen joined Richmond University Medical Center in 1991 and held many leadership positions during her tenure. Her RUMC career began in the Emergency Department. During the pandemic, Mary Ellen applied her critical care skills to oversee the COVID-19 unit before becoming ill with the virus herself. She personified the level of dedication, commitment, and compassion that the staff of Richmond University Medical Center strive for every day. She was a fixture in our hospital for many years and made a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of her colleagues and patients during her time with us.



Margaret “Margie” Venditti Birth Registrar

Margie provided nearly 20 years of service to Richmond University Medical Center. She was part of the Medical Records Department and maintained close relationships with her colleagues. Every year, Margie would take a week's vacation to bake cookies. One year, she gave out handmade holiday ornaments to employees, always bringing joy to those around her. Everyone that Margie crossed paths with felt her presence in their life.



Tribute plaques for three of RUMC's employees who passed away from COVID-19 during the pandemic.



Shadow boxes display various personal protective equipment (PPE) donned by hospital staff throughout the pandemic.



Artwork by local students sent during the pandemic is on display in the exhibit.



Exhibit visitors read the timeline showcasing important dates of the pandemic.



A large crowd gathers during the ribbon cutting to view the exhibit.

Department of Laboratory Medicine Receives Accreditation from College of American Pathologists

Richmond University Medical Center's Department of Laboratory Medicine earned accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) for its high quality care of lab specimens and tests, as well as its strict adherence to quality control measures. Just over 8,000 facilities worldwide, including RUMC, earned this accreditation.

The CAP Accreditation Committee awarded accreditation to RUMC based on results of an on-site inspection. During the CAP accreditation process, designed to ensure the highest standard of care for all laboratory patients, inspectors examined RUMC's laboratory records and quality control procedures. CAP inspectors also examined laboratory staff qualifications, equipment, facilities, safety programs and records, and overall management.

In 2024, RUMC's Department of Laboratory Medicine performed over 1.7 million lab tests and nearly 9,600 pathology procedures including surgical biopsies and autopsies. These were increases over the previous year, in 2023, when the department performed over 1.5 million lab tests and nearly 9,300 pathology procedures.



*Svetoslav Bardarov, MD,
Chair, Department of Laboratory Medicine*

"Achieving CAP accreditation is a significant milestone that reflects the exceptional dedication, professionalism, and teamwork of our laboratory staff," Svetoslav Bardarov, MD, chair of RUMC's Department of Laboratory Medicine, said. "We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality and patient care, and this recognition from the College of American Pathologists reaffirms that commitment."

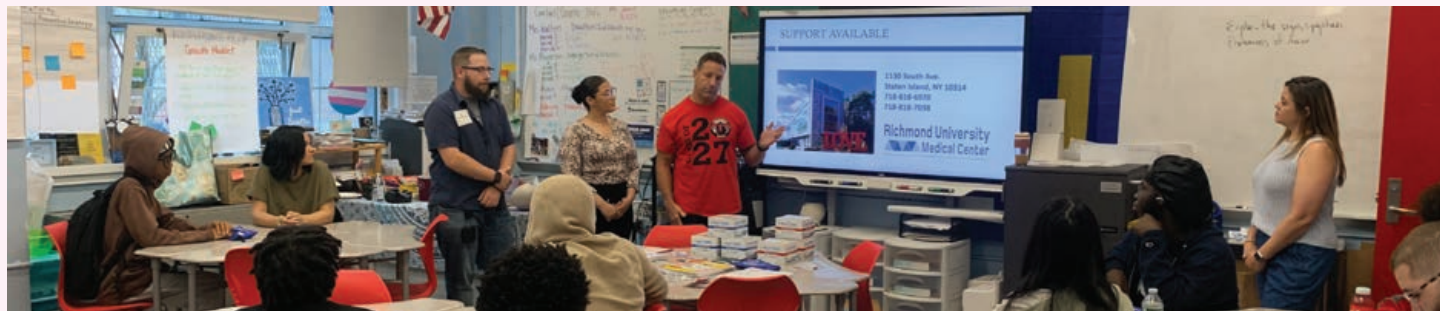
As the world's largest organization of board certified pathologists and leading provider of laboratory accreditation and proficiency testing programs, the College of American Pathologists serves patients, pathologists, and the public by fostering and advocating excellence in the practice of pathology and laboratory medicine worldwide.

"The CAP is pleased to recognize Richmond University Medical Center as meeting the high standard set as part of the CAP's Laboratory Accreditation Program," said Richard M. Scanlan, MD, FCAP, chair of the CAP's Council on Accreditation. "RUMC joins the thousands of others that are committed to raising the quality of laboratory services nationally and internationally."



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about our Pathology
Lab services*

RUMC Provides Narcan Training and Kits to Students at Local High Schools



The plague of illegal opioid use across Staten Island has led healthcare providers to take a more active role in prevention and education. Richmond University Medical Center met with students from several high schools over the past few months to discuss the dangers of illegal opioid use, available addiction resources, and to train the students on how to administer medication that can reverse the effects of a drug overdose.

This past spring, counselors and staff from Richmond University Medical's Center's Silberstein Clinic, Center for Young Adults, and Public Relations and Marketing Department spent two days at Port Richmond High School training students how to effectively administer Narcan, also known as Naloxone, to reverse the effects of a drug overdose. Over the two days, more than 200 students completed the training and received a free Narcan kit to keep with them.

All staff from RUMC completed training on opioids and how to use Narcan. Anthony Arpaia, a registered nurse and healthcare coordinator at the Silberstein Clinic, said, "Opioids are everywhere and getting these Narcan kits into the hands of these kids, at their ages, is probably the most important thing we can do."

Port Richmond High School is located in a section of Staten Island's north shore associated with a high rate of illegal opioid use and high number of overdoses, some resulting in fatalities. New York State Department of Health data shows the rate of illegal opioid use and number of overdoses linked

to this usage are highest in the Staten Island zip codes of 10301, 10302, 10303, 10304, 10305, and 10310.

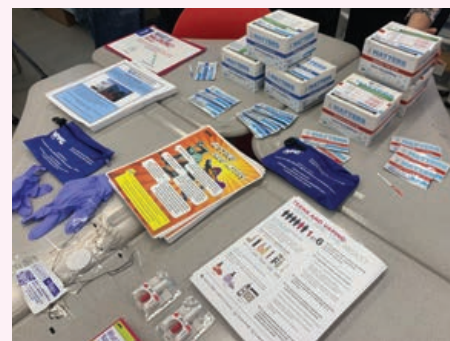
While much of RUMC's outreach and training are targeted in these areas, training has also been provided at high schools all across the borough. Since the beginning of the year, students from Concord High School, McCown High School, Moore Catholic High School, Staten Island Technical High School, and Tottenville High School have also received training and free Narcan kits. Combined with the training at Port Richmond High School, over 400 students have been trained by RUMC so far.



A student practices administering Narcan on RUMC staff during the training.

The trainings are the result of a four-year grant awarded to RUMC by New York State, and administered by New York City, to increase awareness of substance use services, including the provision of harm reduction services that include Narcan kits, with a special focus on Staten Island's north shore. In addition to high schools, RUMC has provided trainings with faith-based organizations and community groups.

Both the Silberstein Clinic and Center for Young Adults are housed within RUMC's Center for Integrative Behavioral Medicine, located at 1130 South Avenue. The Silberstein Clinic provides services for individuals 18 and older seeking treatment for substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders in an outpatient setting. The Center for Young Adults provides addiction treatment services that exclusively focus on adolescents and young adults ages 16 to 24.



Items included in a Narcan training kit, along with behavioral health resources and testing strips to detect traces of narcotics.



RUMC Launches Medical Science Program for Local High School Students

This past spring, Richmond University Medical Center introduced its Medical Science Program to the Staten Island community. The program, geared towards high school juniors and seniors, provides the opportunity to gain hands-on learning experience at the hospital.

“We are delighted to offer this exciting program that will demonstrate the nexus between science and the service professions, which are critical for the people in our community,” Philip Otterbeck, MD, Chief Medical Officer, said. “Ultimately the students’ school curricula supported by experiential

learning on the hospital campus can serve as the basis for the students to see the very important, varied, and consequential work we do in a local hospital system and ignite in students a passion for helping others through careers in healthcare.”

Students will be able to interact with and learn alongside hospital staff while exploring future careers in the medical field. Among the departments students will rotate through include nursing, radiology, respiratory therapy, laboratory services, and physical therapy, to name a few.

The program is open to high school seniors or juniors enrolled in any Staten Island high school, public or private. Each session will last six weeks, with students coming to the hospital one day a week for two hours. Students must pass a physical provided by their primary care provider to be admitted into the program.

“Our medical science program provides a great opportunity for high school students to be able to explore the field of healthcare right in their own community,” RUMC’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.



Medical Science Program students participate in lectures given by RUMC medical professionals to learn about careers in the medical field.

(l-r) Peter DeFeo, Radiology and Transport Manager, Dr. Philip Otterbeck, Chief Medical Officer

(bottom) Stephanie Donnellan, Nurse Manager



To learn more and register for the program, scan the QR code.

Hospital Podcast and Television Show Helping Build Bridges for the Community



Scan here to
view the latest
episodes of
RUMC Connections



Scan here to
view the latest
episodes of
RUMC Vital Signs

For the past two years, Richmond University Medical Center has taken a multimedia approach to showcasing the hospital's services and skilled medical professionals. *RUMC Connections*, a podcast show, just finished its 50th episode, while the television show, *RUMC Vital Signs*, just aired its 30th episode.

Both shows are available on the hospital's website and YouTube channel. The podcast is also heard through Spotify on a variety of channels, while the television show airs on the cable channels of Community Media of Staten Island. The podcast is taped at the studios of Advance Local, the television show at the studios of Community Media of Staten Island.

Started by Senior Public Relations and Marketing Specialist Meredith Gaskins, who also serves as host, *RUMC Connections* ensures that complex medical and health-related topics are broken down through easy to understand, and often friendly, conversion.

"It's a relaxed, informative conversation where everything is explained in simple, everyday terms. We want listeners to know that not every procedure and

appointment is scary—and that the RUMC team is truly caring and here to help," Gaskins said.

From myth-busting episodes on cardiovascular disease, to deep dives into the diverse programs for behavioral health, cancer care, and emergency medicine, each episode allows for daunting topics to be shown in a new unintimidating light. The many conversations with RUMC physicians, nurses, and medical professionals provide accessible health education that feels personal and not clinical.

Hosted by Vice President for Public Relations and Marketing Alex Lutz, *RUMC Vital Signs* features a talk-show style format with RUMC's doctors, nurses, and medical staff sharing their expertise and experiences in informative and educational ways. Lutz, who has a background in journalism, created the show as a way to not only introduce viewers to the hospital's staff and services, but also as a way to urge people to take care of their own health.

One of the show's most impactful episodes featured Cardiovascular Department Chief Francesco Rotatori, MD, discussing angioplasty,

a minimally invasive procedure used to open blocked or narrowed arteries, improving blood flow. In the episode, Lutz shared his own experience undergoing the procedure, which included video of his actual angioplasty performed by Dr. Rotatori.

The video clearly showed blockages in the arteries leading to Lutz's heart. Although he had no outward symptoms indicating something was wrong, as a result of the procedure, it was determined that Lutz required triple bypass surgery. That open heart procedure was performed three years ago by surgeons with the Mount Sinai Health System, with which RUMC has a long-standing affiliation.

After the episode aired, Lutz said many people were moved to go for checkups and cardiac testing, saying the show motivated them to take better control of their health. "If sharing my experience encourages even one person to say, 'Let me go get checked,' then it's worth it," Lutz said.

Both Lutz and Gaskins hope their shows will continue to serve as bridges to the expert, high quality care available at Richmond University Medical Center.

News Briefs

New Assistant Vice President of Behavioral Health

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences welcomed Dr. Prajakta (Praj) Vagal as its new assistant vice president of Behavioral Health. Dr. Vagal is a healthcare leader and physician with over 20 years of experience. Before joining RUMC, Dr. Vagal served as senior director of behavioral health transformation at New York City Health + Hospitals, where she led systemwide initiatives integrating primary care into behavioral health services, expanding comprehensive care management/care coordination services, and optimizing quality improvement programs. She holds a masters of public administration in health policy and management from New York University, and a bachelors of medicine and surgery (MBBS) from Grant Medical College in Mumbai, India.



RUMC President and CEO Re-Elected to Board of Statewide Hospital Association

President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, MPA, was re-appointed to the Board of Governors for the Greater New York Hospital Association. The Association represents nearly 300 hospitals and healthcare systems across New York State, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. He has served on the board since 2017. The Board helps shape healthcare policy at the local, state, regional, and federal levels.

Council Member Frank Morano Visits RUMC

Shortly after winning election to the New York City Council, Council Member Frank Morano toured Richmond University Medical Center for an overview of the services provided to the Staten Island community and received updates on new projects and upgrades underway. As part of the Staten Island City Council Delegation, Council Member Morano helped secure \$1.4 million in the city's FY2026 budget for the hospital. The funds will be utilized to expand RUMC's ambulatory care services.



Medical Society Installation

This past June, the Richmond County Medical Society installed its new slate of officers, which included Ishita Kharode, MD, as its 219th president. Dr. Kharode is a pediatric endocrinologist at Richmond University Medical Center and also provides outpatient care as a member of RUMC's Richmond Health Network. Also installed as new officers were Charles Sineri, MD, as President-Elect; Victoria Forte, MD, as Vice President; Lance Austein, MD, as Secretary; and Melissa Grageda, MD, as Treasurer. Dr. Sineri, Dr. Forte, and Dr. Grageda are all physicians at Richmond University Medical Center. Serving Staten Island for over 200 years, the Richmond County Medical Society's mission is to enhance healthcare delivery and influence legislation that may impact delivery of those services.

News Briefs

RUMC Auxiliary Installs New Officers

In June, the RUMC Auxiliary installed its slate of new officers for the 2025-2026 session. The new officers are Lucille Forlenza, President; Sharon Mineo, Vice President; Diane Scanlon, Recording Secretary; Debra Messina, Treasurer; and Jennifer Dominguez, Corresponding Secretary. The RUMC Auxiliary promotes the interests of RUMC, the welfare of its patients, encourages volunteerism, and coordinates in fundraising activities to benefit Richmond University Medical Center.



Surgical Pavilion Celebrates One Year Anniversary

On June 3, Richmond University Medical Center's Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion celebrated its one-year anniversary. Since its opening in 2024, over 7,000 procedures have been performed inside the 40,000 sq. ft., \$42 million pavilion, a 20% increase in procedures from the previous year. The pavilion features 23 pre- and post-operation bays for patients, larger nursing stations, and 11 surgical suites, including three specifically designed to accommodate robotic surgery systems.

EMS Lounge Dedication

On April 24, a new lounge in the hospital's Emergency Department exclusively for use by EMS personnel was dedicated to the memory of the late Brian Demarest, EMT, and the late James Barghaan, Paramedic. Both spent many years caring for the community as members of RUMC's Emergency Services Department. Family and friends of both men were on hand at the dedication. The lounge is located adjacent to the Emergency Department trauma bays and ambulance entrance.

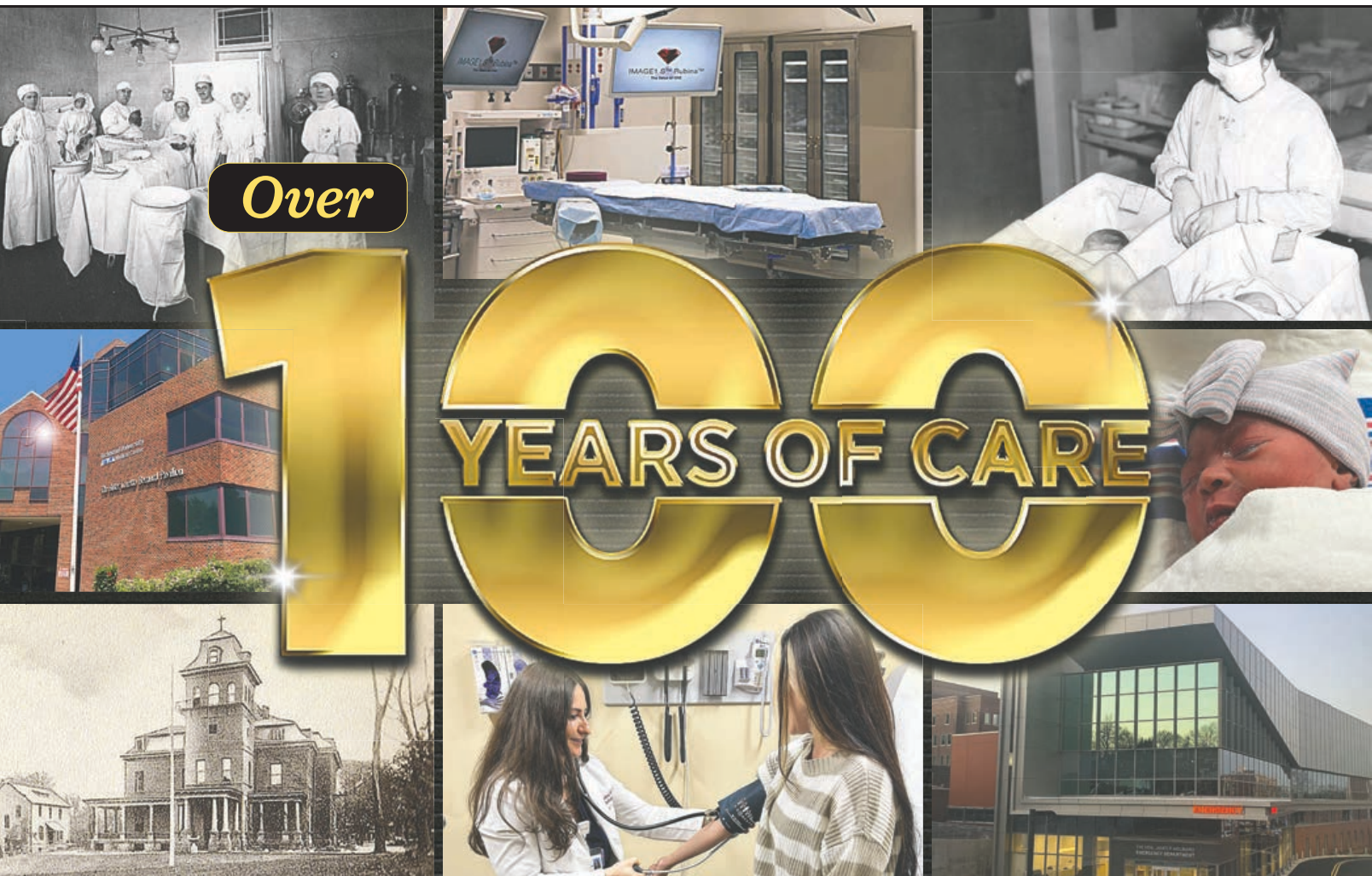


Golf Outing

Over 200 people attended Richmond University Medical Center's annual Jack Sipp Golf, Tennis and Bocce Outing on May 19. This year's event honored Frank A. Oswald, who received the John F. L. Sipp Distinguished Service Award, and Marino Polisenio, DO, who was presented with the Stanley Stilwell, MD, Memorial Award. Mr. Oswald is managing partner of Togut, Segal & Segal LLP, a nationally recognized restructuring law firm. He also serves on the Richmond University Medical Center Foundation Board. Dr. Polisenio is a lifelong Staten Islander and an OB/GYN with deep ties to Richmond University Medical Center. He is currently program director of the OB/GYN Residency Program, vice chairman of the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and practices privately with the Richmond Health Network.

**Richmond University
Medical Center**

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CELEBRATING OVER A CENTURY OF INNOVATION ON STATEN ISLAND

From our humble beginning over a century ago as St. Vincent's Hospital to the nationally accredited full service hospital we are today, Richmond University Medical Center has been a continually trusted source for high quality health care. With new state-of-the-art medical facilities, advanced medical technology, and a compassionate staff of dedicated professionals, we understand the health needs of Staten Island. Throughout our history, we have remained true to one vision: delivering exceptional care and support for all members of our community.

When it comes to your health care, trust Richmond University Medical Center.

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