

## Celebrating a major milestone: Flipping the Switch on Self-Generated Energy



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*Hospital leadership, elected officials flip the switch on RUMC's new cogeneration power plant. Story on Page 3.*



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

In celebration of National Nurses Month, I am proud to extend my deepest gratitude to every one of our exceptional nurses for your continued commitment to Richmond University Medical Center, the Staten Island community, and the patients and families we serve each and every day.

I offer sincere thanks to Christine Mahoney, DNP, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, and Anthony Basile, DNP, Vice President of Nursing, as well as to all Nurse Managers, Directors, Assistant Vice Presidents, Associate Directors of Nursing, Supervisors, and every member of our nursing team. Each of you plays a vital role in allowing RUMC to demonstrate what truly separates us from the rest—unwavering dedication, exceptional clinical expertise, and heartfelt compassion.

As Florence Nightingale so eloquently stated, “Nursing is an art; and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation, as any painter’s or sculptor’s work.” That devotion is evident every day across our hospital.

From caring for our smallest and most vulnerable patients just entering the world to supporting our seniors with dignity, respect, and concern, your work embodies excellence

across every specialty and setting. You are the heart of our institution and the reason our patients place their trust in us.

Throughout Nurses Month, we pause to celebrate not only what you do, but who you are—leaders at the bedside, advocates for safety and quality, educators of the next generation, and trusted partners to our physicians and care teams. In moments of joy and in moments of profound challenge, you bring skill, calm, and humanity to every situation. Your resilience, professionalism, and collaborative spirit continue to elevate our hospital and strengthen the care we provide.

Thank you for all that you do—this month and always.

**Remember the Power of One: You Make A Difference.**

With deep appreciation,

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

## Excellence in Residency and Fellowship Program Honoree

Each month, one or more residents and/or fellows are selected for their exemplary service, and for embodying RUMC’s commitment to fostering a collaborative culture that enhances patient care and professional excellence. Honorees are nominated by their colleagues and selected by the Office of Graduate Medical Education’s Wellness Council.

**This month’s honoree is Dandan Geng, MD.** Dr. Geng is a PGY 1 in the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Geng has a medical degree from Saint George’s University and hails originally from Jiangyin, China.



## Congratulations to our Employee of the Month:



**Maria Orea Gonzalez**  
Receptionist  
*Bariatric and Metabolic Institute*

# Powering Preparedness: RUMC's New Co-Generation Plant Strengthens Staten Island's Healthcare Future



*District Attorney Michael McMahon with RUMC nursing staff at the ceremony.*

*by Meredith Gaskins*

On April 27, Richmond University Medical Center marked a milestone that may not immediately catch the eye of a passerby – but one that carries lasting importance for Staten Island's healthcare system and emergency preparedness.

Gathered outside a renovated facility on the West Brighton campus across from RUMC's James P. Molinaro Emergency Department, hospital leaders, elected officials, board members, and community partners joined together for a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of RUMC's new on-site co-generation plant. While the project sits largely behind the scenes, its impact is anything but subtle.

The new combined cooling, heating, and power (CCHP) system will supply energy for a significant portion of the hospital's operations, including electricity, heating, cooling, and hot water for key areas. While RUMC still remains connected to the traditional power grid, the co-generation plant provides a critical layer of resilience – ensuring that essential hospital functions can continue during severe weather, grid disruptions, or emergency conditions.



*The cogeneration plant is powered by two natural-gas-fueled 1.5 megawatt units.*

“This project is about being ready – for our patients, our staff, and our community,” said RUMC President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, MPA, FACHE. “It strengthens our ability to provide uninterrupted care when Staten Island needs us most.”

That message was echoed by the elected officials in attendance. Staten Island District Attorney Michael McMahon spoke to the importance of preparedness, and the role hospitals play not only in healthcare delivery, but overall public safety. In moments of crisis, McMahon noted, resilient healthcare infrastructure becomes an extension of emergency response – supporting first responders, families, and the broader community.

Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella highlighted the significance of the investment within the context of Staten Island's evolving infrastructure needs. He praised RUMC for making forward-looking decisions that prioritize stability and long-term service, emphasizing that projects like the co-generation plant strengthen the borough's ability to weather future challenges.

The significance of the project is heightened by RUMC's unique geographic role. As Staten Island's only hospital located outside designated flood zones, the hospital services as a critical access point for care when other facilities may be vulnerable. Lessons learned following Hurricane Sandy underscored the importance of self-reliance and

infrastructure redundancy – lessons that directly informed the hospital's decision to pursue on-site energy generation.

Leadership behind the project extended beyond hospital executives. Members of RUMC's Board of Trustees played a vital role in guiding the initiative from concept to completion. Board Chair Timothy Harrison emphasized the board's responsibility to invest in systems that protect both patients and the institution's future. He was joined by Trustees Tom DelMastro and John Santora, whose extensive involvement helped steer the project through years of planning, development, and execution.



*Borough President Vito Fossella and District Attorney Michael McMahon touring the co-gen plant with President and CEO Daniel J. Messina.*

Hospital leadership also expressed gratitude to Con Edison, a key partner throughout the process. The collaboration involved careful coordination, technical planning, and regulatory navigation, all essential to bringing the complex energy system online. RUMC officials credited Con Edison's support as instrumental in helping the hospital strengthen its infrastructure while remaining aligned with regional energy standards.

For patients and visitors, the new plant may never be noticed – and that is exactly the goal. Its success lies in its quiet reliability: lights staying on, clinical environments remaining safe and stable, and care continuing without interruption.

## A New Era in Sleep Apnea Care Arrives on Staten Island



*Dr. Sivarajah and her team after completing the first successful procedure involving the Inspire V System performed inside RUMC's Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion.*

by Alex Lutz

Recently, Shanmugappiriya Sivarajah, MD, MPH, our head and neck surgical oncologist and reconstructive surgeon, successfully implanted the Inspire V System, one of the first procedures performed on Staten Island involving the new system that manages obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), without the need for a mask or continuous air flow from an external source.

Inspire therapy uses advanced technology to restore natural breathing during sleep through a small, battery-powered device implanted beneath the skin in the chest. This device works by stimulating the tongue muscles to keep the airway open during sleep, preventing the interruptions in breathing that characterize OSA. Since August 2024, Dr. Sivarajah has been providing this cutting-edge solution to patients seeking long-term relief.

The new Inspire V System is an innovative advancement in Inspire therapy, designed for a more simplified procedure. With a new integrated respiratory sensor, the Inspire V system eliminates the need for physicians to place a separate sensing lead and instead allows for respiratory sensing to occur inside of the implant.

Dr. Sivarajah graduated from medical school at the Schulich School of Medicine in London, Ontario, Canada. She completed her residency in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery at the University of Alberta. She has also completed two clinical fellowships in head and neck cancer surgery and microvascular reconstruction at Massachusetts Eye and Ear at Harvard University in 2022, followed by the South Carolina Sarah Cannon Fellowship in 2023.

For more information on Inspire therapy call our Center for Advanced ENT, Sinus and Voice Care at 718-818-1855.

## Commitment to Quality Care on Full Display at Nursing Skills Fair

Nursing Education hosted a two-day skills fair on March 25 and 26. The fair provided all RUMC's nursing staff with an opportunity to learn new patient care skills as well as refresh important everyday skills they already provide.



*How to place electrodes for an EKG was explained by Registered Nurse Ievgenia Cherkes.*



*Showing post-partum hemorrhage techniques were Registered Nurses Elyse Harrell, Laurie Ann Cowen, and Kayla Westgate.*

The fair consisted of over 25 stations with hands-on skills training and live education. Placement of electrodes to perform an electrocardiogram (EKG), how to insert a Swan-Ganz catheter, dermatology care, post-surgical support, and cardiac catechization care were among the services showcased

over the two-day fair.

All staff who attended gained valuable knowledge and built greater confidence in their daily practice. The fair was also an opportunity to highlight the commitment of our nurses to continuous learning and delivering safe, high-quality patient care.



*Registered nurses Gina Velazquez, Laure-Anne Alston, and Melissa Acevedo*

# Two RUMC Leaders Recognized Among Crain's 2026 Notable Leaders in Health Care

by Alex Lutz

New York State hospitals and health systems generate \$247 billion in annual economic activity, according to Crain's New York Business. The New York City focused news outlet recently unveiled its list of Notable Leaders in Health Care for 2026. Among the 80 honorees was our President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, MPA, FACHE; and Vice President of Patient Care Services and Nursing Operations, Anthony Basile, DNP, RN, CCRN, SCR.N. Both Messina and Basile are the only Staten Island based leaders on this year's list.

According to Crains, "Our 2026 Notable Leaders in Health Care represent the driving force behind this industry. The 80 honorees are leading innovations in neuroscience, making mental health support more accessible, advising health care organizations on digital innovation, leading workforces that are thousands strong, and more."

At the helm of RUMC since 2014 and a seasoned executive with over 30 years of healthcare leadership experience, Messina was named to this year's list in recognition of his accomplishments, including major expansions in ambulatory care, behavioral health, cancer care, surgical services, rehabilitation, and emergency medicine. Crain's also praised his commitment to developing strategic partnerships, system-wide growth, facility modernization, and network integration across Staten Island and its neighboring communities.

Crain's also cited several recent "big wins" for Messina, including advancing maternal and pediatric health access, and securing financing for significant capital projects, including RUMC's James P. Molinaro Emergency Department that opened in 2023, the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion that opened in 2024, and the creation of an on-site



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

cogeneration power plant that reduces reliance on outside energy sources, and provides the hospital with self-generated electricity, heating, cooling, and hot water.

"While recognition is always appreciated, I view this honor as a reflection of the extraordinary teams I have had the privilege to work alongside at Richmond University Medical Center," Messina said. "Our ability to achieve meaningful progress during some of the most challenging times our industry has faced is a testament to the leadership of our Board of Trustees, the dedication of our exceptional medical staff, the management staff, and to each and every frontline employee whose resilience, compassion, and professionalism make our mission possible every day."

Also making the list from RUMC was Basile, who has been in his current role as a member of Nursing Administration at the hospital since 2022. He was cited by Crain's for driving systemwide initiatives that enhance patient outcomes, elevate nursing practices and



*Vice President of Patient Care Services and Nursing Operations, Anthony Basile, DNP, RN, CCRN, SCR.N*

strengthen organizational performance. Crain's also recognized his leadership in transformative efforts to reduce central line-associated bloodstream infections by applying evidence-based practices. Thanks to these actions, infection rates dropped measurably, improving patient safety and outcomes.

"I am truly greatly to have the opportunity to work with a dedicated team," Basile said. "I take pride in being a nurse leader and I'm fortunate to mentor future nurse leaders and maintain the integrity of our profession. It's an honor to be included in Craine's Notable Leaders for 2026."

The Crain's Notable Leaders in Health Care includes 80 individuals whose nominations were accepted after a review by the news outlet's editors. To qualify, nominees had to currently be serving in a senior leadership role, demonstrate significant impact through their initiatives, and show positive contributions to the communities, sectors, or populations they serve.

# RUMC's SAFE Conference Reveals Critical Gap in Care for Victims of Sexual Assault



*Presenters and RUMC SAFE nurses Julia Calvo, Isa Shoneyin, Shania Arthur, Amanda Fursa, and Julissa Salazar*

*by Meredith Gaskins*

Attending Richmond University Medical Center's 2026 Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Conference on April 15 was both eye-opening and deeply affirming of why this work matters – especially on Staten Island where RUMC serves as the only designated SAFE Center of Excellence for survivors of sexual assault.

SAFE nurses practice within structured protocols, supported documentation standards, and strong institutional backing.

As Isangozi “Isa” Shoneyin, Forensic Nursing Coordinator at RUMC, reminded attendees, “Testifying can feel intimidating, but SAFE nurses are never

nursing is taught in traditional nursing programs. For many students in attendance, this conference was their first real exposure to what SAFE nursing entails. Presenters and RUMC SAFE nurses Julia Calvo, Amanda Fursa, Julissa Salazar, and Shania Arthur brought the curriculum to life – walking participants through evidence collection, trauma-informed care, skills stations, and real-world case discussions. The result was not intimidation, but clarity and confidence.

Opening remarks from Chief Nursing Officer, Christine Mahoney and Johnathan LeBaron, DO, chair of emergency medicine, underscored RUMC leadership's commitment to expanding this essential workforce. Their presence reinforced that SAFE nursing is not a fringe specialty – it is a core pillar of patient-centered emergency care at the hospital.

As sexual assault cases continue to rise on Staten Island, the need for trained, supported SAFE nurses has never been more pressing. This conference did more than provide education; it reframed SAFE nursing for what it truly is: a protected, purposeful, and profoundly impactful role. For students and nurses alike, it was a powerful reminder that courage grows from knowledge – and that learning can be the first step toward change.



*Julia Calvo, RN, explains to nursing students how a Burton ultraviolet light is used during a SAFE exam*

Throughout the day, one message emerged clearly: there is an urgent need for more SAFE-trained nurses, yet too many nurses hesitate to step into this role. As explained by forensic nursing leaders, fear often centers on courtroom testimony and concerns about licensure. The conference thoughtfully confronted these fears head-on, reinforcing that

practicing in isolation. When nurses follow established protocols thoroughly, they are protected – and they are making a difference.” That reassurance resonated deeply, particularly for nurses who had previously viewed forensic nursing as too risky.

Equally striking was how little forensic



*Amanda Fursa, RN, instructed nursing students how to draw blood during a SAFE exam for forensic and medical analysis*

## New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Jawed Ahmed — *Material Specialist*  
Tiffany Alejandro — *Medical Assistant*  
Jose Almodovar — *Receptionist*  
Robert Annicherico — *Pharmacist*  
Samaya Barrett — *Central Sterile Tech*  
Princetine Beauchamp — *CRT/RT*  
Ramona Berroa-Nieves — *Nursing Assistant*  
Anish Chacko — *RN*  
Eyad Chafik — *Clerk*  
Ikram Chhaiti — *Receptionist*  
Shea Clarke — *Nursing Assistant*  
Adan Estrada — *Accounts Payable Coordinator*  
Regina Fiumefreddo — *Respiratory Therapist*  
Katherine Goncharova — *RN*  
Wagih Henna — *Respiratory Therapist*  
Alaz Kurtisi — *Mental Health Tech*  
Maria Lella — *RN*  
Vanessa Leung — *RN*  
Jamie Manutano — *RN*  
Gianna Marino — *Echo Cardiographer*

Aldin Muratovic — *Security Officer*  
Caroline Murphy — *RN*  
Sarah Orme — *Receptionist*  
Gloria Pang — *Respiratory Therapist*  
Ksida Pifti — *Building Service Supervisor*  
Val Protopopova — *RN*  
Elias Rivera — *Mental Health Tech*  
Andrea Sanchez — *Medical Assistant*  
Lauren Sheppard — *RN*  
Michele Song-Mui — *Quality Manager*  
Christine Spall — *RN*  
Darius Sturge — *Peer Advocate*  
Dorothy Sutton — *Cook*  
Ndeye Ramatoulaye Traore — *Nursing Assistant*  
Sheree Wheeler — *Respiratory Therapist*  
Fredmalyn Williams — *Nursing Assistant*  
Kenya Williams — *Registrar*  
India Wright — *RN*  
Annasimone Younan — *Ultrasound Tech*

## May Observances

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

### Month-Long:

Alport Awareness Month  
ALS Awareness Month  
Arthritis Awareness Month  
Better Hearing and Speech Month  
Better Sleep Month  
Bladder Cancer Awareness Month  
Blood Clot Awareness Month  
Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness Month  
Brain Cancer Awareness Month  
Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month  
Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes Awareness Month  
Food Allergy Awareness Month  
Global Employee Health and Fitness Month  
Healthy Vision Month  
Hepatitis Awareness Month  
High Blood Pressure Awareness Month  
Huntington's Disease Awareness Month  
Lupus Awareness Month  
Lyme Disease Awareness Month  
Maternal Mental Health Month  
Mental Health Awareness Month  
National Asthma and Allergies Awareness Month  
National Celiac Disease Awareness Month  
National Critical Care Awareness and Recognition Month  
National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month  
National Nurses Month  
National Osteoporosis Awareness Month  
National Physical Fitness and Sports Month  
National Speech-Language-Hearing Month

National Stroke Awareness Month  
National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month  
National Teen Self-Esteem Month  
National Women's Health Month  
Necrotizing Fasciitis Awareness Month  
Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month  
Older Americans Month  
Oncology Nursing Month  
Preeclampsia Awareness Month  
Skin Cancer Prevention Awareness Month  
Tourette's Awareness Month

### Week-Long:

May 3 to 9: Children's Mental Health Awareness Week  
May 4 to 9: North American Occupational Safety and Health Week  
May 6 to 12: National Nurses Week  
May 10 to 16: Food Allergy Awareness Week  
May 10 to 16: Maternal Sepsis Week  
May 10 to 16: National Stuttering Awareness Week  
May 10 to 16: National Hospital Week  
May 10 to 16: National Skilled Nursing Care Week  
May 10 to 16: National Women's Health Week  
May 10 to 16: Neuroscience Nurses Week

### Recognition Days:

May 2: International Scurvy Awareness Day  
May 3: World Ankylosing Spondylitis Day  
May 5: World Hand Hygiene Day  
May 5: World Asthma Day  
May 5: World Pulmonary Hypertension Day

May 6: National School Nurse Day  
May 6: World Maternal Mental Health Day  
May 7: Children's Mental Health Awareness Day  
May 8: National Student Nurses Day  
May 8: World Ovarian Cancer Day  
May 9: International Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) Awareness Day  
May 10: National Lipid Day  
May 10: World Lupus Day  
May 11: National Women's Checkup Day  
May 12: International Awareness Day for Chronic Immunological and Neurological Diseases  
May 12: International Nurses Day  
May 12: ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia International Awareness Day  
May 15: Hyperemesis Gravidarum Awareness Day  
May 17: World Hypertension Day  
May 18: World AIDS Vaccine Day  
May 19: Hepatitis Testing Day  
May 19: National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day  
May 19: World IBD Day  
May 20: World Autoimmune and AutoInflammatory Arthritis Day  
May 22: World Preeclampsia Day  
May 23: Medical Coder Day  
May 24: World Schizophrenia Day  
May 25: World Thyroid Day  
May 27: National Senior Health and Fitness Day  
May 29: World Digestive Health Day  
May 29: National Heat Awareness Day  
May 30: World MS Day  
May 31: World No Tobacco Day

# Annual Arnie O and Rory Bea 5K Run/Walk Held to Support NICU



*1st place women's division winner Melissa Kraker with Mark DeCristoforo, Tonya Obey-McCombs and RUMC Foundation President Bobby Urs*



*1st place men's division winner Ostap Makoretskyi with Mark DeCristoforo, RUMC Foundation President Bobby Urs, RUMC VP of Development Joe Burt, and Tonya Obey-McCombs*



*The DeCristoforo family poses with RUMC President & CEO Dr. Daniel J. Messina and Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon*

*by Cheryl Garber*

Nearly 400 participants gathered Saturday, April 26, at Clove Lakes Park for Richmond University Medical Center's annual Arnie O and Rory Bea 5K Run/Walk. Attendees watched a new champion emerge in the men's division as Ostap Makoretskyi took first place, while defending champion Melissa Kraker once again captured the women's title.

Challenging wet and windy conditions didn't deter the field, as more than 150 runners and nearly 160 walkers completed the 3.1-mile loop around the park and lake. The event kicked off with a kid's dash that featured nearly 30 young participants.

Fourteen-year-old Makoretskyi earned this year's men's title with a winning time

of 18:16.98. On the women's side, Kraker successfully defended her crown, finishing in 20:41.39 to secure consecutive victories. Rounding out the top three in the men's division were Nicholas Amegretti (18:31.34) and Tim Mallen (20:09.75). In the women's division, Isabelle Fiduccia Cammayo finished second with a time of 21:17.45, followed by 9-year-old Nicole Valladares in third at 22:11.49.

The annual event honors the memory of Rory DeCristoforo and Arnold Obey. Rory, the youngest child of Mark and Meg DeCristoforo, tragically lost her life following a house fire on New Year's Day 2024. She was transported to RUMC after the fire, where she passed away. Rory was born at RUMC and spent her first

days of life receiving care in the hospital's NICU.

Obey, who passed away in 2020, enjoyed a distinguished basketball career at Wagner College, first as a standout player and later as an assistant coach. Beyond the court, he was a dedicated runner whose passion for sports spanned nearly 40 years. Obey completed an extraordinary 38 consecutive New York City Marathons, making long-distance running a major part of his adult life.

Proceeds from this year's event will once again benefit RUMC's Level III Wayne Zenna Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), which specializes in the treatment for high-risk newborns, some weighing as little as one pound at birth.



*Small strides, big smiles! Young runners dash to the finish line during the Kids Dash*



*Guided by trust and teamwork, an Achilles International runner and his guide share the 5K experience.*



*Members of St. Peter's Boys High School.*