

# Richmond University Medical Center

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*RUMC Board of Trustees Chair Kathryn K. Rooney cuts the ribbon on the hospital's new employee parking lot as hospital administration, trustees, contractors, and staff look on.*

## Richmond University Medical Center Opens New Employee Parking Lot

On November 16, Richmond University Medical Center officially opened its new employee parking lot, which marks the first in a series of major improvement projects to reach completion. The new parking lot has over 200 new parking spaces for employees, providing easier access to the hospital, and removes vehicles from nearby residential streets. The new parking lot also features lighting, new trees, shrubs, and landscaping along the surrounding perimeter, and the "Blue Light" emergency security system. Access to the parking lot is protected by gates that require a RUMC ID badge.

"Construction on our new parking lot continued throughout these past few months while much of our attention was focused elsewhere," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said referring to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The parking lot is just the beginning of many exciting enhancements to our hospital that will enable RUMC to continue improving the health of our community for generations to come."

Over the next few years, additional improvement projects will reach completion, including the hospital's new cogeneration, or Co-Gen, plant in 2021. When completed, RUMC will join other companies leading the way in energy efficiency. The new Co-Gen is being constructed in an existing building at the rear of the campus. Over the past few months, work has progressed to include interior demolition and excavation for subsurface utilities. When completed, it will

make the hospital self-sufficient and able to continue operating in the event of an area power failure or natural disaster. The Co-Gen will also feature two new cooling towers.

Then in spring of 2022, RUMC's new 35,000 square foot, two-story emergency department will open. When completed, 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. The current emergency department, constructed in 1978, is 15,000 square feet and built to service around 30,000 emergency care patients annually. Today, RUMC averages about 65,000 patients coming to its emergency department for care annually. Since March, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has treated over 1,400 people affected by the virus. Last month, the hospital hosted a beam signing ceremony as the steel structure of the new ED will soon begin to take shape.

Also underway is planning for the renovation of the windows throughout the hospital as part of a FEMA resiliency project. The new windows, when installed, will be able to withstand hurricane force winds. RUMC is the only hospital on Staten Island not located in a flood zone and is critical to providing continuous emergency care for the community should a hurricane or large-scale natural disaster occur on Staten Island.

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



As 2020 comes to a close, we realize that this past year has been one none of us could have imagined this time last year. However, despite the many obstacles that came our way, we banded together, worked day and night as a team, and stepped up when our community needed us most. We came out of the spring stronger and closer as a RUMC family, showing that COVID-19 could not take us off our game.

Now, as the winter months come, we are seeing increases in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, though not as dramatic as what we saw in the spring. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to stay the course. We must remain vigilant in our efforts to keep the curve as flat as possible. That means wearing the proper PPE according to CDC guidelines inside the hospital, wearing a mask at work and in

public, maintaining social distancing, and exercising proper hand hygiene. As we all wait for a vaccine, it will be these weapons that carry us through the next round of the COVID-19 battle, a battle I have no doubt we will win. Remember, the same procedures you practice in the hospital should be practiced at home. This way we continue to not only protect ourselves, but those we love most: our family and friends.

This holiday season, the trials of the past year should bring greater cause for thanks and celebration. While we will not be able to celebrate it as we have in years past, it does not in any way diminish the meaning of the holidays. Holidays are about love, family, and friendships. Many new friendships were forged this year and many new families began this year—over 2,000 right within our own hospital in our Labor and Delivery Department. By holding family and friends dear, we remind ourselves that there are far more positives and good things in life than adversity. If we stop for a moment and

reflect on that fact, it cannot help but bolster the spirit. It is this spirit that is essential to us.

So to each of you I wish the very best holiday greetings to you and your families. May 2021 be a happy and healthy new year for each of you and for our community. Thank you for a year of tremendous dedication to our hospital and community!

### 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

From the moment my son John Paul Mocio entered the emergency room at Richmond University Hospital, the skill and dedication of the entire staff and medical team on hand provided a sense of calm at a time when the world as I knew it stopped.

It was the expertise of the nurses and doctors that provided me reassurance, knowing everything possible was being done to help my son. John Paul was treated with the utmost respect combined with sincere compassion and care beyond what I ever imagined. The professionals who took care of us during the entire stay at Richmond University Medical Center—from the Emergency Department staff to the incredible nurses like Aurora, Pam, Maryann, Kevin and all the others of the CCU floor, including the dietary nurse Ginny—made an extremely stressful and scary time much calmer. I also want to thank all the doctors who oversaw my son's case.

Lastly, I would like to personally thank Dr. Daniel J. Messina and his secretary Tara. John Paul continues to receive exceptional follow-up care and we continue to seek medical expertise regarding this health event. At this time I would like to thank each and every one of you for being there for us. I remain forever grateful to Richmond University Medical Center and the entire staff.

Sincerely,

**The Mocio Family**





## Chief, Division of ENT, Head & Neck Surgery, Named One of Staten Island's 20 Under 40



Christopher V. Lisi, MD

Congratulations to Christopher V. Lisi, MD, chief, division of ENT (Otolaryngology) Head & Neck Surgery, a recipient of the 2020 Staten Island Economic Development Corporation's 20 Under 40 Leadership award. The 20 Under 40 Leadership Awards are presented annually to talented young individuals who work and/or live on Staten Island and are making a difference in their respective fields.

Dr. Lisi is a board certified Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) surgeon with a special interest in adult and pediatric sinus, nasal, and voice disorders. Previously in private practice on Long Island, he operated at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and Cohen Children's Hospital. He is trained in the latest state-of-the-art procedures for ear, nose, and throat

conditions, including minimally invasive sinus procedures.

**He is trained in the latest state-of-the-art procedures for ear, nose, and throat conditions, ...**

Dr. Lisi completed an intensive five-year residency in Ear, Nose, and Throat surgery at the University of Miami where he served as Chief Resident. During this time, he won first place for outstanding resident research in ENT as well as multiple awards for the highest annual exam score in his program. Dr. Lisi has authored or co-authored several journal publications related to the latest advancements in the ENT field. Dr. Lisi graduated cum laude from a prestigious accelerated medical program with his undergraduate institution, Villanova University, and Drexel Medical School. He was awarded a B.S. in biology and a minor in Spanish, and received his M.D. as a Medical Humanities Scholar for his volunteer work in rural Peru.

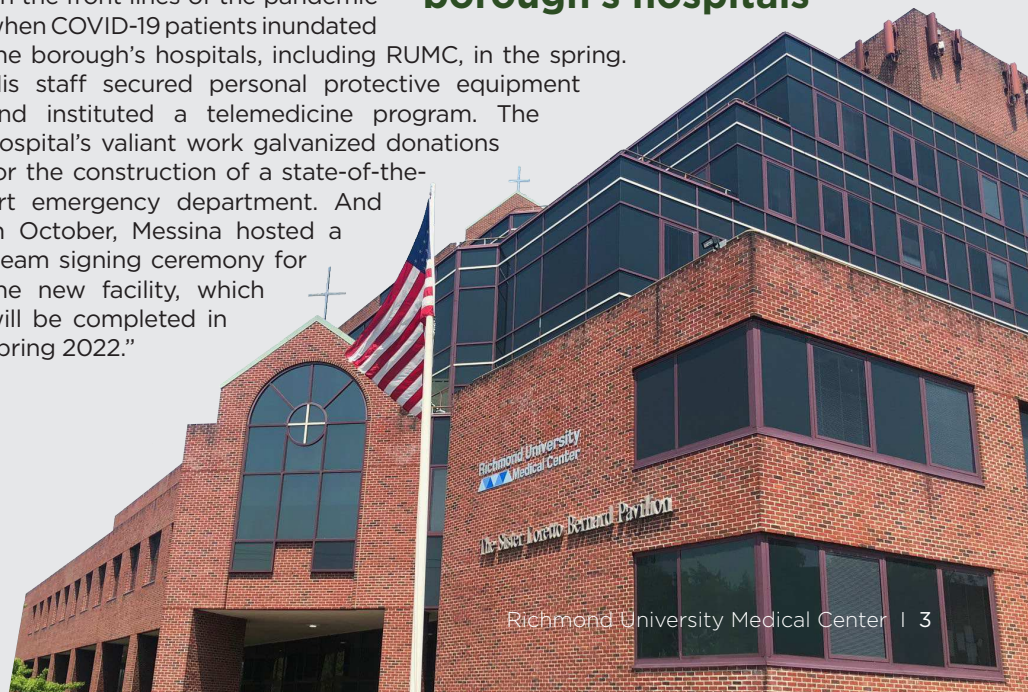
## President and CEO named One of Staten Island's Power 100



President and CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE

President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, was named to City & State Magazine's Staten Island Power 100 list for 2020. Dr. Messina joined 99 of his colleagues from across the borough recognized for their commitment and dedication to the community. Awarded No. 6 on the list, Dr. Messina was cited for being "on the front lines of the pandemic when COVID-19 patients inundated the borough's hospitals, including RUMC, in the spring. His staff secured personal protective equipment and instituted a telemedicine program. The hospital's valiant work galvanized donations for the construction of a state-of-the-art emergency department. And in October, Messina hosted a beam signing ceremony for the new facility, which will be completed in spring 2022."

**"on the front lines of the pandemic when COVID-19 patients inundated the borough's hospitals"**





## Richmond University Medical Center Continues Adopt-A-Family Tradition



*Timothy Mannix with Jennifer Dominguez, RUMC continuing medical education coordinator and director of the Adopt-A-Family program. The Mannix family and ShopRite are donating 50 turkeys and gift cards for distribution by RUMC to needy families this holiday season.*

More than 20 years ago, Richmond University Medical Center launched its Adopt-A-Family program, providing food, clothing, and toys to needy families in Staten Island. This year the tradition continues thanks to the generosity of hospital staff, the Mannix family, Trader Joe's, and employees of ShopRite supermarkets.

"Each year we adopt over 50 families, helping to make the holidays just a little brighter for many of our families in the community," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "The employees of RUMC can be very proud of the hundreds of families they have helped over the years and we look forward to helping many more in the years to come. This would not be possible if not for the generosity of our staff and our partnership with the Mannix family, ShopRite, and Trader Joe's."

This year, employees of ShopRite have joined with various staff from multiple departments at RUMC to provide food, toys, and other donated goods for distribution to needy families that access services provided by the hospital's community clinics. In addition, the Mannix family has donated 50 turkeys to the program for distribution to families, as well as ShopRite gift cards. All items will be distributed to the selected families on the grounds of the hospital on December 22 and 23.

Under the program each department at the hospital adopts a family and the members of that department shop for clothing toys, food, and more. The larger the department, the larger the family. Some of the larger departments actually adopt two families.

"The family names are always kept confidential," Jennifer Dominguez, continuing medical education coordinator and director of the Adopt-A-Family program, said. "The departments are given a list of family members' sizes and ages of the children. The names of the families in need are submitted by our social work department and our clinics. Many of the recipients do not know they are getting gifts until they receive a call to come to the hospital and get their gifts. Often representatives of the departments are there to give the gifts to the family. The outpouring of generosity is amazing."

## RUMC Holds Virtual Gala to Support New ED Construction



*(l-r): RUMC Gala host Larry Gold; VP of Development Laura Gajda; Senior Development Specialist Gina Ferreri; President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE; and RUMC Foundation President Robert Urs share a masked toast at the conclusion of RUMC's virtual gala.*

Even the COVID-19 pandemic could not slow the show of support for Richmond University Medical Center. The hospital held its annual gala, virtually, on the evening of November 19. The two hour event raised more than \$250,000 for the construction of the hospital's new emergency department, which will open in the spring of 2022.

The event was held live on location at RUMC following all COVID-19 guidelines, and featured a series of taped segments highlighting this year's honorees: the entire medical staff of RUMC, which has treated over 1,400 COVID-19 patients since the pandemic began in March of this year. Members of the hospital's senior administration, board of trustees, and Foundation expressed their appreciation and admiration for the physicians, nurses, and entire staff who risked their lives to save others. In addition to the taped segments, the gala paid homage to those lost in the RUMC family this year, such as Foundation Treasurer Lucille Chazanoff, and staff members lost to the COVID-19 virus, William Langley, Mary Ellen Porter, and Margaret Venditti.

# Chair of Medicine and Endocrinology Answers Top 10 Questions About Diabetes



*Philip Otterbeck, MD, chairman of Medicine and Endocrinology*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 34 million Americans have diabetes, and another 88 million adults—roughly one in three—are pre-diabetic; a disturbing trend that is of particular concern on Staten Island. “Diabetes on Staten Island has reached unacceptably high levels,” confirmed Philip Otterbeck, MD, chairman of medicine and endocrinology. To increase diabetes education, Dr. Otterbeck answered some of the most commonly-asked questions about diabetes, including causes, symptoms, treatments, and ways to reduce risk:

**1. What is diabetes?:** “Diabetes is a disease related to the processing of sugar in the blood, which results in the body’s inability to maintain glucose levels within a normal range,” said Dr. Otterbeck, who added that diabetes can occur in two forms: Type 1 and Type 2. “Type 1 is an autoimmune disease whereby the body creates antibodies that attack the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. Most individuals with Type 1 are diagnosed young (some older patients can develop Type 1, but it’s less common) and these patients will be dependent on synthetic insulin for the rest of their lives.” According to Dr. Otterbeck, Type 2 diabetes is a disease of insulin resistance. “Due to genetics and dietary habits, those with Type 2 diabetes require more insulin production to keep their glucose levels in the normal range,” he said.

**2. What are symptoms of diabetes?:** “In severely advanced cases of

either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, patients can experience excess urination, thirst, and weight loss,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “Many individuals who have Type 2 diabetes are asymptomatic and are diagnosed through routine bloodwork.”

**3. What are risk factors for diabetes?:**

“Family history and the presence of other autoimmune conditions such as hyper or hypothyroidism, adrenal insufficiency, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus increase a patient’s chance of developing Type 1 diabetes,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “Heredity, a poor diet, lack of exercise, and obesity are risk factors for Type 2 diabetes, as is race (African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are all at higher risk for Type 2 diabetes than Caucasians, according to the American Diabetes Association).”

**4. What are short- and long-term effects of diabetes?:**

“If left untreated, an individual with diabetes could experience disorientation from either severe low or high blood sugar and may eventually suffer from nerve damage/neuropathy, kidney damage, vision problems, stroke, heart attack, and peripheral vascular disease (blockages in the arteries in the lower extremities),” he said.

**5. What are the latest treatments for diabetes?:**

“The mainstay treatment for Type 1 diabetes is insulin, which was traditionally delivered via vials and syringes or insulin pens; now, however, the standard of care is an insulin pump, which delivers a constant infusion of insulin that physicians program based on their patient’s dietary practices,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “Treatments for Type 2 diabetes include a variety of mechanistically distinct oral and subcutaneous approaches, which are geared toward reducing insulin resistance and improving the body’s ability to make its own insulin. All of these agents can be very effective at achieving glucose targets and preventing complications of diabetes.”

**6. How can I prevent diabetes?:** “Regular exercise, a healthy diet that’s low in sugar, carbohydrates, and processed foods, maintenance of an ideal weight,

and adherence to medications prescribed by a doctor can help prevent Type 2 diabetes,” he said.

**7. How does diabetes affect COVID-19?:**

“Diabetes is a risk factor for COVID-19 and can increase the chances of a poor outcome if you contract COVID-19,” he said. “As a result, it’s more important than ever to manage diabetes effectively during this pandemic and ensure that you’re taking your medication consistently to reduce your risk.”

**8. Are children at risk for diabetes?:**

“Type 2 diabetes is an increasing problem among children due to reduced physical activity, large food portions, and the societal lure of fast food,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “We need to encourage kids to be more physically active and eat more fruits, vegetables, and lean meats as opposed to foods high in calories, fat, carbs, and sugar. Getting kids into good habits early will set them up for a lifetime of better health.”

**9. What numbers do I need to monitor for diabetes?:**

“Important numbers to monitor include your Hemoglobin A1C, which is a three-month measure of the percent of red blood cells in the body that have glucose attached to them; this number should ideally be less than 6.5 percent or 7 percent,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “In addition, your fasting glucose when you wake up in the morning should be between 80 and 130 milligrams per deciliter.”

**10. What should I do if I’m diagnosed with diabetes?:**

“While it’s never ideal to have any medical issue, there’s so much research being done on diabetes and so many evidence-based therapies and novel approaches available to manage it,” Dr. Otterbeck said. “For those on insulin therapy, blood sugar can be volatile, so it’s important for patients to consistently manage their blood sugar and understand how different foods will affect those values. Overall, diabetes can be managed as long as you’re proactive and disciplined. If you’re attentive to your diet, exercise, and prescribed medications, you can avoid many complications and enjoy a long and high-quality life.”



## ED Nurse Earns Board Certification for Emergency Nursing



(l-r): Krista Salvatore, RN, nursing educator and Marisa Semioli, RN, MSN, FNP-BC, CEN

Congratulations to Marisa Semioli, RN, MSN, FNP-BC, CEN, on completing her Board Certification for Emergency Nursing (CEN).

Marisa was hired as an intern in the Emergency Department in January 2017, completing the program in January 2018. Marisa spent her downtime during the COVID-19 pandemic preparing for her certification in Family Nurse Practitioner and the CEN exam. Marisa completed both exams successfully within a week of each other.

The CEN certification is awarded after the certifying board determines the candidate has met or exceeded strict eligibility requirements and also successfully completes the required examination. Certifications are valid for a four year period, and are nationally recognized.

The ANCC Family Nurse Practitioner board certification examination is a competency based examination that provides a valid and reliable assessment

of the entry-level clinical knowledge and skills of nurse practitioners. Once you complete eligibility requirements to take the certification examination and successfully pass the exam, you are awarded the credential Family Nurse Practitioner-Board Certified (FNP-BC). This credential is valid for five years. The Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification accredits this ANCC certification.

With the COVID-19 pandemic placing more focus on the critical importance of nurses, these certifications send a powerful statement that the nursing staff at Richmond University Medical Center has the knowledge and skills required to provide the highest quality care, no

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matter the situation. From a life threatening emergency, to managing a chronic illness, to even a global pandemic, the nurses at RUMC are dedicated to improving the health of the communities and individuals they serve.

This latest achievement not only speaks to Marisa's specialized knowledge and expertise, but also to the effectiveness of the intern program at Richmond University Medical Center, and the skills and talents of its educators, preceptors, team leaders, and charge staff.

## New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Anthony Aurilia, *EMT*  
Quiana Burton, *DRT*  
Victor Cange, *Paramedic*  
Johanne Chamblain, *Central Sterile Tech*  
Ruthie Geraghty, *RN*  
Jessie Gonzalez, *CT Tech*  
Valentina Kagan, *Anesthesia Tech*  
Bianca Kilayco, *Endo Tech*  
Sergey Kim, *Clinical Lab Tech*  
Candie Lau, *NP*

Mabel Luo-Huang, *Clinical Lab Tech*  
Jason Maniscalco, *LMSW*  
Michele Misiag, *Financial Analyst*  
Devin Mooney, *Nursing Assistant*  
Rangana Piyasena, *Clinical Lab Tech*  
Joseph Ruggiero, *RN*  
Nielsen Scott, *Food Service Worker*  
Gianna Sicari, *EMT*  
David Stultz, *Nursing Assistant*

## Lung nurse navigator urges those at high risk of lung cancer to get screened

All year round, Nancy Sayegh-Rooney, RN, ONN-CG, CTTS, lung nurse navigator, promotes awareness of the risks of using tobacco products—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic—as well as the importance of lung screenings for those at high risk of COPD or lung cancer.

### The Facts on Tobacco Use

“Across the country, 34 million American adults smoke and more than 16 million Americans live with a smoking-related disease,” Sayegh-Rooney said. “Here on Staten Island, a recent New York City Department of Health community health survey reported that nearly 16 percent of Staten Islanders smoke, the highest rate of smoking in all five boroughs.” Studies show that the population of smokers is often composed of males between the ages of 25 and 64 who have a lower level of education, live below the poverty level, and/or may be disabled with serious psychological issues or mental distress; a higher incidence of tobacco use has also been seen among Native Americans and the LGBTQ population.

Among those who smoke, “nearly all tobacco product use starts in adolescence, while young people’s brains are still developing, and they quickly get hooked on nicotine, which is the addictive ingredient in all tobacco products,” Sayegh-Rooney said. “Addiction happens with the first puff, as nicotine activates the dopamine receptor and triggers feelings of relaxation, but it’s important for people to know that if they just breathe deeply, they can achieve that same outcome naturally.”

Unfortunately, she said, “reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirm that America is currently experiencing a teenage smoking epidemic, with a 48 percent increase in the use of e-cigarette devices by middle schoolers and an over 70 percent increase in the use of e-cigarette devices among high school students between 2017 and 2018.” While society has long known that the risk of lung and bladder cancer rises significantly from smoking, “the



*Nancy Sayegh-Rooney, RN, ONN-CG, CTTS*

medical community has identified a new lung disease linked to vaping called ‘EVALI’ (E-cigarette, or Vaping, product use-Associated Lung Injury),” she said. “And whether you smoke cigarettes or vape, the use of tobacco products also increases your risk of an adverse reaction if you contract COVID-19 based on the damage smoking does to the lungs.”

### The Importance of Early Detection

Sayegh-Rooney confirmed that if you are a smoker, or a former smoker and at “high risk” for lung cancer—which is defined as being between the ages of 55 and 80 and being or having been a ‘30-pack-year’ smoker (e.g., smoking one pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years, two packs a day for 15 years, or any other combination of packs per day and years that amounts to 30)—you’re eligible for lung screening that’s fully covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

According to Sayegh-Rooney, “having a lung screening can save your life because early detection is the best medicine, and at Richmond University Medical Center we’ve made lung screenings even easier during the pandemic.”

Specifically, “patients who fit the criteria simply need to get a prescription for a lung screening from their primary care physician,” she

explained. “Much of their information is taken over the phone and then I’ll register them, schedule them, meet them at the door, and accompany them through the screening, which takes all of 15 minutes in the hospital. We use masks, adhere to all safety protocols, and the process is safe and efficient. Lung screenings are annual tests, like mammograms, so it’s important for those at high risk of lung cancer or COPD to undergo them every year so that any area of concern that may evolve can be identified as soon as possible.”

“Use of tobacco products isn’t a habit—it’s a psychological and physical addiction that’s hard for many to overcome because the tobacco product becomes their ‘best friend’—something that, for example, a pack-a-day smoker spends an average of two-and-a-half hours a day holding and relying on,” she said. “Giving up a dependency on tobacco is a journey that doesn’t necessarily happen overnight, but it can absolutely be done if you have a good support system, and the minute you cut back on or quit smoking and begin regularly inhaling pure oxygen, your body will start to heal.”

“Knowledge is power and we encourage those at high risk to get a lung screening,” Sayegh-Rooney said. “Early detection is key and it could save your life.”

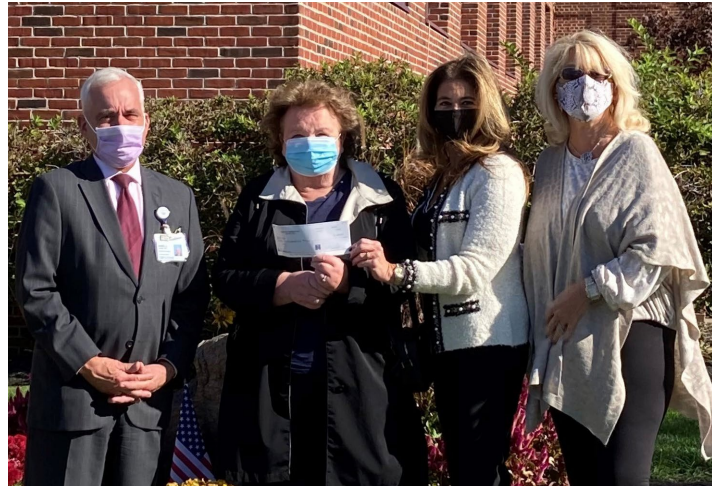


## Pediatric Unit Gets Boost From Local Women

To show their thanks and appreciation for the care provided to Staten Island's youngest residents, World of Women, a Staten Island-based community organization, presented a donation of \$2,500 to Richmond University Medical Center on November 5. The donation will be used to support the hospital's pediatric unit.

"As a Level II Pediatric Trauma Center, we care for every type of pediatric emergency every day of the year, 24/7," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "These past few months our pediatric department also cared for many young residents battling COVID-19 and Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, or MIS-C, a condition that arose in many of these patients as a result of COVID-19. This support from World of Women will help ensure our pediatric department continues to provide the very best care available. We are delighted to have them as partners, working together to improve the overall health of our communities."

World of Women, Inc. or WOW, was founded in 1995. Their mission is to advocate on behalf of women and children across Staten Island and surrounding communities.



(left to right): RUMC president and CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE; Helen Tamari, president, World of Women S.I. Inc.; Sally Malfi, RUMC Foundation board member and member of World of Women S.I. Inc.; and Pat Caltabiano, president, World of Women S.I. Inc.



## Nike, Good 360 Donate Sneakers and Socks to RUMC Staff

Richmond University Medical Center received a generous donation of 2,100 pairs of sneakers and compression socks from Nike, in conjunction with Good 360, as a thank you to frontline and essential healthcare workers combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The goods

were donated to RUMC staff and distributed over the course of two days. The special edition sneakers are not sold in stores and were specially designed by Nike to provide comfort to hospital workers who spend long hours on their feet.