

Hospital Opens First School-Based Health Center at Wagner High School



Staff and administration from Richmond University Medical Center and Susan E. Wagner High School officially cut the ribbon opening the new school-based medical center for students.

Richmond University Medical Center opened its first school-based health center at Susan E. Wagner High School on October 22. Hospital staff, school faculty, students, and community leaders were on hand to celebrate the new center located in the school building at 1200 Manor Road. Students will have immediate access to on-site, experienced medical professionals from the hospital to treat acute illnesses, manage chronic diseases, deliver emergency care, provide mental health counseling, and administer vaccines and screenings. Also on hand to celebrate the new center were hospital trustee Kathrine Connors, Staten Island Deputy Borough President Ed Burke, and representatives from the New York City Department of Health and Department of Education.

“School-based medical centers have become an important method for increasing direct health care services to young people,” chair of pediatrics, Brian McMahon, MD, said. “Over 2,000 centers, similar to ours, exist in 48 states. Our center will provide access to health care services for youth faced with financial, cultural, and geographic barriers to service.



Wagner High School Principal David Cugini thanked the hospital, city, and state agencies for collaborating to make the school's new medical center a reality.



Richmond University Medical Center chair of pediatrics, Brian McMahon, MD, talked about the importance of the center offering students both physical and behavioral health services in the same location.

From the President & CEO

Daniel J. Messina, Ph.D., FACHE



Every three years we are required to perform a community health needs assessment to identify priority medical needs in our community that can be improved through the vast array of health care services we provide. To determine these priority needs, a detailed process is conducted that takes over a year to complete.

It starts with a thorough review of federal, state, and city health data. This is followed by a survey of members of the community including health care providers and faith-based and local leaders focused on improving the health of their communities. Their input is added to the federal, state, and city data and then all of it is assessed internally to determine the most prevalent health care needs in our community and where our services can have the most effective impact. From

there, we develop goals, objectives, and interventions that are tracked over a three-year period.

We are finishing the community health needs assessment for 2019 through 2022, which has identified the highest priority health needs as preventing chronic diseases and preventing mental and substance use disorders. These are two areas we have already been addressing for the past few years through increased services and the expansion of our outpatient facilities.

One such area we will be focusing on is prevention of nicotine use, especially in young people. Staten Island has the largest percentage of high school age students in New York City who use nicotine products, are vaping, or are using JUUL. To combat this epidemic, we are increasing our nicotine prevention education programs that target high school students. These are efforts led by our certified lung nurse navigator Nancy Rooney.

We also lead the city in the percentage of adults who currently smoke, so we will continue to screen for tobacco use and initiate referrals for both our inpatient and outpatient populations, continue to offer free tobacco cessation programs, and continue to offer "The Conquerors" support group for past smokers who completed a cessation program.

Additionally we will be focusing on addressing nicotine use in our behavioral health clients. The rate of smoking in the behavioral health population is 40 percent, as opposed to 15 percent in the general population. The behavioral health population's average life span is also 25 years shorter than the general population and 50 percent of deaths are related to smoking. In light of this, programs and services at our Center for Integrative Behavioral Medicine at South Avenue will be expanded to ensure these patients have full access to our cessation resources.

Over the next few editions of the Chronicle I will share the additional focus areas determined by the community health needs assessment. It will take a full team effort to address these needs, but one that will have a lasting positive impact on our community's health for many years to come. Your commitment to patient experience and quality excellence is an essential driver of our success as an organization.

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

Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

Dear Dr. Messina,

In June of this year, my dad turned 67 years old. To celebrate, he bought himself an orange Subaru. When he came home with his brand new car, my family and I gasped in horror! Orange!

About a month later, I received a call from his office that he was unresponsive and that EMS was on the way. My daughters and I scrambled to his office on Castleton Avenue. I immediately saw that the left side of his face was drooping and he was unable to speak. The EMS activated the stroke code and he was on his way to RUMC within minutes. We were greeted by a team of nurses, doctors, residents, and students. They immediately diagnosed that he was having a stroke and initiated everything needed to treat him.

Every staff member who saw me and my girls comforted us as we imagined the worst. There was a large clot in my dad's brain and they needed to perform a thrombectomy. Dr. Perel and his team immediately took my dad into the operating room. As we waited, the nursing staff kept giving us updates. They were so patient and kind. Even the anesthesiologists came out and gave us updates. They were able to successfully remove the clot

as a whole. Dr. Perel came out and said my dad was talking again and was able to move all his extremities.

He was then transferred to SICU where the nurses and aides were wonderful. My dad was confused at times, but they were professional and patient with him. After a few days, he was discharged. He was told to rest for the next few months and was not allowed to drive. Each day he got stronger and stronger.

We were so fortunate to notice the changes in my dad so quickly and to have the RUMC team effortlessly work to save his life. They kept my family whole and my dad alive. They treated my dad and my family with so much love and empathy. I pray and thank God for the RUMC staff that saved my dad's life.

This summer was definitely a challenge for my entire family, but fortunately my dad is one hundred percent back to himself and he is finally able to drive his orange car again!

Nisha Philip-Crisano

National Organizations Recognize Cardiac, Breast Imaging Quality of Care



The Joint
Commission



American Heart
Association

CERTIFICATION

Meets standards for

Advanced Heart Failure
Certification

Richmond University Medical Center's Breast and Women's Center, located at 1161 Victory Boulevard, is now a facility accredited by the American College of Radiology (ACR) after earning the gold seal of accreditation for the center's comprehensive mammography, breast ultrasound, stereotactic biopsy, and ultrasound guided biopsy services. The gold seal, awarded in early October, represents the highest level of accreditation provided by the ACR for quality of care and patient safety.

The ACR gold seal of accreditation is awarded only to facilities meeting ACR practice parameters and technical standards. The Breast and Women's Center's imaging services underwent an in-depth ACR peer-review evaluation to receive accreditation. The evaluation was conducted by board certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in image quality, personnel qualifications, quality control procedures, and quality assurance programs. This is the first

ACR accreditation for the Breast and Women's Center.

According to the American Cancer Society, from 2011 to 2015, Staten Island has had the highest rate of new cancer cases in New York City. In Staten Island, female breast cancer accounts for 13.9 percent of all cancer cases on Staten Island and 6.9 percent of all cancer deaths.

Also in October, The Joint Commission, the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care, awarded gold seal recertification to Richmond University Medical Center for the high standard of care provided to patients experiencing chest pain or suffering heart failure.

Gold seal recertification is the highest awarded by the commission, which has now certified the chest pain and heart failure care services at the hospital four consecutive years. In partnership with the commission, the American Heart Association also awarded its

Heart Check Mark to the hospital for meeting its requirements in the same areas of care.

New York State has the 17th highest death rate from cardiovascular disease in the country. The Staten Island heart disease death rate is the highest in New York City. Heart disease is often a result of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. More than 25 percent of Staten Island adults report having high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol.

In the last 12 months, over 61,700 patients received care in Richmond University Medical Center's emergency department. Almost 10,000 patients were diagnosed with chest pain and over 540 were treated for heart failure. Chest pain was the most common reason reported for seeking medical attention at the hospital.

Senior Director, Ambulance & Security, Honored for Years of Service

Congratulations to Richmond University Medical Center Senior Director, Ambulance & Security, William Amaniera, who was honored by the Visiting Nurse Association with the Smith/Stamley award for his years of service to the community and health care field.



Hylan Blvd Immediate Care Earns Recognition for Patient Care

The Hylan Boulevard Immediate Care/Primary Care/Walk-In Center of Richmond Health Network has been named a New York State Patient-Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Under the direction of Paula Caputo, vice president, Ambulatory Health Network, the practice met over 70 criteria required to achieve this prestigious recognition in the categories of team-based care and organization, knowing and managing patients, performance measurement and quality improvement, patient-centered access and continuity, care management and support, care coordination, and care transitions.

The team members responsible for this recognition include Dr. Tara Farahvash, Dr. Peter Stathopoulos, Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, Brittany Langan, Director, ambulatory performance



Ashley Barbosa-Ruela, April Frost, Christopher Olaskiewicz, Brittany Langan, Paula Caputo, Maria Sutera, Dr. Tara Farahvash, and Karen Sanicola.

improvement; Karen Sanicola, senior physician practice manager; Maria Sutera, office manager; Christopher Olaskiewicz, clinical systems analyst; Ashley Barbosa-Ruela, clinical systems analyst, and all clinical and clerical staff at the center.

The Hylan Boulevard center is the latest

Richmond University Medical Center facility to earn recognition from the NCQA. In 2014 the Ambulatory Care Center at 800 Castleton Avenue was among the first facilities on Staten Island to achieve this recognition for its comprehensive pediatric and adult medical care practices.



Hospital Staff Wear Pink for Annual Making Strides

Staff from the hospital and the Breast and Women's Center wore pink on Sunday, October 20, for the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in South Beach. Over 10,000 people walked for breast cancer

awareness and to remember loved ones lost to the disease. In addition to providing information about mammograms and the importance of self-exams, board certified radiologists Michael Shamis, MD, DABR, and Dara

Fedele, MD, DABR, were on hand to provide consultations and assist people with making appointments at the Breast and Women's Center. Dr. Shamis was also the only physician invited to address the crowd.

RUMC Reps Participate in NAACOS Conference, Visit Capitol Hill

Each year the National Association of Accountable Care Organizations (NAACOS) sponsors a national conference bringing together ACOs from around the country. The conference includes presentations, sharing best practices, and the opportunity to engage representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that oversee the ACO program.

Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) are groups of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers who come together voluntarily to give coordinated high quality care to Medicare patients. The goal is to ensure that patients get the right care at the right time, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of services and preventing medical errors.

Richmond Quality ACO, LLC, is a hospital sponsored ACO covering almost 7,500 Medicare lives on Staten Island. Created in 2015 as a shared savings program, other partners in the ACO include over a dozen primary care physicians both employed and voluntary. Since 2015, Richmond Quality ACO has been a leader in



(l-r): Richard J. Salhany, MBA, FACHE; Jasmin Danso, MS, LSSMBB; Marianne La Barbera, MD; and Clif Gaus, president and chief executive officer of the National Association of ACOs (NAACOS).

outperforming other ACOs in New York State. Its annual quality score has ranked in fifth and sixth place and each year it has demonstrated savings to core business; it received shared savings in the first three of the four years.

This year the Richmond Quality ACO leadership was part of the national team that met on Capitol Hill with members of Congress and their staff to provide input into government policy on ACOs. Richard J. Salhany, MBA, FACHE, president of the Richmond University

Health Network and ACO executive director, along with Jasmin Danso, MS, LSSMBB, director of Richmond Quality ACO and Ambulatory Population Health, discussed the ACO Improvement Act of 2019. The Act highlights opportunities for CMS to encourage more national participation in ACO initiatives and remove barriers to current participants. Also in attendance was Marianne La Barbera, MD, chair of the Richmond Quality ACO and president of the hospital medical staff.

RUMC Co-Sponsors 2019 Health and Wellness Expo



Providing diabetes self-assessments at the expo were Crocifissa Giordano and Vincenza Pearl.

Richmond University Medical Center was one of the co-sponsors of the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation's 11th annual health and wellness expo held on October 3 at the Hilton Garden Inn. Staff from the

hospital provided information on how to detect a stroke and perform a breast self-exam, and provided assessment checklists for diabetes. Medical staff also performed over 100 screenings including those for blood pressure, prostate cancer, lung capacity, and ankle brachial index. Presentations on healthy eating and the dangers of nicotine were provided by Maria Falzone, MS, RD, CDN, and our lung nurse navigator Nancy Rooney, RN, CTTS. Representing the hospital on this year's careers in health care panel was patient experience director, Andrew Burt, MBA, CPXP. Douglas Cohen, MD, was chosen by the hospital as its 2019 Community Health Hero in recognition of his over 20 years of service to the community in the field of neurological surgery.



Douglas Cohen, MD, is presented with the 2019 Community Health Hero award by president and CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.

October New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Daniel Ameneiros, *Building Service Worker*

Christina Bondonese, *MRI Tech*

Michael Brent, *Registrar*

Tetasha Bryant, *Nursing Assistant*

Pilar Brzyski, *Building Service Worker*

Maudi Bulgin, *Nursing Assistant*

Tara DeMarco, *Manager*

Laurie Eyles, *RN*

Julie Filippini, *Manager*

Kim Fitzpatrick, *Teacher*

Maria Guerrero, *Staff Accountant*

Jennifer Jackson, *Controller*

Lynn Kunath, *Clinical Resource Manager*

Toniann Lamirata, *RN*

Laura Lubrano, *Social Worker*

Dominique Maggi, *Registrar*

Eileen Martino, *Switchboard Operator*

Nicole Napoli, *RN*

Denise Nizzare, *Program Coordinator*

Andy Nunez, *Desktop Analyst*

Ashley Parsons, *Clerk*

Taylor Rivera, *Ultrasound Tech*

Marilyn Ruiz, *Medical Assistant*

Joseph Spitalieri, *RN*

Amanda Schettini Sr, *Clinical System Analyst*

Craig Roberts, Sr., *PA*

Sevinj Suleiman, *Food Service Worker*

Portia Velez, *Nursing Assistant*

Kristy Wolfson, *RN*

Olga Zverdina, *RN*

TJC Readiness Refrigerators

Now that we have reviewed our refrigerator logs, ensured that they are up to date, and have filed the old logs away, let's continue to focus on the refrigerators.

Take a look inside:

- ▶ Check items for expiration dates and labels
- ▶ Ensure patient-specific items are labeled
- ▶ Ensure cleanliness and schedule for defrosting if needed

Remember, individual personal refrigerators in an office do not require a temperature log, however, a refrigerator that is in a staff lounge that serves many does.



RUMC Gamblers Treatment Program: A Beacon Of Hope For Thousands

Staten Island resident Bob F. recalls the positive associations he made with gambling even as a kid. "My father and uncle were gamblers and I remember wanting to be like them; the way they looked and acted and the action surrounding them was cool to me," said Bob, 61. "That impression stayed with me and gambling seemed like the thing to do growing up in Brooklyn."

By the time Bob turned 21, the "harmless" games of cards and dice he had played with childhood friends in the neighborhood gave way to more formal sports betting through bookies. He soon found himself obsessed with gambling, stealing money from family members, maxing out multiple credit cards, seeking out phone booths everywhere so he could place bets, thinking about gambling 24/7, and lying to those around him to minimize or cover up his actions.

"Though I worked on Wall Street and made good money, I didn't have two nickels to rub together," said Bob, who estimates that he gambled as much as \$50,000 a year at the height of his addiction during his 30s and 40s. Though the addiction cost him his first girlfriend, a job, and his financial solvency — facing over \$90,000 of debts, he declared bankruptcy in 1992 — he continued his destructive behavior.

"Gambling made me feel big and less insecure," he shared. "It allowed me to run away from reality and forget about all responsibilities. I loved gambling more than anything — the action, the risk, and the belief that I was special and could do this. Gambling was my drug."

It's a story that Beth Schwartz, program manager for the Gamblers Treatment Program at Richmond University Medical Center, has witnessed many times.

"The fact is, through a growing number of casinos, scratch-offs, and online betting venues, the opportunity to gamble has become easier and more

prevalent than ever, especially with our area's proximity to Atlantic City and newly legalized sports betting in New Jersey," Schwartz said.

As a result, the statistics on gambling and its repercussions are alarming. Among them:

- According to a recent Gallup poll, nearly two-thirds of Americans admit that they have gambled in the last year, whether via a state lottery ticket, a casino, an office pool, or a professional sporting event.
- U.S. consumers rack up over \$100 billion a year in total gambling losses.
- The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) and other sources estimate that roughly six million adults and a half a million teens meet the criteria for gambling addiction, defined as persistent and recurring problematic gambling behavior that causes distress and impairs one's overall livelihood.
- Studies show that male gambling addicts rack up average debt of \$55,000 to \$90,000 and females accumulate average debt of \$15,000.

Launched in 1982 as one of three founding outpatient gambling treatment programs in New York State, the Gamblers Treatment Program at Richmond University Medical Center uses a range of cognitive and behavioral therapies to help free problem gamblers from the throes of their addiction and support them in their pursuit of a happier and healthier life.

Following a thorough intake and assessment process, "We offer prevention and education and work to understand the circumstances that precipitated their gambling in the first place," Schwartz said. "We meet with individuals and/or family members in one-on-one sessions and also meet periodically in group settings to help the

individuals understand and manage their situation. We also have a psychiatrist on staff should medication be necessary, as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and/or substance use disorder often co-exist with a gambling disorder."

"There are currently over 50 people in our Gamblers Treatment Program and thousands have come through the program since it started," shared Schwartz, who encourages clients' participation in the hospital's program in conjunction with participation in 12-step Gamblers Anonymous (GA).

Bob is one of them. Since starting with GA in 2000 and Richmond University Medical Center's Gamblers Treatment Program in 2006, which he currently attends once a week, "We talk about everything — life, relationships, etc. — because it's all tied into gambling, and I've learned how to stay away from gambling and avoid triggers," Bob said. "I'm comfortable in my mind and not obsessed anymore; I can sleep and financially I'm in good shape. I'm free now and nothing's controlling me anymore."

Bob credits both the program's personalized format and the sincere support of his therapists with much of his recovery. "You need that one-on-one interface to be honest with yourself, do the work, and get deep-rooted in what caused you to gamble in the first place," he said. "I came to the Gamblers Treatment Program because I was sick and tired of being sick and tired and didn't want to hurt myself and others around me anymore."

Richmond University Medical Center's Gamblers Treatment Program is located in the Center for Integrative Behavioral Medicine at 1130 South Avenue and can be reached at 718-876-1285 or by visiting www.rumcsi.org/psychiatric.

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



RUMC's 13th Annual Gala Honors Ron and Gail Purpura, Remembers Allan Weissglass



The family of trustee Allan Weissglass who passed away earlier this year were presented with a memorial plaque in tribute to his dedication to the hospital.



In keeping with the theme of the event "An Evening with the Royals" the Queen paid a visit to the gala.

Over 200 supporters of Richmond University Medical Center spent an "Evening with the Royals" on Saturday, November 2, when the hospital held its 13th annual Gala Reception at the Hilton Garden Inn. Complete with British-themed fare and members of the Queen's Guard, guests were transported "across the pond" without leaving Staten Island.

This year's honorees were Ronald A. Purpura and his wife Gail. Purpura,

vice chairman of Richmond University Medical Center's board of trustees, is also the managing partner and chairman of Hartfield Titus & Donnelly, a fixed income securities broker/dealer. He is also chairman of Town Square Holdings, a Jersey City-based firm with branch offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, and Hoboken, NJ. Ron has been married to his wife Gail for 40 years. Gail is a native

Staten Islander born in Eltingville. They have two children and seven grandchildren.

There was also a special tribute to late board of trustee and former board chair Allan Weissglass, who passed away earlier this year. Born at the hospital, Weissglass would continue a 40-year relationship with the medical center supporting its growth and services to the borough.



Gala co-chairs Len Rampulla and Allison Cohen.



This year's honorees Ronald and Gail Purpura (right).

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to the following individuals, selected as the Employees of the Month for October 2019:



Nancy Marudo,
Community Health Worker, DSRIP



Lisa Yeno, RN, MICU