

Richmond University Medical Center

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Center for Cancer Care Earns American College of Radiology Accreditation



Richmond University Medical Center's Center for Cancer Care has been awarded three-year accreditation in positron emission tomography (PET) following a recent review by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

The ACR gold seal of accreditation represents the highest level of image quality and patient safety. It is awarded only to facilities meeting ACR practice parameters and technical standards after a peer-review evaluation by board certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in the field. Image quality, personnel qualifications, adequacy of facility equipment, quality control procedures, and quality assurance programs are all assessed during the review process. The Center for Cancer Care, located at 1000 South Avenue, opened in June of 2018.

PET, also called PET imaging or a PET scan, is a type of nuclear medicine imaging. Nuclear medicine is a branch of medical imaging that uses small amounts of radioactive material, ingested by the patient, to diagnose or treat a variety of diseases, including many types of cancers. Radiologists assess PET imaging to locate cancers, determine if a cancer has spread, evaluate if a cancer-related treatment is effective, and to see if there is a re-occurrence of cancer in a patient.

"We are honored to have earned the ACR's accreditation," chief administration officer and

president of the Richmond Health Network Richard Salhany, MBA, FACHE, said. "While more cases of cancer are diagnosed in Staten Island than the rest of the city, the rate of cancer-related deaths is similar to the rest of the city and lower than the national rate. This means cancers are being identified and treated effectively at places like our Center for Cancer Care, which provides the most advanced treatments available and utilizes the latest technology modern medicine has to offer."



According to the New York State Department of Health, from 2011 to 2015, the rate of all cancers combined on Staten Island was 16 percent higher than the rest of New York City and three percent higher than the rest of New York State. The Health Department also

reported that during the same time period, Staten Island residents were diagnosed with thyroid cancer 67 percent more than the rest of the city's boroughs and 69 percent more than the rest of New York State.

According to New York State, the Staten Island lung cancer incidence rate is also the highest in New York City. This finding is consistent with higher smoking rates among Staten Island adults and youth than the other boroughs. Staten Island also has the highest lung cancer death rate among the New York City boroughs.

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



On any given day, somewhere in our hospital and outpatient sites, military veterans, first responders, and members of their families are being cared for. According to the last census, there are over 9,000 military veterans, active and retired, living on Staten Island. There are thousands of firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and volunteer first responders who also call Staten Island their home. As we enter the new year, I am proud to announce that Richmond University Medical Center has created a VIP program for veterans and first responders, offering them special benefits as a way of saying thank you for their service and helping others in their time of greatest need.

Veterans and first responders will be able to enroll in the program on line or by mail, providing basic contact information and proof of service. Once enrolled, they will receive a VIP program card granting them access to their benefits when shown along with their proof of service. Benefits include same day scheduling at primary care sites, complimentary private maternity room, free valet or token parking at the main hospital, free telephone and/or television rental when admitted, and discounts at Lori's Gifts in the main lobby, hospital cafeteria, and Starbucks. Members will also receive reduced rates for hospital special events, like our gala and 5K Run, and VIP invitations to our lunch and learns and

ribbon cuttings. Each card will also display the 24/7 behavioral health hotline, 718-818-6300, so members can have immediate access to our trained medical staff when they or a family member are in need. According to the latest information from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, an average of 16 veterans have a life-threatening mental health crisis every day. According to the US Fire Administration, firefighters and law enforcement officers are more likely to die by suicide than from a line-of-duty death, with job stress being the most likely contributor. Thousands of veterans and first responders also suffer from PTSD, or post traumatic stress disorder.

Our VIP program is just the first step in showing our veterans and first responders how special they are to us. We will be developing sensitivity guidelines focusing on our military and first responder patients. We will also be inviting guests, some of them retired veterans, to give us special insights on how to care for our veterans, not from a clinical perspective, but from a person-to-person standpoint. Words cannot emphasize how much we owe our veterans and first responders for our freedoms and for knowingly placing themselves in harm's way to save others. Expressing our thanks with a few simple gestures to these special people is the very least we can do.

To all our veteran and first responders who may read this, patients and staff alike, thank you for your service!

**Remember the Power of One —
You Make A Difference!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. Messina".

Patient Satisfaction: *A Note of Thanks*

Dear Respected Hospital Staff,

On the evening of November 14, after playing for the school soccer team to win the last match of this season, my son felt a serious pain in the stomach and vomited about four or five times. He was sent to the hospital early the next morning. At first, he was diagnosed with appendicitis and told that only an easy and short operation was needed. It seemed that the problem he was facing was not so severe. But more surprising news came one after another: the originally planned operation was canceled; he needed to be in the hospital for more days; he wasn't allowed to eat or drink anything. Being so worried about him, I took the earliest flight from China and found he was very weak when I arrived at his bedside. Eight days passed, things didn't get any better and we started to panic and feel desperate. All the doctors and the nurses tried their best to help. They offered everything they could think of to make us feel even a little bit comfortable—encouraging words, warm hugs. I will never forget Bella, Amanda, Cristin, Susan, John, Peter, and many others.

The one who I want to thank most is Dr. Gilchrist. Literally, Dr. Gilchrist saved my son's life by a timely and successful operation and by helping him avoid another

operation caused by a bowel obstruction he had after the surgery. Dr. Gilchrist is an expert not only in curing patients physically, but also in healing others mentally. He treated my son just like his own. After the operation, he came to visit us as often as he could. He observed the development of the disease closely and gave us confidence to fight bravely. Thinking of the language barrier, he invited a Chinese doctor friend to provide translation to make sure of clear communications. As a foreigner, feeling alone and helpless at the beginning, I was later deeply touched by Dr. Gilchrist's professionalism and kindness. Once a nurse told my son, "You are the apple in Doctor Gilchrist's eyes." No words can fully express our gratitude to him.

I am lucky to have my son back home again. He is now getting close to full recovery. Life will move on, but our feelings of gratitude will never fade.

Sincerely,
Shimin Z.

Dear Dr. Messina,

I would like to write to you about one of your Labor and Delivery Unit nurses, Rugiatu Bah.

Ms. Bah was one of my daughter-in-law's nurses. My daughter-in-law had a C-section in December. Ms. Bah met her in her room when she was first wheeled in after delivery. Ms. Bah was very kind, caring, and compassionate. I saw firsthand Ms. Bah's expertise as a

nurse. She really knows her stuff, is an asset to Richmond University Medical Center, and should be commended.

My daughter-in-law and I would like her to know how appreciative we are for all she did for mom and baby!

Sincerely,
Denise G.



Local Non-Profit Donates Handmade Pillows for Breast Cancer Patients



Physicians and staff, including RUMC president and CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE (second, left), accept a donation of lymphedema pillows from Cancer Tamer Foundation founder Dr. Charley Ferrer (center).

Richmond University Medical Center welcomed the founder of the Cancer Tamer Foundation, Dr. Charley Ferrer and supporters of her organization at the hospital's Breast and Women's Center, where they donated 50 handmade lymphedema pillows for distribution to breast cancer patients. Cancer Tamer Foundation is a local Staten Island based non-profit launched to help women and men with breast cancer. Hospital president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, was joined by physicians and staff from the hospital's oncology department to accept the pillows.

Lymphedema pillows are used by patients who have undergone breast surgery and lymph node removal. These special pillows help alleviate pain and provide comfort. The pillows are placed under the armpit and held in place with ribbons or the person's arm. They can also be positioned under the breast for support and over the breast to provide a cushion, such as when wearing a seatbelt.

"We are so grateful to Dr. Ferrer and her volunteers for thinking of our patients with this generous act of kindness," Dr. Messina said. "Staten Island has the highest rate of new cancer cases in New York City and female breast cancer accounts for over 13 percent of all cancer cases on Staten Island. These pillows will be put to good use as we help men and women in their battles against this dreadful disease."

Cancer Tamer's mission is to provide education, empowerment services, and life-enriching activities to individuals diagnosed with breast cancer. Dr. Ferrer started the organization after her own battle with breast cancer. "All the thanks goes to our volunteers who make these pillows," Dr. Ferrer said. "Knowing that we can help alleviate pain and discomfort for people is the best feeling in the world."

The pillows will be distributed to patients undergoing treatment at the Breast and Women's Center, located at 1161 Victory Boulevard, the Center for Cancer Care at 1000 South Avenue, and

the main hospital at 355 Bard Avenue. Dr. Ferrer offered to provide additional pillows when the need arises.

Opened in October 2018 and offering comprehensive surgical and imaging services, the Breast and Women's Center is a facility accredited by the American College of Radiology (ACR) after earning gold seals of accreditation last fall for comprehensive mammography, breast ultrasound, stereotactic biopsy, and ultrasound guided biopsy services.



The handmade lymphedema pillows will be provided to breast cancer patients and come in a variety of colors and patterns.

RUMC Continues “Adopt a Family” Tradition



Over 20 years ago, Richmond University Medical Center was approached by the Adopt-a-Family program and asked to become participants. The Continuing Medical Education Department, comprising two employees at the time, willingly accepted the responsibility. The tradition continued this past holiday season with many more families benefiting from the generosity of hospital employees and volunteers.

Members of Adopt-a-Family sponsor low-income families during the holiday season by providing donations such as toys, books, food, and clothes. The family names were kept confidential as many of the recipients received a surprise call from the hospital to inform them their gifts were waiting. Department representatives were there to greet the families and on some occasions even arranged for transportation since many recipients did not have vehicles.

When the program was first initiated over 20 years ago, each department would “adopt a family.” The larger the department, the larger the family. Some departments even adopted two families. After receiving the sizes and ages of the children, they were able to customize their donations.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the program!

SAVE THE DATE SPRING 2020 UPDATE IN INTERNAL MEDICINE

CME Activity (earn up to 20 credits)

May 18-22, 2020
8:00A.M. — 1:00P.M.

Updates on:

Cardiology, Critical Care Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Nephrology,
Pulmonology, Hematology/Oncology and much more...

For further information, please contact Jennifer Dominguez at 718-818-3106

Richmond University
 **Medical Center**

January New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Diana Alcaraz, *RN*
Diana Brunetti, *RN*
Devon Conway, *Sr PA*

Thomas DeBacker, *Security Officer*
Illekuttige Fernando, *RN*
MarieElena Festo, *RN*
Karen Findley, *RN*

Nabiel Gurges, *Sr PA*
Nadine Hill, *Clerk/Receptionist*
Mija Hwang, *RN*
Laura King, *RN*
Hailey Lopez, *Clerk/Receptionist*
Barbara Maloney, *RN*
Gabrielle Medina, *Nursing Assistant*

Lemuel Murphy, *RN*
Joseph Muscente, *Staff Physician*
Leah Philip, *DRT*
Kristy Randazzo, *DRT*
Mario Rodriguez, *EMT Driver*
Ewa Roginski, *Ultrasound Tech*
Robert Toscanini, *Manager*

BOARD PROFILE



Meet Our Trustees: Samala Swamy, MD

Samala Swamy, MD, has been a leading cardiologist on Staten Island for more than 35 years. During these years, Dr. Swamy has not only witnessed profound advancements in his field, in many ways he has also helped shape them.

Dr. Swamy emigrated from India to the United States to assume a residency position at St. Vincent's Medical Center and became the hospital's first cardiology fellow in 1974. Dr. Swamy was also one of the first cardiologists on Staten Island to use cardiac catheterization for the diagnosis of coronary heart disease for the benefit of his patients. Today, Dr. Swamy serves Richmond University Medical Center as director of its cardiac catheterization lab.

In recognition of his contribution to the betterment of cardiac care, Dr. Swamy was awarded the "Humanitarian Award" by the former St. Vincent's Medical Center and the "Excellence in Medicine" award by the Staten Island chapter of the American Heart Association. Dr. Swamy is board certified in cardiology, nuclear medicine, and interventional cardiology.

Dr. Swamy is married to Veeramani and blessed with three children, his sons Sudheer and Sumanth, and his daughter, Sumana.

5K

Saturday, April 4, 2020
Clove Lakes Park

RUMC RUN WALK

To benefit the Neonatal
Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
Big Journeys Begin
with Small Steps

**Richmond University
Medical Center**

For more info, contact
Gina Ferreri: 718-818-2106
GFerreri@RUMCSI.org



New Chief of Otolaryngology Discusses Wintertime Ear, Nose, and Throat Issues



Christopher Lisi, MD, chief of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery

Americans battle an estimated one billion colds in an average year, most of which occur in the fall and winter.

"Illnesses like colds and flu are more common in wintertime. The colder environment and its fallout — dry, chapped nasal passages, etc. — predispose us to these viruses," confirmed Christopher Lisi, MD, new chief of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery. "When certain ear, nose, and throat, or ENT, conditions become frequent, chronic, or longer in duration despite appropriate treatment by a primary or urgent care doctor, they may require intervention by an ENT specialist."

Board certified in otolaryngology and in practice for over 10 years, Dr. Lisi discussed some of the more common ENT conditions plaguing area residents during the wintertime and how they are treated.

"In their initial stages, sinus infections may feel like a cold and may clear up on their own within a week, but if symptoms persist longer than a week or linger despite being treated with antibiotics, patients should see an ENT specialist," Dr. Lisi said. "While people may complain of a headache, sore throat and dry cough, these are more likely symptoms of a cold. True symptoms of a sinus infection include nasal congestion, stuffiness, and discolored nasal discharge. We can actually look in an individual's nose and throat with a small endoscope to help differentiate between a cold and a sinus infection."

Within the first week of a sinus infection, Dr. Lisi said that symptoms may resolve on their own, though nasal saline rinses and a course of Flonase or another nasal steroid spray may help flush out mucus from the nasal passages and reduce inflammation. "If symptoms persist beyond a week or so, we put patients on a course of antibiotics and that usually works. If not, we'll treat with different antibiotics and nasal medicine," Dr. Lisi said. "We can also opt for balloon dilation of the sinuses, a quick, minimally invasive office procedure that dilates the sinus passages and helps treat chronic reoccurring sinus infections that don't respond well to antibiotics."

"For people who just feel stuffy and experience frequent restricted breathing on one or both sides, nasal decongestants or nasal steroid sprays like Flonase can help," Dr. Lisi said. "The double whammy of a cold environment outdoors and heated homes indoors can create dryness that contributes to frequent colds." He recommends hydrating the nose with saline spray or performing saline flushes with neti pots. According to Dr. Lisi, "keeping a humidifier in the bedroom during the winter months can also help keep nasal passages moist."

If symptoms are chronic, surgical intervention may be necessary. "For example, some individuals may require surgery to fix a deviated septum or a procedure to reduce the turbinates (networks of bones, vessels, and tissue

within the nose) to widen the nasal passages," he said. "These in-office procedures are all minimally-invasive, leave no scars, enable a quicker recovery, and can provide effective, long-term relief."

Tonsillitis/Throat Infections

"These conditions are reflected by big, red, swollen tonsils, severe burning in the throat and pain when swallowing. Swollen tonsils can also cause heavy snoring and/or sleep apnea," said Dr. Lisi, who noted that tonsillitis and throat infections are more commonly experienced by children and teenagers than adults.

"These conditions can be treated with antibiotics for seven to 10 days by a pediatrician or urgent care physician, but if they occur multiple times a year, the tonsils and/or adenoids may need to be removed," Dr. Lisi said. The procedure, which is done in a hospital or ambulatory surgery setting, is one of the nation's most commonly performed pediatric surgeries. "Patients will usually go home that day or the next day following a short observation. The procedure will significantly reduce the frequency and/or severity of these conditions."

Dr. Lisi said that a number of personal practices can help reduce chances of being sidelined with ENT illnesses this season. Among them are "practicing good hand hygiene, such as sneezing into a tissue or your arm instead of your hand; and washing your hands with soap and water frequently," he said. "Remember to also boost your immunity by staying up-to-date on immunizations and vaccinations, especially getting a flu shot."

Dr. Lisi's office is located at 1855 Richmond Ave. Same day appointments are available and most insurances are accepted. To make an appointment, call (718) 818-1855. To learn more about Dr. Lisi and his services, visit www.rumcsi.org/earnoseandthroat.

This article can be found on SLLive.com and was written by Susan Bloom.

Chief Nurse Officer/COO Honored by JCC of Staten Island



Members of RUMC's board of trustees and senior administration were on hand to congratulate chief nurse officer and COO, Rosemarie Stazzone, RN, MSN, CNE (bottom, left) on her honor.

Richmond University Medical Center's chief nurse officer and chief operating officer, Rosemarie Stazzone, RN, MSN, CNE, was honored on January 26 by the Jewish Community Center of Staten Island for her contributions to the community. Stazzone was one of several honorees celebrated at the JCC's annual Sunshine Sunday,

an event benefiting the Lucille & Jay Chazanoff Sunrise Day Camp.

Sunrise Day Camp is the world's first full-summer day camp for children with cancer and their siblings. Recognizing the financial demands that a child's chronic illness can have on a family, Sunrise Day Camp and its

year-round and in-hospital programs are offered completely free of charge to all children being treated for cancer and their siblings, on a non-sectarian basis. It is the only day camp for children with cancer in New York City and serves families from Staten Island, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and New Jersey.

Honorees of the Month



Congratulations to the following individuals, selected as the Honorees of the Month:

Volunteer of the Month:

Arlene Bajxac, *Emergency Department*

Employee of the Month:

Vaithilingam Arulthasan, MD