

## Richmond University Medical Center Opens Post COVID-19 Care Center



*Keith Diaz, MD, director of RUMC's lung screening program, explaining the multiple services available at the center to assist recovering COVID-19 patients with their short-term and long-term healthcare needs.*

Last month, Richmond University Medical Center announced the opening of its comprehensive Post COVID-19 Care Center, which features a team of multi-disciplinary experts focused on assisting recovering COVID-19 patients with their short-term and long-term healthcare needs.

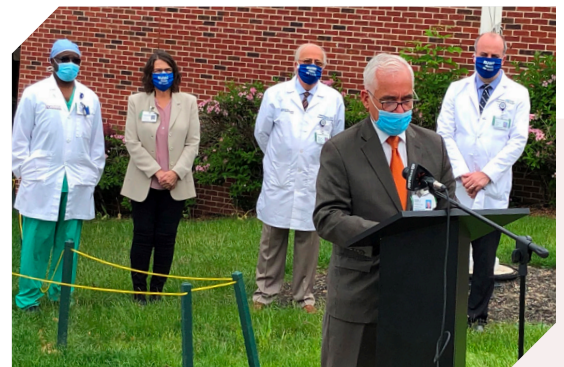
"Since March 14, when our hospital treated its first COVID-19 positive patient, our doctors, nurses and medical professionals have been working 24/7 treating COVID-19 patients and saving lives," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "But our care for these patients does not end with their discharge. Recovering patients face many challenges both physically and mentally including cardiac and pulmonary issues, anxiety, depression, and loss of stamina, to name just a few."

The Post COVID-19 Care Center, or PCC Center, features experts in pulmonary care, cardiology, infectious disease, psychiatry, behavioral health, physiatry, and additional areas of healthcare. A specific pediatric program involving similar sub-specialists is also available for children recovering from COVID-19 and Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C). Patients do not need to have been previously treated at RUMC to access the center's services.

"We have developed a process so that COVID-19 patients can easily be referred to the center," Keith Diaz, MD, director of RUMC's

lung screening program, said. "The referral can come from a primary care physician, upon discharge from a hospital, or from an ambulatory clinic."

During the initial visit, patients will receive a comprehensive evaluation by a center physician. This may include a physical, EKG, blood work, pulmonary function screening, and a radiology exam. Patients will also receive a screening for depression and anxiety, which is often a hidden side effect for COVID-19 patients. The patient may require additional testing such as a sleep study or swallowing evaluation and additional examinations by other subspecialists. Once all the information is obtained, the multidisciplinary team collaborates to ...*(continue on next page)*



*President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, announcing the opening of the Post COVID-19 Care Center located at 288 Kissel Avenue, behind the main hospital.*

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



Summer is here and while it will no doubt have a different feel to it, the warm weather is still welcome and coincides with the continued re-opening of our city. Please remember to be mindful of others and observe the CDC and New York State guidelines for social distancing, mask wearing, washing hands, and self-monitoring.

In this edition of the Chronicle, you will learn that while in the midst of our COVID-19 response, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) re-certified Richmond University Medical Center as a Level I Adult Trauma Center, effective immediately.

The official notice came from the ACS and NYS DOH in April. The hospital was temporarily designated as a Level-II Adult Trauma Center since October of last year. While we satisfied all direct patient care criteria required for Level I status, ACS and NYS DOH requested additional published research articles and activities, a distinction between Level I and Level II. We provided the requested research to both ACS and NYS DOH in March of this year, a full four months ahead of the deadline.

With regards to construction, we remain full speed ahead on our expansion projects! Our new state-of-the-art 35,000 square foot emergency department progresses and we will be cutting a ribbon in early 2021. The same can be said for our Co-Gen power plant,

which will be finished in 2021 as well and situated in our former laundry location next to the facilities building. You can also now see paving, trees, shrubs and medians throughout what will be our new parking lot with 200 plus spaces behind the facilities building. We also have some unfolding news with regards to window replacements in the hospital. More details to follow in the next edition of the Chronicle. Onwards and upwards!

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

Sincerely,

## Rep. Rose, DA McMahon, TASC Donate PPE to Richmond University Medical Center



*RUMC President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, accepts donation of PPE from members of the Turkish American Steering Committee while Rep. Max Rose looks on.*

On June 19, Rep. Max Rose was joined by Assembly Member Charles Fall, representatives from Staten Island District Attorney Michael McMahon's office and members of the Turkish American Steering Committee (TASC) to donate food and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to Richmond University Medical Center.

"Our primary service area, the north shore of Staten Island, has the second highest hospitalization rate in New York City per 100,000 people, second only to communities in The Bronx," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "While we are definitely on the other side of the COVID-19 mountain and the number of hospitalizations has dropped to a fraction of what we saw in early April, the virus is still out there. This PPE will protect our healthcare workers who continue to save lives every day."

The PPE donation included CDC-compliant gowns and masks from the Congressman, Assembly Member, District Attorney, and TASC. TASC also donated food and distributed red and yellow roses to the RUMC staff as a token of their gratitude for the services provided to the public over the past few months of the pandemic.

"I've been in a war before," Rep. Rose said. "But I can't imagine what the men and women working in this hospital have been through these past few months."

## Continued from front page...

formulate a detailed report that is sent back to the referring physician to ensure that the primary care physician is kept updated on the recommended treatment plan and of the patient's progress towards their goal. Treatment plans may include pulmonary rehab, changes in medication, regularly scheduled follow-up visits, and additional services to assist in the patient's short-term and long-term recovery.

"As we start to see COVID-19 patients back in our offices for follow-up care, we are seeing side effects similar to those that countries around the world have seen," Francesco Rotatori, MD, chair of cardiology, said. "Cardiac complications are quite common. One of the goals of the center is to identify the cardiac deficiencies during the evaluation and provide each of these patients with the appropriate cardiac testing.

The PCC Center is located at 288 Kissel Avenue, inside the hospital's Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, behind the main hospital. For more information, call 718-818-1500.



# Richmond University Medical Center Reinstated As Level I Adult Trauma Center



*RUMC has been reinstated as a Level I Adult Trauma Center by New York State and the American College of Surgeons. The reinstatement comes as the hospital continues construction on a new ED slated to open in 2021.*

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) have reinstated Richmond University Medical Center as a Level I Adult Trauma Center, effective immediately. This designation confirms the hospital has the appropriately trained medical staff, trauma educators, nurses, equipment, and protocols in place to continue treating all adult patients in need of emergency care.

The official notice came from the ACS and NYS DOH in April while the hospital was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The hospital had been designated as a Level-II adult trauma center since October of last year. While the hospital satisfied all direct patient care criteria for Level I status, RUMC was requested by ACS and NYS DOH to provide additional published research articles and activities, a distinction between Level I and Level II. The requested documentation was provided to both ACS and NYS DOH in March of this year, a full four months

ahead of the deadline provided by the agencies.

Seven years ago, Richmond University Medical Center achieved Level I Adult Trauma and Pediatric Level II Trauma Center status, making it the first medical facility in New York City to achieve this dual designation. RUMC has consistently met or exceeded all criteria required for a Level II Pediatric Trauma Center and as a result that designation has never been changed by the ACS or NYS DOH.

"I want to thank the American College of Surgeons and the New York State Department of Health for expediting their review and agreeing that our hospital is fully equipped to handle all patients in need of immediate, emergency care," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "This re-certification assures the communities of Staten Island that the level of trauma care at Richmond University Medical

Center continues to be of the highest caliber. I would like to express my deep appreciation to everyone here at the hospital who worked together through a very complicated and detailed process while also ensuring we were prepared and ready to care for a high volume of COVID-19 patients desperately in need of our services."

To meet the increasing needs for the services provided by Richmond University Medical Center, the hospital is in the midst of constructing a new state-of-the-art 35,000 square foot emergency department. When completed in 2021, the new emergency department will provide private treatment rooms, trauma bays, and specialty areas for pediatrics and urgent care on the ground floor, with the second floor used for new operating rooms and critical care units. Built in 1978 to treat 15,000 people annually, the hospital's current emergency department treats over 60,000 patients every year.



## Pediatric Patient Discharged After Battle with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)

Staff at Richmond University Medical Center gave a warm sendoff to a 16-year-old patient from Staten Island after his battle with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C).

The patient was diagnosed with COVID-19 in early May and admitted to Richmond University Medical Center a week later when he developed symptoms of MIS-C. He was discharged less than a week later following treatment by a team of physicians, nurses, and clinical professionals led by Melissa Grageda, MD, chief medical director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and director of pediatric quality and performance improvement.

“Behind every successful discharge is a hard-working team of providers that makes this possible,” Dr. Grageda said. “The entire PICU team is extremely happy that our patient had a remarkable recovery and was discharged home to his family. Special thanks to our resident physicians Dr. Asaad and Dr. Garimella, and our PICU nurses Lauren and ToniAnne, who worked nonstop from the time the patient was admitted until he improved. Also, many thanks to the patient and his family for sharing their story, because everyone needs good news, especially during these prolonged, uncertain times.”

The patient was accompanied by his mother, father, brother and sister as he said good-bye to the hospital and staff.



## NYS Approves RUMC For Non-Essential Elective Outpatient Surgeries And Non-Urgent Procedures

Early last month, Richmond University Medical Center was approved by the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) to immediately resume scheduling of non-essential elective outpatient surgeries and non-urgent procedures at the hospital and throughout all of its outpatient facilities.

“I want to thank Governor Andrew Cuomo and Health Commissioner Howard Zucker for acting quickly on our request to resume elective surgeries and procedures, which we submitted in late April,” president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. “This allows us to resume services and procedures for the continued health and well-being of our community.”

The NYS DOH confirmed that Richmond University Medical Center met its criteria and requirements for healthcare facilities to resume non-essential elective outpatient

surgeries and non-urgent procedures. This includes appropriate staffing and adequate supplies of CDC-compliant PPE for all staff and patients from pre-op through discharge. Under the state’s requirements, RUMC will also test all patients receiving non-essential elective outpatient surgeries and non-urgent procedures for COVID-19. Patients must test negative for COVID-19 prior to any such surgery or procedure. The test must be administered

no more than three days prior to the surgery or procedure.





## Local Students Come Together to Donate Children's Masks for RUMC Clinic

Two Staten Island Technical High School alums have joined forces with their families to donate handmade masks to children being cared for at Richmond University Medical Center's pediatric ambulatory clinic, located at 800 Castleton Avenue. The "Masks For Minors" team creates the masks in all different sizes, colors, and patterns for kids two to six years of age.

"Given what we are learning, that small children are experiencing a multisystem inflammatory syndrome, similar to Kawasaki disease, that could be linked to COVID-19, every precaution must be taken to ensure their safety and protection," president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "Thank you to everyone with Masks for Minors for your efforts to protect our youngest patients."

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been numerous efforts to make face coverings for adults, but few have focused around masks for children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children two years of age and older wear masks or cloth face coverings when outside or in public.

Enter Dr. Sonya Bakshi, psychiatry resident at NYU Langone Medical Center, and Winnie Huang, strategy

advisor with the New York City Department of Education. The pair have been best friends since their days at Staten Island Technical High School, from where they graduated in 2010. Huang recruited her mom, Cindy He, a designer seamstress who wanted to lend her expertise in the battle against COVID-19 by crafting masks. She had been making adult masks for family and friends and was able to easily adapt the pattern for young children. Dr. Bakshi recruited her brothers, Michael and Steven Mantello, to fundraise and purchase kid-friendly fabrics for the masks. The brothers, who are both high school students, suggested choosing patterns and themes appealing to children which would increase the likelihood of them wearing the coverings outside. They also suggested making two different sizes: masks that fit children two to four years of age and also four to six years of age.

Within one week, Masks for Minors designed, fabricated, and delivered 100

masks to the clinic back in mid-May. RUMC's pediatric ambulatory clinic provides care for nearly 3,000 children from the community, many of whom are from underserved populations.

"Before we started giving out these child-size masks, many children were wearing the adult-size ones on their neck and plenty of others had none," Dr. Ana Mendez, director of the pediatric ambulatory clinic, said. "We at the clinic are thankful for this effort and the families we serve are pleased their children are better protected."



## SIBOR and SI Running Association Show Support for RUMC



To show their appreciation for Richmond University Medical Center's efforts to improve community health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, both the Staten Island Board of Realtors (SIBOR) and the Staten Island Running Association (SIRA) made separate

donations to support the hospital's operations. The donation of \$3,335 from SIBOR was made in honor of Richard H. Dun, whose son is an officer of SIBOR. Dun passed away earlier this year from COVID-19 complications. SIRA held a virtual run for its members which



raised \$1,750 for the hospital. Accepting the donation on behalf of RUMC was president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, and vice president of development, Laura Gajda.



# Post COVID-19 Care Center



**The most comprehensive  
care for your post  
COVID-19 conditions.**

**The PCC Center features a multi-disciplinary team of experts including:**

- ▶ Primary Care/Family Medicine Physicians
- ▶ Pulmonary Medicine
- ▶ Cardiac Care
- ▶ Psychiatry and Behavioral Health
- ▶ Infectious Disease
- ▶ Pediatrics
- ▶ Additional Specialists
- ▶ Physiatry

**IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE  
HAVE HAD COVID-19, PLEASE  
CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR  
FOR A REFERRAL.**



**718-818-1500**  
**[www.rumcsi.org/postcovidcare](http://www.rumcsi.org/postcovidcare)**

288 Kissel Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10310  
(behind the main hospital building)





*RUMC nursing administration with some of the visiting nurses from across the country who helped the hospital during the COVID-19 outbreak. As COVID-19 case numbers in Staten Island have declined, many will be returning home, some to states still experiencing spikes in cases.*

## RUMC Says Thank You to Nurses Who Came to Battle COVID-19

When Staten Island needed them most, they came. Nurses from all across the country, trained in all different specialties. They came in March and April at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic here in New York City. On June 26, Richmond University Medical Center expressed its thanks and unending gratitude to almost 80 of these nurses as they begin making plans to return home. The hospital held a “grab and go” breakfast early that morning as the nurses arrived for their shift at 7 AM or left after completing their overnight duties. As cases of COVID-19 decline across New York City, many of the nurses will be leaving shortly after

the July 4th holiday, while others will remain into August.

“Many of them will be leaving us shortly to return home, many to states that are seeing spikes of COVID-19 that rival what we faced just a few short weeks ago,” president and chief executive officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. “I am hopeful that these men and women who came when we needed them most remain safe and can also take what they learned here, apply it in their own hospitals, and save lives.”

The nurses were assigned to RUMC by New York City to provide support during

the height of the pandemic. In addition to providing weeks of support in the emergency department and Intensive Care Units, the nurses were also assigned to various other departments. For some of the nurses, RUMC was only one of the hospitals they worked in during their time in New York City.

“They came to us at a critical time,” chief nurse officer and chief operating officer, Rosemarie Stazzone, RN, MS, CNE, said. “Their professionalism and enthusiasm to be a part of our RUMC team was truly a bright spot during one of the most difficult and challenging times on our hospital’s history.”

## COVID-19 Patient Discharged After Over 40 Days On Ventilator

On June 16, Staten Islander Brian Volpini, 51, was discharged after recovering from COVID-19. Admitted on April 20, Volpini spent over 40 days on a ventilator to help him breathe while his body fought against the virus.

“Brian is one of those cases that shows why as doctors we never give up,” said Jay Nfonoyim, MD, and vice chair of medicine. “We just kept saying there will be a light at the end of Brian’s tunnel and we will not give up on him. When you see him finally going home it validates why we do what we do.”

Volpini was admitted by ambulance to Richmond University Medical Center on April 20 and placed almost immediately on a ventilator to assist his breathing. From the time he was admitted to his discharge on June 17, Volpini spent his entire admission in the hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ICU) under the direct care of Dr. Nfonoyim.

Volpini was discharged to a nearby rehabilitation center to continue his recovery. As Volpini left, staff from the ICU applauded and cheered their miracle patient, wishing him well on his continued recovery.



*Patient Brian Volpini with RUMC nurses Lisa Yeno, RN; and Rosalie Roccanova, RN.*

