

# Richmond University Medical Center

MARCH 2020 • RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER • WWW.RUMCSI.ORG

## Grateful Patient Thanks Critical Care Unit with \$25,000 Donation



(From left to right) Laura Gajda, VP of Development; Keith Diaz, MD; Jessie Saverimuttu, MD, PhD, AAHIVS; Mitchell Fogel, MD; Robert Reilly, Mary Reilly, and Jay Nfonoyim, MD.

### **Reilly Family Says Gift Is for a Team That “Never Gave Up On Me”**

In 2013, Mary Reilly was undergoing outpatient chemotherapy treatments for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. A reaction to the treatments caused her to go into respiratory failure. Placed into a medically induced coma, she would remain at Richmond University Medical Center for over two months. Recently, she returned to the hospital with her husband, Robert, to provide a \$25,000 donation to the Critical Care Unit (CCU), a personal thank you to the doctors, nurses, and staff who saved her life.

“Through their dedicated efforts I made it through,” Reilly said. “While I do have some life-altering effects, I have continued to be healthy, living my life and enjoying my greatest joys: my grandchildren Lucianna who was born at RUMC just two months before I ended up there in 2013 and her little brother Lucas who was also born at RUMC in 2016.”

Reilly’s ordeal began on July 15, 2013, when she began having trouble breathing. Her husband rushed her to the emergency department at RUMC where she was placed on oxygen. Having little effect, eventually she would be placed into a medically induced coma, have an emergency tracheostomy performed and be placed on a respirator. She would be moved to CCU where she would remain until the end of September.

“I had a fabulous team of wonderful doctors led by Dr. Jay Nfonoyim, Dr. Keith Diaz, Dr. Jessie Saverimuttu, and Dr. Lucia Palladino,”

Reilly said. “They never gave up on me and at times it was very grave, I was expected to die.”

While in the coma, she would battle several conditions from blood clots to infections, overcoming them all and stabilizing to the point that she was transferred to an outpatient facility where she learned to breath on her own again and began occupational and physical therapy.

On November 16, 2013, Reilly returned home for good. In November 2019, she and her family celebrated six full years of happiness and health. Today, she continues to undergo therapy at RUMC’s Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, located behind the main hospital.

“Working with my therapists and the wonderful nurses I have been able to make great strides,” Reilly said. “While my lungs will never repair, they are stronger.”

Recently, the medical team at RUMC saved her husband’s life. This past summer, he came to the emergency department with chest pains. He was diagnosed with a double aneurysm of his aorta. After undergoing emergency surgery, he has made a full recovery.

“RUMC is a vital part of our community, and a true life saver for our family,” Reilly said. “Robert and I hope that this donation for the critical care unit will help the doctors continue the wonderful work of saving lives. Our family will always be grateful for the wonderful care and dedication that RUMC has shown to us. God bless everyone at RUMC always.”

*A Publication for Employees, Physicians, Trustees, and Volunteers of  
Richmond University Medical Center*

## From the President & CEO

### Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE



No matter where you go, coronavirus is the topic on everyone's mind. At Richmond University Medical Center we are taking all precautions and remaining vigilant throughout our hospital and outpatient offices. Our medical staff, especially our emergency department and infectious disease teams, have been in lockstep with federal, state, and local health agencies sharing information and gathering the latest information on this ever-changing situation around the world.

Here at Richmond University Medical Center, the emergency department has maintained a high level of surveillance. Any patients or people coming with

patients are being monitored visually for symptoms, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Should anyone exhibit symptoms, that person and everyone in their group are issued masks, placed in an area separate from our other patients, and more thoroughly evaluated. Our staff is using heightened barrier precautions in such instances, implementing face shields for their own protection and protection of our other patients. After the more thorough evaluation, our medical staff will be in immediate contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) should coronavirus be suspected. Further precautions will be undertaken as we learn more about this virus, and as directed by the CDC and other health organizations. Our outpatient sites throughout Staten Island have also been advised to immediately report any individuals they encounter that raise concerns.

The safety of our patients and our staff is always our highest priority. We will keep everyone informed of the latest information as it becomes available. To safeguard your own health, remember we are also still in a very active flu

season, so wash your hands frequently, especially before and after patient contact, and utilize the hand sanitizing stations located around the hospital. If you have not done so already, please get your flu shot. For the latest information on the coronavirus, please visit [www.rumcsi.org/covid-19](http://www.rumcsi.org/covid-19).

Lastly, March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer, which is cancer of the colon or rectum, is the third most common cancer in the United States and the second leading cause of death from cancers that affect both men and women. To assess your risk factors for colorectal cancer, visit our website at [www.rumcsi.org](http://www.rumcsi.org), click on our comprehensive health library, and enter the keywords "colorectal cancer assessment." A quick assessment will let you know if you are at high risk and what your next steps should be. Please take a few minutes, take the assessment, urge others to do so, and let's help save lives.

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

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

# 5K

**Saturday, April 4, 2020**  
Clove Lakes Park

**Richmond University**  
 **Medical Center**

# RUMC RUN WALK

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

**For more info, contact**  
Gina Ferreri: 718-818-2106  
[GFerreri@RUMCSI.org](mailto:GFerreri@RUMCSI.org)





## RUMC Promotes Cancer Awareness at Black History Month Celebration

On February 8, staff from Richmond University Medical Center's oncology department discussed the importance of cancer screenings and risk factors for several types of cancer at the annual Black History Month celebration at St. Philip's Church in Port Richmond. Over 70 people attending the event were provided with information on the prevalence of cancer, particularly on the north shore of Staten Island and in minority populations. President of the Richmond Health Network and Chief Administrative Officer Richard Salhany, MBA, FACHE, discussed the growing increase in cancer of the bladder, thyroid, breasts, and lungs. He also stressed the lung screening and tobacco cessation services available at the hospital. Free prostate cancer tests were also provided at the event, which is organized each year by Rev. Tony Baker, pastor of St. Philip's and a member of RUMC's board of trustees.



*Gabrielle Iacono, clerk cancer services; Shannon Carberry, cancer services program coordinator; Richard Salhany, MBA, FACHE, president of the Richmond Health Network and chief administrative officer; and David Branch, patient care technician, joined Rev. Tony Baker to stress cancer awareness to the congregation of St. Philip's Church.*

## Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

To the Amazing Staff at the Center for Cancer Care,

From the very first day that we anxiously entered your office, you have greeted us with warm smiles and genuine concern. You made our time with you so much more bearable and easier than we ever imagined it to be. Thank you for all your dedication to each patient and all the energy and care you've shown each day. You are making such a difference in a world that needs more people like you!

Sincerely,  
Chris and Olivia

Dear Labor and Delivery Staff,

Thank you all so much for your support and help in bringing our son safely into this world!

Love,  
Erin, Mark and Salvatore B.

Dear ER Staff,

Thanks for taking such good care of my husband. He is doing well! The bionic man!

Sincerely,  
Jean K.

To All It May Concern,

It is with joy and sorrow that we write this letter. Eileen Kilbane, RN, was on duty in the ER when our relative was brought in from a nursing home on January 4, 2020. Her care and compassion was beyond our expectations. For lack of a better word, it was exceptional. Not only did she care for him that day, but also the next morning when she came back to help us through the most difficult time in our lives.

We are a large, loving family of three children and spouses, with fourteen grandchildren, our extended family, and myself. We will always treasure those hours that Eileen gave us. She was able to give us comfort, privacy, and closure by arranging a room in ICU. This allowed our loved one to pass with dignity to his eternal reward and home.

We could never thank and praise Eileen enough for all she did. It was over and above her duty as a nurse. She ran the extra mile for us so we could spend that precious time together.

Please let Eileen know we are holding her and her loved ones in our hearts.

Fondly,  
The Parsons Clan

## Deputy Commissioner Talks About Ending HIV and AIDS in New York City



*(From left to right) Dr. Jay Nfonoyim, RUMC's vice chair of internal medicine, program director, and chief of critical care; and NYC DOHMH deputy commissioner, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis.*

On February 11, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Deputy Commissioner Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH, spoke to over 100 physicians, nurses, and staff about the city's aggressive efforts to end the epidemic of HIV.

As deputy commissioner, Dr. Daskalakis is the head of HIV/AIDS prevention and

all infectious disease programs for New York City. He has been a career-long physician activist in the area of HIV treatment and prevention, with a focus on LGBTQ communities.

Dr. Daskalakis discussed the primary objectives the city has developed including increasing access to HIV prevention services, including pre-

exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) & post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP); promoting innovative, optimal treatment for all New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS; enhancing methods for tracing HIV transmission and identifying outbreaks; and improving sexual health equity for all New Yorkers through targeted outreach to priority populations.

## Triple Certification for George Abdelsayed, MD



Richmond University Medical Center's physician advisor and medical director of utilization review and management, George Abdelsayed, MD, recently became triple board certified by the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians (ABQAURP). He has now achieved certification in Healthcare and Quality Management (CHCQM) and in the sub-specialties of Patient Safety/ Risk

Management and Physician Advisor. Dr. Abdelsayed has over 30 years of patient care experience. His specialties include gastroenterology, hepatology, liver disease, and internal medicine. Dr. Abdelsayed graduated from New York Medical College in 1983.



## RUMC Co-Sponsors Inaugural Mentoring Event for Young Women



*Katherine Connors speaking with one of the many young attendees about planning future career choices.*



*Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD, was one of over 40 mentors on hand to help young women at the Staten Island Advance's inaugural Mentoring Monday event.*

On February 24, over 100 women attended the Staten Island Advance's Mentoring Monday, co-sponsored by Richmond University Medical Center. The inaugural event was held to link

young women from across Staten Island with successful women in leadership positions in a variety of fields. The attendees from local high schools had opportunities to speak with mentors

in a one-on-one setting and in group settings. Among the mentors were RUMC trustees Katherine Connors and Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD.

## 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**



## February New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Carol Brown, *RN*  
Radhames Dominguez, *Security Guard*  
Eric Gutzeit, *Intern*  
Aya-Fatima N'Guessan, *Clerk*

Frank Rubino, *Manager*  
Jake Sadowski, *Security Guard*  
Beatriz Velez, *Admin Asst*

## Honorees of the Month



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

**Volunteer of the Month:**  
Dorothy Czajkowski, *Pharmacy Department*

**Employee of the Month:**  
Sarina Libomati (pictured) and Keisha Daniells-Murrell, *Department of Medicine*

## RUMC Unveils Heart Center Kiosk at SI Mall

Now people visiting the Staten Island Mall can have free health risk assessments done, thanks to a new state-of-the-art kiosk located on the upper level of the mall, near Macy's. The new Heart Center kiosk allows people to have their blood pressure taken as well as receive a body mass index, or BMI, report right on the spot.

People can also provide their email information through the kiosk's touchscreen to receive free health

assessments on their mobile devices to determine their risk for heart attack, stroke, lung cancer, breast cancer, colon cancer, and diabetes. After completing the assessments, information is provided for the person to follow up with Richmond University Medical Center to further discuss their findings and schedule appointments. In addition, the appropriate department will also email the individual directly in case they have questions and to help them schedule appointments if

necessary. All information is protected, not shared outside the hospital, and is fully HIPPA-compliant. The kiosk went on line in early February and has been used more than 500 times since going live. Rotating digital ads inform people of the different health risk assessments available at the kiosk.



## Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center Keeps Hearts Beating Long and Strong



*Kristine Delgado, administrative director of rehabilitation.*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that Staten Island has some of the highest rates of heart disease in all five boroughs of New York City. That fact has not gone unnoticed—or unaddressed—by Richmond University Medical Center.

Since opening its Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center in 2018, Richmond University Medical Center has been providing community members with easy access to services that are transforming lives every day. The state-of-the-art facility, which is funded through support from the office of Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, is conveniently located on hospital grounds at 288 Kissel Ave.

“Through our Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, we’re helping patients increase their activity level; build strength, energy, and endurance; address tobacco cessation and/or other behavioral health issues; improve their diet; and otherwise prudently manage a heart disease diagnosis,” explained Kristine Delgado, administrative director of rehabilitation. “Our program is about helping to improve outcomes, prevent hospitalization, and enhance quality of life.”

Delgado added that the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center’s services are made available to people with a qualifying diagnosis. “Eligible patients include those with heart failure or coronary artery disease (CAD), or anyone who has had a heart attack, cardiac stents implanted, a heart transplant, or a valve replacement,” she said.

At the center, physicians, nurses, and other staff members take a comprehensive approach to evaluating, monitoring, and treating patients. Once patients have been discharged from the hospital following cardiac-related treatment, “they meet with one of our nurses, who discusses the program with them and handles any paperwork,” Delgado said. “Patients then see a cardiologist for a consult and, if they’re good to proceed, they can start the program right away.”

Because exercise is critical to their rehabilitation, the patient’s completion of 36 one-hour cardiac rehab sessions in the facility’s expansive workout area is central to the program. “The workout area looks like a gym, but patients who have had a cardiac event often are fearful of walking into a gym alone and being at risk, so we ensure that nurses monitor their activity on telemetry machines through several phases,” Delgado explained.

Stephanie Donnellan, RN, coordinator at the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, noted that the center has been designed to enhance patient success in many other ways as well. “We have a broad range of equipment, including four NuStep® machines, one elliptical machine, two stationary bikes, four treadmills, a modified recumbent elliptical machine, a rower machine, and free weights,” Donnellan said. “All sessions are conducted in groups of up to 12 to 15 patients, which avoids overcrowding and time spent waiting for machines while also promoting socialization, friendship, and support among group members.”

Programs are also personalized for each patient. They will be prescribed different

exercises based on their fitness/activity level, diagnosis, etc., Donnellan explained, noting that a patient’s successful completion of 36 monitored sessions enables them to progress to an additional 36 sessions off the monitor.

In addition to cardiac rehab, patients of the center benefit from other services offered by the hospital. “We refer all smokers to the hospital’s tobacco cessation program, arrange for patients to work with the hospital’s outpatient nutrition services to address their dietary needs, and can refer them to one of our behavioral health specialists if they’re flagged for any of the psychological or emotional issues that often accompany a heart disease diagnosis, such as depression or sleep problems,” Donnellan said. “We can connect them to our physical, occupational, or speech therapists if any kind of limitation or pain is preventing them from progressing through their rehab program and we also have immediate access to our experienced network of cardiologists, pulmonologists, and primary care physicians.”

As a result, “Hundreds of patients have come through our program since it launched and have made tremendous progress, whether it’s getting off of oxygen, exercising on their own, being able to play with their grandkids, returning to work, losing weight, or better controlling their blood pressure,” Delgado said.

“It’s so gratifying to see the progress patients make through their own hard work and discipline,” Donnellan agreed, “Our patients do all the work. We’re just their champions and cheerleaders.”

Richmond University Medical Center’s Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center is located at 288 Kissel Ave. (behind the main hospital building) and can be reached at 718-818-2515 or by visiting [www.rumcsi.org/cardiocrehab](http://www.rumcsi.org/cardiocrehab).

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



## New ED Work Resumes, Parking Lot Construction Progresses



Work has resumed on the hospital's new 35,000 square foot emergency department. When completed in late 2021, the emergency department will feature private treatment rooms and observation areas for pediatrics and intensive care. Over 60,000 people a year are treated in the emergency department, which was designed for far fewer patients annually.

The larger, more modern emergency department will enable Richmond University Medical Center to continue saving lives for generations to come.

Work also progresses on the hospital's new parking lot, located in the rear of the campus. When completed in early spring of this year, over 200 new

parking spaces will be available for hospital employees, easing the need for staff to utilize the on-street parking around the hospital.

