

Richmond University Medical Center Remembers September 11, 2001

Through a sea of masks, Richmond University Medical Center paid tribute to the victims of the attacks on September 11, 2001, with a ceremony in front of the hospital's 9/11 memorial on Bard Avenue, next to the hospital's main entrance. Hospital staff, residents, veterans, and community leaders participated in the ceremony, which included tributes, a moment of silence, and reflections from first responders who participated in the rescue operations in Lower Manhattan 19 years ago.

"It's hard to imagine that almost 20 years have gone by," president and chief executive officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "But while the years have progressed, the memories for many of us still remain, as if the events of September 11, 2001 happened only yesterday. So it is important that we remember all those who lost their lives 19 years ago. That we remember their families, friends, and loved ones who struggle each year to make it through this difficult day."

On hand for the ceremony were a host of dignitaries including New York State Assembly Member Charles Fall and New York City Council Member Deborah Rose. They were joined by representatives for Rep. Max Rose, New York State Senator Andrew Lanza, New York State Assembly Member Nicole Malliotakis, and Staten Island District Attorney Michael McMahon.

All in attendance wore masks as the somber anniversary fell while the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Dr. Messina spoke about how those who helped others in the immediate aftermath of the attacks have now fallen victim to the coronavirus. At the height of the pandemic in early April, over 200 COVID-19 positive patients were admitted to RUMC for care, some of them first responders who participated in search, rescue, and recovery efforts 19 years ago.

"Sadly, for some of the 9/11 heroes and survivors, their lives were still cut tragically short over these past few months as their post 9/11 illnesses made it difficult to fight off the COVID-19 virus," Dr. Messina said. "We continue to send our deepest condolences to the family and friends of those lost to COVID-19, and continue to keep them in our hearts."

While bagpipes filled the air, members of the NYPD, FDNY, and EMS stood at attention as members of the Staten Island chapter of Rolling Thunder motorcycle club, all military veterans, performed the changing of the colors ceremony, hoisting a new American flag and POW/MIA flag atop the hospital flagpole directly above the 9/11 memorial stone and garden.

"Holding this ceremony and seeing all the people who come to mark this solemn occasion, it helps me get through the day more than people think," RUMC's senior director of EMS and security, William Amaniera said. Amaniera was a first responder at the World Trade Center on the day of the attacks. "On that day 19 years ago, we were all one; one city, one nation. Now, we are all one again as we face the pandemic. That's the American spirit, that's how we overcome any challenge: we do it together."

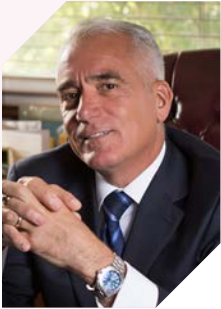


A member of RUMC's EMS team provides a new American flag to members of Rolling Thunder who raised the flag to half-mast in remembrance of those lost 19 years ago.



RUMC President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, reflected on the emotions of the day while many are still dealing with fears related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pink ribbons will be everywhere and the motto is "Think Pink!" On behalf of everyone at Richmond University Medical

Center, I would like to begin this month's message by offering condolences to the families and friends of all those who have lost a loved one to breast cancer. I would also like to extend continuing admiration and support to the courage of breast cancer survivors everywhere. If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, know that we are here for you. Our entire RUMC family is here to help you and your family win the battle against cancer.

According to The American Cancer Society, except for skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women. Currently, a woman has a one in eight chance that she will develop breast cancer sometime in her life. Almost 276,500 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed this year and an additional 48,530 new cases of carcinoma in situ (CIS) will be diagnosed. CIS is non-invasive and is the earliest form of breast cancer. Only lung cancer kills more women each year than breast cancer—it is estimated that

over 42,170 women will die in 2020 from breast cancer.

Thanks to advances in treatments and therapies, as well as heightened awareness about the importance of early detection through screenings, since 2007, death rates from breast cancer have remained steady in women younger than 50 years of age and continue to decrease in older women. Richmond University Medical Center is home to the latest, state-of-the-art technology at our Breast and Women's Center, located at 1161 Victory Boulevard. At the center, we provide 3D mammograms, biopsies, and breast exams under the expert supervision of our two board certified radiologists, Michael Shamis, MD, DABR, and Dara Fedele, MD, DABR.

October is also the two-year anniversary of our Breast and Women's Center. It's hard to believe it has been two years since we first opened the doors of the center to the public on October 25, 2018. Over these past 24 months, thanks to the entire dedicated and compassionate staff at the center, we have given many women peace of mind through exams, mammograms, and minor surgical procedures conducted at the center. The center continues to be the centerpiece of breast care for all of Staten Island. The latest clinical and imaging services are performed daily while our registered nurse navigator,

Arlene Coyle, RN, is available to provide patients and their family support from the day of diagnosis through survivorship and beyond. Arlene provides compassionate care and guidance throughout treatment, including connecting patients to hospital, community, and social support services; collaborating with other disciplines involved in cancer care; and identifying and overcoming barriers to a patient's treatment.

So please, remember to schedule your mammogram and encourage others to do the same. The Breast and Women's Center can be reached at 718-818-1161. And remember to Think Pink!

Finally, I would like to update you: in mid-September The Joint Commission inspected our facilities and while we await official results and findings, the initial comments from the commission staff were extremely positive. I want to thank the entire leadership team for preparing our facilities for the inspection and to everyone for all their hard work in ensuring we had our very best foot forward!

**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



I was in the emergency room on July 5 because upon slipping at the doorway of my apartment, I leaned on the frame on which my cats scratch their large nails. It was to my pain and surprise when a piece of wood became lodged in my left arm. I was brought to the emergency room via ambulance with two paramedics, two young women who were very professional and compassionate. I received very good attention from everyone in the emergency room. The doctor approached and very pleasantly and kindly told me they were going to do a CT scan of my arm. Later the

doctor who operated on me was very professional and kind. She treated me with kindness and took the wood out of my arm. The same kindness was provided to me by the nurse who gave me the tetanus vaccine. Thank you very much for your attention. It's been a long time since I felt valued as a person, not just as a patient.

Thank you,
Corina Pacheco

RUMC Provides Free At Home Colorectal Cancer Screening Kits to the Public

To promote the importance of screening for colorectal cancer, Richmond University Medical Center provided free at-home test kits to the first 80 members of the public who contacted the hospital and were 45 years or older. The completed kits were assessed by the hospital's oncology department and individuals were contacted within 48 hours about their results. The Oncology Services Department received over 80 requests within 72 hours following publication of the offer in local media outlets.

"While the rate of people being diagnosed with colorectal cancer has thankfully declined annually the past few decades due to increased screening and people making lifestyle changes to decrease their risk factors, still only about one in three people who should get screened actually have one performed," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.

Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States, according to the latest studies conducted by The American Cancer Society. They also estimate there will be over 104,600 new cases of colon cancer and more than 43,300 new cases of rectal cancer. The importance of screening for colorectal cancer has been highlighted in recent weeks following the death of actor Chadwick Boseman at the age of 43. Colorectal cancer is expected to cause about 53,200 deaths this year.

Overall, the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 23 for men and 1 in 25 for women. African Americans have the highest incidence rate for colorectal cancer and the highest mortality rate of all racial groups in the United States.

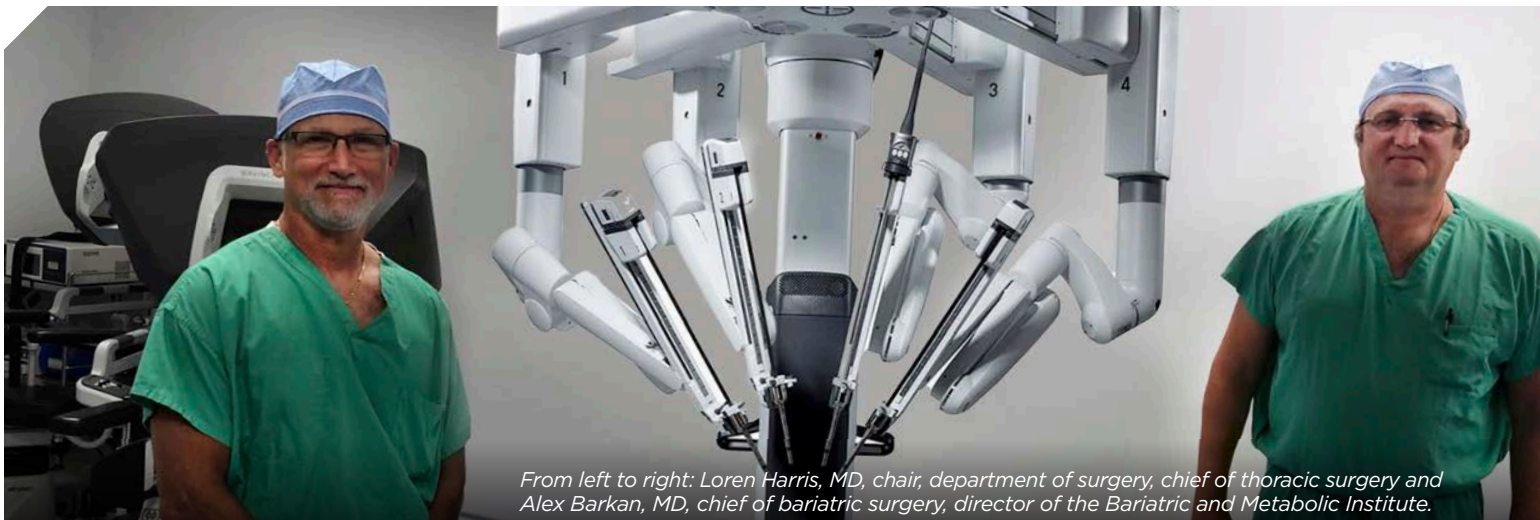


The contents of the free FIT kits included instructions, test card, brushes, waste bags, and a postage-paid envelope to mail back the sample for assessment by the hospital's oncology department.

September New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Andro Abdelmalek, *Asst Project Manager*
 Minos Abraham, *NP*
 Christopher Caldiero, *Security Guard*
 Jose Cortes Melo, *Building Service Worker*
 Azza Elemam, *Physician*
 Sarah Ganzer, *Social Worker*
 Patrick Grasso, *Anesthesia Tech*
 Sara Hemmer, *Staff Accountant*
 Meghan Higgins, *LMSW*
 Nadine Hill, *Unit Clerk*
 Taylor Jentz, *Ultrasound Tech*
 Ambreen Khalil, *Physician*
 Sarah Lawrence, *RN Surgical Specialist*
 Matthew Leardi, *LMSW*
 Jessica Loyo Garcia, *Lab Tech*
 Sylvia Lubak, *Infection Control Coordinator*

Diana Mathew, *RN*
 Dennis Mescal, *Plumber*
 Christine Millo, *LMHC*
 Selton Ng, *Project Manager*
 Richard Nielsen, *Security Guard*
 Frank Pagano, *Supervisor*
 Carlos Rivera, *HVAC Mechanic*
 Keith Seymour, *MHT*
 Nilusha Smith, *Nursing Assistant*
 Robert Suarez, *Switchboard Operator*
 Donna Traini-Matthews, *Payroll/Staffing Clerk*
 Jackeline Trejo, *Building Service Worker*
 Samantha Vacca, *Surgical Tech*
 Justin Wilkey, *Security Guard*
 Robert Zhang, *Payroll/Staffing Clerk*



From left to right: Loren Harris, MD, chair, department of surgery, chief of thoracic surgery and Alex Barkan, MD, chief of bariatric surgery, director of the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute.

Robotic surgery at RUMC enabling greater precision and faster recovery

It may sound like a new concept, or something out of a science fiction movie, but actually the use of robotic systems during surgery has been around for decades. In fact, robotically assisted surgery was first introduced in the 1980s and 1990s as a way to enhance the capabilities of surgeons and safely overcome some of the limitations of certain surgical procedures. The 2000s saw the first robotic systems approved by the FDA for general laparoscopic surgery. Since then, said Loren Harris, MD, chairman of the department of surgery and chief of thoracic surgery, “robotic surgery has become increasingly standard in many specialties.”

At the beginning of his own career more than 30 years ago, “we trained in open surgery and patients had good outcomes, but they experienced longer hospital stays and more pain,” Dr. Harris said of the evolution of surgical procedures. “The industry then moved to video-assisted technology, where we worked through small incisions with hand-held instruments, which was also effective but not as precise.”

With the advent of robotically assisted surgery in the last 10 to 20 years, however, “we use a 3D camera and precise instruments, sit in the operating room at a console located a few feet away from the patient, and every small move of the surgeon’s hand is mimicked by the instruments at the end of the robot’s arm,” Dr. Harris said. “While it’s the instrument that touches the patient’s tissue rather than the surgeon’s hand, the surgeon can still feel everything and develops optic feedback, almost a ‘sixth sense,’ ” he said. “Thanks to robotic technology, the surgeon’s vision is also extraordinary during these procedures — you see the area you’re working in as if you’re part of the environment, which enables unprecedented precision.”

The level of visual acuity and precision enabled by robotic technology translates into a number of benefits for patients. Among those, “the patient’s pain level is much lower than with previous open surgery platforms because robotically assisted surgery uses small incisions that damage less tissue, a benefit which also leads to shorter hospital stays,” Dr. Harris said. “Ultimately, patients can get back to work and to activities of daily living sooner and they can do this requiring less pain management.”

According to Dr. Harris, Richmond University Medical Center acquired Intuitive’s ‘da Vinci Si’-branded robotically assisted surgical system in 2010. “Back then, the technology was used largely by urological surgeons, who relied on robotics to assist with prostatectomies, removal of all or part of the prostate gland, because robotically assisted surgeries helped improve the patients’ urinary and sexual functionality after the procedure.”

“Today, we still use Intuitive’s da Vinci Si model, but we now also have the da Vinci ‘Xi,’ the newest iteration of that robotic technology,” Dr. Harris said. “In addition to having more malleable arms that are easier to use and set up by the surgeon, the Xi is less obtrusive and has a much smaller footprint in the operating room. In addition, its high-tech new instrumentation uses different wavelengths of light to help surgeons distinguish anatomy and ducts around organs, which leads to an even greater degree of precision and safety.”

Among the specialties that’s experienced great success using robotics is the field of bariatrics, or weight loss surgery.

“I’ve been performing robotically assisted surgeries for the past five to six years and it results in fewer incisions, less damage to tissue, less pain, and better aesthetics,” said Alex Barkan, MD, chief of bariatric surgery. “It also supports a more secure operation because of the technology’s enhanced visualization, which enables you to see details closer, and provides an increased range of motion through the robot’s 540-degree robotic wrist versus a 360-degree human one, which enables surgeons to access smaller spaces.”

Both Dr. Barkan and Dr. Harris are excited that Richmond University Medical Center can serve its local community as a center of expertise and experience in the field of robotic surgery. “Staten Islanders want and deserve the best and most cutting-edge health care, and we’re proud to say that they can get it right here in Staten Island at our hospital,” Dr. Harris said. “For the vast majority of minimally invasive robotically assisted procedures, there’s nothing surgeons are doing in Manhattan that we can’t offer right here at Richmond University Medical Center.”

This article was written by Susan Bloom and appears on SILive.com.

Flu shot still a proven way to reduce exposure and stay healthy

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some 35.5 million Americans contracted the flu in 2018-2019. Of those, nearly 500,000 people ended up hospitalized and 34,200, mostly elderly individuals, died.

Many of us have battled the flu and its symptoms, which include fever, cough, runny nose, headache, muscle aches and pains. This year, however, “coronavirus also presents with many of the same symptoms, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, headache, and muscle aches, which can make it hard for patients and doctors to distinguish between the two,” said Jessie Saverimuttu, MD, infectious disease specialist and Chief of Quality Improvement within the Department of Medicine at Richmond University Medical Center.

For patients exhibiting any of the aforementioned symptoms, “we’d have to take nasal swabs and test for both the flu and COVID-19, which can end up being a major cost on testing, supplies, and personnel,” shared Dr. Saverimuttu, who noted that the concurrence of COVID-19 and seasonal flu cases this fall and winter could overwhelm ICUs and challenge the health care system. “As a result,” she said, “we should focus on anything we can do to reduce the impact of this situation. In that respect, getting the flu vaccine can help.”

Dr. Saverimuttu says that annual flu season typically runs from October through May, with the peak occurring November through February. However, people can contract the flu any time before or after that as well. “Although the CDC confirmed that only 45% of adults got the flu shot in 2018-2019, there is still tremendous opportunity for our society to reduce flu-related mortality, as the 45% of individuals who got the shot prevented an estimated 4.4 million flu cases, 58,000 hospitalizations, and 3,500 deaths,” she said.

Unlike viruses such as the mumps or measles, which can be effectively addressed by a few doses of vaccines over a lifetime, “the flu virus mutates itself and makes subtle changes that require the development of a new flu vaccine annually to address the current strains of the virus that are most prevalent that year,” Dr. Saverimuttu said. The virus can further mutate even during a few months’ time that it takes to develop that year’s vaccine, which explains why flu shots are less than 100% effective. “At least some of the current viruses circulating get incorporated in the annual flu shot and getting the shot can definitely help to reduce the burden of infection,” she said.

In response to some people’s concern, Dr. Saverimuttu and the CDC confirms that the flu vaccine is safe and should be well-tolerated by most, except in specific situations. “One of the components that goes into the flu vaccine is egg protein, so those individuals with serious egg allergies that could lead to anaphylaxis should only get the flu shot under professionally monitored circumstances with a doctor,” she said. “In addition, if you’ve previously developed a serious reaction to or anaphylaxis from the flu shot in the past, you shouldn’t get it again.”



Jessie Saverimuttu, MD, infectious disease specialist and chief of Quality Improvement.

Dr. Saverimuttu provided her best advice as we enter the annual flu season this fall:

- **Be Mindful of Others:** “People have to think of the whole community at this time. While you may experience little to no flu symptoms or you’re able to fight them off, you’re still infectious and can transmit the flu to infants and children, the elderly, those who are immuno-compromised, and others who may not fare as well. It’s also critical that everyone wear a mask, wash their hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and practice social distancing to reduce the spread of viruses, especially during this COVID-19 era.”
- **Get the Flu Vaccine:** “According to the CDC, the flu vaccine is recommended for anyone six months of age and older.”
- **Act Quickly:** “If you feel symptoms, reach out to your primary care physician or another provider to be tested immediately so that we know what we’re dealing with and can treat and isolate you as soon as possible in order to reduce the spread.”
- **Practice Other Considerate Behavior:** Dr. Saverimuttu reminds people to avoid congregating in large groups, which can promote the spread of the flu and COVID-19. In addition, she said, “cover your mouth and/or cough or sneeze into your sleeve to reduce transmission of any virus.”

Overall, Dr. Saverimuttu concluded, “we can win this battle if we put our hearts to it, work together, and do our part for the community.”

The article was written by Susan Bloom and appears on SILive.com.



Executive Club of Staten Island Donates \$5,000 to New ED Construction

As a show of appreciation for the hospital's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and for its continuing efforts to improve the quality of healthcare on Staten Island, the Executive Club of Staten Island, Inc. presented Richmond University Medical Center with a \$5,000

donation to assist with construction of the hospital's new state-of-the-art emergency department. The Executive Club of Staten Island, Inc. focuses on fostering its members' business growth through relationship building, education, and community involvement.

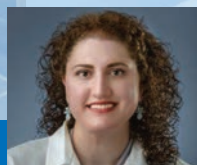
When completed in 2021, the new emergency department will feature private treatment rooms, trauma bays, and comprehensive specialty areas for pediatrics and urgent care on the ground floor. The second floor will be used to upgrade the hospital's surgical unit and increase space for additional services.



**In the fight
against breast
cancer, the first line
of defense is YOU!**



Michael Shamis, M.D., D.A.B.R.
Director of Breast Imaging
and Intervention
Board Certified — Radiology



Dara Fedele, M.D., D.A.B.R.
Breast and General Radiologist
Board Certified — Radiology

***1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer.
But, when detected early, the 5-year relative
survival rate for breast cancer is 99%.**

Utilizing advanced 3D technology, the board certified radiologists and medical staff at our Breast and Women's Center will perform your mammogram, help you better understand your risk factors, and create a personalized breast cancer prevention strategy. When it comes to maintaining your breast health, you are not alone!

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**Richmond University
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For your health and protection, all of our facilities meet CDC and New York State Department of Health guidelines for cleaning and sterilization. All staff are outfitted in CDC-compliant PPE.

Accredited for over 80 consecutive years



*American Cancer Society

Richmond Quality ACO Earns High Quality Marks, Saves Medicare Money



Richard Salhany, MBA, FACHE, President of Richmond University Health Network and Chief Administrative Officer

Richmond Quality ACO, an affiliate of Richmond University Medical Center and Richmond Health Network, improved care for over 9,000 Medicare beneficiaries on Staten Island and saved Medicare over \$7.2 million by meeting quality and cost goals in 2019, according to recently released performance data from the federal agency that administers Medicare.

The Richmond Quality ACO earned a quality score of 96 percent on performance measures ranging from preventive health checks, to use of computerized health records, to preventing avoidable hospitalizations, Medicare data showed. The \$7,213,193

of gross savings to Medicare resulted in a shared savings payment of over \$3.46 million to Richmond Quality ACO. The payment will be used to continue the work of improving population health in the communities of Staten Island.

“When providers work together through an ACO to focus on patients and invest in care coordination, information technology, and other care improvements, they can both increase quality and reduce costs,” said president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.

As an example, Richmond Quality ACO providers work to increase the number of Medicare beneficiaries taking advantage of annual wellness visits, including recommended screenings and preventive care. “Working within an ACO framework has enabled the providers to focus on the overall care of the patients while simultaneously improving the quality of the care they provide and ultimately having a positive impact on the entire population we serve,” Marianne LaBarbera, MD, and chair of the Richmond Quality ACO Board, said. “All ACO providers receive detailed information about their performance on quality measures, and clinicians and providers share best practices to coordinate the care beneficiaries receive from different primary care and specialty providers to prevent health issues and repeat hospitalizations.”

“The performance of the Richmond Quality ACO, a hospital sponsored ACO, demonstrates that we are on the right path focusing on improving quality healthcare for the community in a cost effective manner,” president of the Richmond Health Network and chief administrative officer, Richard J. Salhany, MBA, FACHE, said.

A market-based solution to fragmented and costly care, accountable care organizations (ACOs) empower local physicians, hospitals, and other providers to work together and take responsibility for improving quality, enhancing patient experience, and keeping care affordable. The Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) creates incentives for ACOs to invest in transformation of care by allowing them to share in savings they generate after meeting defined quality and cost goals. In 2019, a total of 541 ACOs across the nation participated in the MSSP, generating a gross savings of \$2.6 billion, based on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services methodology for setting financial benchmarks.

“The Medicare ACO shared savings program is the largest value-based payment model in the country and a critical tool in moving the health system toward better value,” ACO operations director, Jasmin Eversley-Danso said.



GRATITUDE GALA

Join us from the comfort of your home as we give thanks to our frontline workers and community members who supported their neighborhood hospital during the COVID-19 Pandemic

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19 AT 7PM

For registration and any questions, please contact Gina Ferreri at gferreri@rumcsi.org or 718.818.2106.



Annual Golf and Tennis Outing A Success

Supporters of Richmond University Medical Center did not let the COVID-19 pandemic get in the way of showing their support for the hospital while also enjoying a day on the links or tennis court. RUMC held its annual

golf and tennis outing on September 24 at the Richmond County Country Club. Over 100 people participated, maintaining social distancing and following other preventive measures to ensure that everyone had a safe

and enjoyable experience. Funds raised from the outing will support the hospital's new emergency department, which will be completed in 2021.

