

# CARE

SUMMER 2018 • RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER • [WWW.RUMCSI.ORG](http://WWW.RUMCSI.ORG)



## CENTER FOR CANCER CARE OPENS ON SOUTH AVENUE

A True Cancer Team Now Under One Roof

## PATIENT SUCCESS STORIES

What Our Patients Say About Their Care

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

# A Message From the President & CEO



The recent opening of our Center for Cancer Care on South Avenue is a long-term project that has now become a reality. This conveniently located mid-Island facility at 1000 South Avenue unifies Richmond University Medical Center's Cancer Services, providing on-site diagnostic services with a PET-CT scanner, radiation treatment with a linear accelerator, and the office location of our team of medical and radiation oncologists, as well as lung screening, and tobacco cessation programs.

In this issue, we feature stories of our patients who have been successfully treated for cancer. Recently, the subject of cancer has been making headlines on Staten Island. According to recent findings from the New York State Department of Health, Staten Island has had the highest overall cancer rate in New York City from 2011 to 2015. Cases of thyroid cancer on Staten Island are 67 percent higher than the state average,

making our county the highest in New York State for this form of cancer. Staten Island is one of four counties in the state that is currently the focus of a comprehensive study being conducted at the request of Governor Cuomo to examine cancer trends and potential causes. The Department of Health is expected to conclude the study and announce their findings and recommendations by the end of this year, which we will be eager to review.

Also on the front of battling cancer, I am excited to announce the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer has awarded Three-Year Accreditation with 5 commendations to our cancer program. Since 1937, RUMC's cancer program has held the approval of the Commission, one of the most prestigious national accreditations in the field of cancer. This latest accreditation marks 81 consecutive years of approval from the Commission for RUMC. We salute our cancer care team for their compassionate and effective treatment and support from cancer diagnosis to monitoring long-term follow-up for these patients. Congratulations team!

Finally, we'd like to express our heartfelt appreciation for all Northfield Bank Foundation has done to help Richmond University Medical Center. From supporting our new emergency department campaign to ongoing annual support for the unit, we thank Northfield Bank Foundation for all of their generosity.

Wishing you a healthy and safe summer.

Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, LNHA  
President & Chief Executive Officer

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Medical Center is a not-for-profit healthcare provider serving the diverse community of Staten Island and its neighbors. We provide quality patient-centered care through a full spectrum of emergent, acute, primary, behavioral health and medical services. We do this in an environment that promotes the highest satisfaction among patients, families, physicians and staff.

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## EDITORIAL

Alex Lutz, Laura Gajda and Claire Regan

Richmond University Medical Center is an academic and clinical affiliate of Mount Sinai Hospital and has an integrated surgical program with SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

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The information contained within this magazine is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, for which your physician is your best choice.

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## **NORTHFIELD BANK FOUNDATION SUPPORTS RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER'S BIGGEST PROJECT**

A \$62.5 million project to build a bigger, better emergency room at Richmond University Medical Center is proceeding thanks to a \$250,000 pledge from Northfield Bank Foundation.

The 35,000-square-foot facility will serve twice as many patients as the current Emergency Department (ED) and include a trauma bay that fits the hospital's status as a Level 1 Trauma Center. With private treatment rooms, a new surgical department, better ambulance access and flood-and-storm-resistant architecture will meet the growing needs of Staten Island.

"I can't think of a needier cause than a new ED at Richmond University Medical Center," said Diane Senerchia, the foundation's executive director and secretary. Of the quarter-million-dollar pledge, \$150,000 has already been given, she added.

Ground was broken for the new Emergency Department, which will be named after former borough president and hospital board member James P. Molinaro, in September 2016.

Northfield Bank Foundation has been a

steady supporter of the hospital, securing grants that supplied crash carts in the emergency room and intravenous needles for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Its 10<sup>th</sup> annual Charity Golf Classic in May netted \$30,000 for the hospital.

The foundation's mission is to promote charitable purposes within the community, with a focus on projects that support education, health and human services, youth programs and affordable housing and improve the quality of life for borough residents.





# CENTER FOR CANCER CARE OPENS ON SOUTH AVENUE

STATE-OF-THE-ART TREATMENT IN A COMFORTING ENVIRONMENT

## Richmond University Medical Center Center for Cancer Care

Richmond University Medical Center has ushered in a new era for Staten Island with the opening of the Center for Cancer Care in Bloomfield.

“The journey has been long, but they never gave up,” said hospital board chairperson Kathryn Krause Rooney, praising the efforts of staff and supporters at a June 7 ribbon-cutting ceremony. “This is a beautiful place and an excellent location to provide quality service to the people of Staten Island.”

At the state-of-the-art facility at 1000 South Avenue, cancer care professionals will work to develop comprehensive care plans and preventive initiatives and provide radiation therapy treatments. A PET-CT scanner for diagnoses and a



The Center for Cancer Care medical team includes, from left, Thomas J. Forlenza, MD; Hoon Lee, MD; Marc T. Adams, MD, and Maxim Shulimovich, DO.

linear accelerator for treatment are on site.

The center will also be used to train residents and hematology-oncology fellows in the most up-to-date cancer care methods. And it will be home to Richmond University Medical Center's lung screening and tobacco cessation programs, praised for early detection.

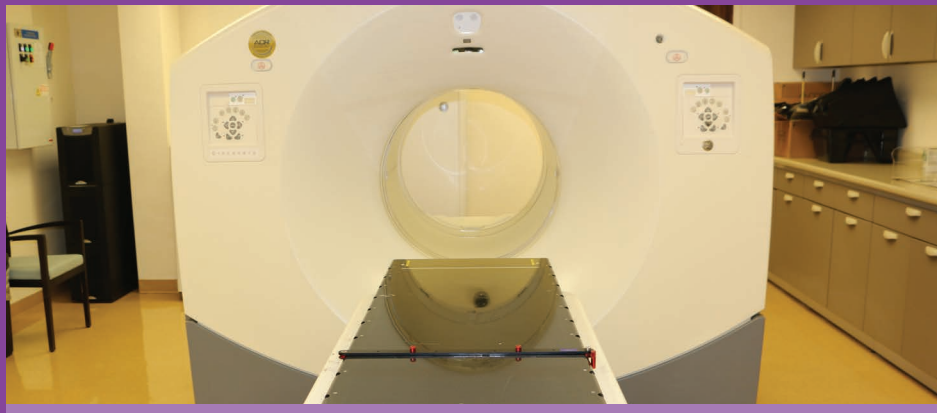
Richard Salhany, senior vice president of strategic planning and medical operations, cited statistics that support an urgent need for the Center for Cancer Care.

"According to the American Cancer Society, in 2018 there will be 1.7 million new cases of cancer nation-wide with 610,000 new deaths from cancer," he said. "The evidence points to Staten Island cancer levels far exceeding New York City and some national levels at alarming rates," Salhany added.

The Center for Cancer Care medical team includes Thomas J. Forlenza, MD, director of oncology; Marc T. Adams, MD, director of radiation oncology; Hoon Lee MD, radiation oncologist, and Maxim Shulimovich, DO, chief hematologist-oncologist.

"We are now a true cancer team with an integrated system under one roof," noted Dr. Adams.

"This center was five years in the making," said Dr. Forlenza, acknowledging the



efforts of Dan Messina, the hospital's president and chief executive officer, and his executive staff. "This was Dan's vision, to see a separate cancer center." A lifelong Staten Islander who has been a member of the Richmond University Medical Center staff for 35 years, Dr. Forlenza believes the bucolic location of the Center for Cancer Care will benefit patients therapeutically.

"We are surrounded by trees, which creates a healing environment," he observed. "We offer state-of-the-art care in a homey, comforting environment."

Dr. Lee agreed. "There is a lot of natural light. It's a tranquil setting, an open atmosphere." "This is an amazing opportunity to bring cutting-edge treatment to Staten Islanders," added Dr. Shulimovich, who is joining the Richmond University Medical Center team from Maimonides

Medical Center in Brooklyn as a specialist in immunotherapy, chemotherapy and targeted therapy. "I'm looking forward to being a part of this growing practice."

The Center for Cancer Care team includes medical assistants Crystal Nicosia and Wilda Fatigati, office manager Edith Stern and receptionist Ella Consiglio, who together help patients feel comfortable with compassion and courtesy.

Lois and Richard Nicotra, owners of the building at 1000 South Avenue and developers of the South Avenue business district, were on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Center for Cancer Care "helps us realize our dream of the medical mile," Nicotra said.

**Medical Oncology, Dr. Forlenza,  
and Dr. Shulimovich — 718-816-4949**

**Radiation Therapy, Dr. Adams  
and Dr. Lee — 718-370-2100**



"This is an amazing opportunity to bring cutting-edge treatment to Staten Islanders."

– Dr. Maxim Shulimovich,  
chief hematologist-  
oncologist





# PET and LINAC

## equipment offers cancer patients the highest standard of care

It takes a strong medical team and state-of-the-art equipment to diagnose and treat cancer. Richmond University Medical Center offers both under one roof, at its new Center for Cancer Care at 1000 South Avenue in Bloomfield.

The center provides positron emission tomography (PET) scans for accurate diagnoses and a linear accelerator (LINAC) that facilitates customized treatment of a tumor.

The PET scan uses radioactive tracers that are swallowed, inhaled or injected, depending on which part of the body is being examined. Organs and tissues then absorb the tracers.

When highlighted under a PET scanner, the tracers help your doctor to see how well your organs and tissues are working. The tracers collect in areas of higher chemical activity, which is helpful because a higher level of chemical activity is commonly associated with disease.

Cancer cells, which have a higher metabolic rate than noncancerous cells, show up as bright spots on PET scans.

Typically an outpatient procedure, a PET scan can measure blood flow, oxygen intake, how your body uses sugar and much more. It reveals problems at the cellular level, giving your doctor the best view of complex systemic diseases.

About 2 million PET scans are performed in the U.S. each year.

### A PET SCAN IS ALSO HELPFUL FOR:

- ▶ Seeing if the cancer has spread
- ▶ Seeing if a cancer treatment is working
- ▶ Checking for a cancer recurrence

A linear accelerator (LINAC) customizes high energy x-rays or electrons to conform to a tumor's shape and destroy cancer cells while sparing surrounding normal tissue.

It features several built-in safety measures to ensure that it will not deliver a higher dose than prescribed and is routinely checked by a medical physicist to ensure it is working properly.

If you're scheduled for radiation therapy using a LINAC, your radiation oncologist will collaborate with a radiation dosimetrist and a medical physicist to develop a treatment plan.

Your doctor will double-check this plan before treatment begins and implement quality assurance procedures so that each treatment is delivered consistently.

As an additional treatment option, physicians at the Center for Cancer Care evaluate patients for clinical trials, which test new therapies for varying stages of the disease. Cases are reviewed weekly to determine eligibility.

Clinical trials of new treatments can be beneficial for certain situations on a case-by-case basis, especially if conventional treatments have failed, explains Marc T. Adams, MD, director of radiation oncology for Richmond University Medical Center.

The trials help determine new ways to treat cancer, find and diagnose cancer, prevent cancer and improve the quality of life for patients during and after treatment.

*115 years later...*

# RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER CONTINUES ITS TRADITION OF HIGH-QUALITY CARE.



**FOR OVER A CENTURY...QUALITY, PATIENT SAFETY, AND CARING FOR THE RESIDENTS  
OF STATEN ISLAND HAS BEEN OUR MISSION AND PROMISE TO THE COMMUNITY.**

From emergency services and trauma to neurosurgery and general surgery, to oncology, orthopedics, primary care, and more — our commitment is to treat one patient at a time, and to treat each patient like family.

To make an appointment with a Richmond University Medical Center physician, contact our Physician Finder today at **844.834.CARE**.

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

[www.rumcsi.org](http://www.rumcsi.org)



## PATIENT STORIES



### LINDA ORTIZ

**Y**ou could say three-time survivor Linda Ortiz knows the drill when it comes to cancer treatment.

Now 70, the West Brighton resident experienced two diagnoses of breast cancer earlier in her life – the first 30 years ago and the second 10 years later – that resulted in a double mastectomy.

A smoker since her teen years when she would sneak cigarettes from her father, Linda decided to call it quits after several bouts of pneumonia and bronchitis.

“I finally said, ‘enough,’” she recalls.

She tried the patch and electronic cigarettes, but ended up quitting cold turkey. And she admits it hasn’t been easy staying nicotine-free.

“I enjoyed my cigarettes. I still miss them three-and-a-half years later.”

A first lung screening at Richmond University Medical Center prescribed by her pulmonologist, Keith Diaz, MD, came up

negative. But a second screening “showed something,” she explains.

Complications led to a month-long hospitalization, followed by rehabilitation to regain her strength.

Because of the condition of her lungs, surgery was not an option. Under the care of Hoon Lee, MD, Linda underwent five radiation treatments beginning last November.

She returns to Dr. Lee every three months for a CT scan.

“I just had another scan, and the tumor shrank again,” Linda reports with relief.

She credits an early diagnosis for her progress and is grateful for the care she has received at Richmond University Medical Center.

The retired Met Life branch administrator is feeling good and enjoys frequent trips with her husband, son and daughter-in-law to Atlantic City to play the slot machines at the Borgata.



“Everybody [at the hospital] has been wonderful,” she says. “They always answer all of my questions. The doctors don’t just stick their heads in the door; they sit down, talk with us and explain things.”

“The staff told me ‘we’re a team and we’re going to fight this together,’” she adds. “So far, we’re winning.”

Complications led to a month-long hospitalization, followed by rehabilitation to regain her strength.

### STEVEN SAIA

**J**ust mention Richmond University Medical Center to Steven Saia and adjectives describing the care he received as a cancer patient start rolling off his tongue.

“Extraordinary. Amazing. Absolutely spectacular.”

A smoker for 40 years, Steve was diagnosed with early Stage 2 lung cancer and underwent a lobectomy on Aug. 18, 2014.

A collapsed lung led to two transfusions and a 22-day stay in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit.





Admittedly a reluctant patient, the former Wall Street executive says the staff comforted and encouraged him when he needed it most.

“I’m a big baby” when it comes to medical procedures, and Nancy Rooney, RN, his nurse navigator, was always there to hold his hand.

“The nurses in Surgical ICU are nothing short of saints,” Steven adds, listing Phyllis, Noel, Roxanne and Jimmy as those he remembers most.

“They took care of me like I was their

brother or their father. I may forget their [last] names, but I will never forget their faces and their kindness.”

He also cites Jackie and Lauren who guided him through chemotherapy, and Pam who brought him coffee during the session.

Steven’s cancer is in remission. His last four CT scans have come back negative; the next one is scheduled for this summer.

Looking back on the experience, he is especially grateful for the early detection screenings at Richmond University

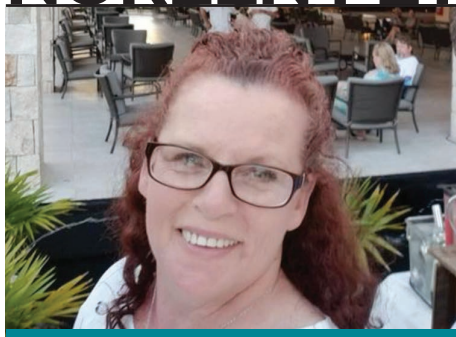
Medical Center.

And there’s one more name to add to the list, Steven insists — Peter Gottlieb, MD, his pulmonologist.

“I only go to a doctor if I have glass sticking out of my head,” the 59-year-old admits with a characteristically dry sense of humor. Dr. Gottlieb was the coach he needed most to convince him to go for the lung screening.

“And that’s why I’m still alive today,” he acknowledges.

## NOREEN PETERSEN



When Noreen Petersen first learned she had lung cancer three years ago, she wasn’t the least bit surprised.

Though smoke-free for 14 months and asymptomatic, she expected that 30-plus years of a pack-a-day addiction had taken a toll on her health.

“I figured I wasn’t going to walk away scot-free,” she admits.

During a regular checkup, her internist sent her to Richmond University Medical Center’s Lung Screening program, specifically designed for smokers and former smokers.

After CT and PET scans, Noreen was diagnosed with stage 1A lung cancer on March 9, 2015.

Rather than panic, she felt confident the situation could be resolved after learning about the treatment plan for a surgical wedge resection.

“I wasn’t scared because I knew they caught it early,” she says.

Reassuring guidance from RUMC’s Nancy Rooney, RN, CTTS, the screening program’s pulmonary nurse navigator, “put me at ease with everything,” Noreen adds.

The surgery was a success, and Noreen was home two days later. “No chemo, no radiation needed,” she adds gratefully.

Still smoke-free and cancer-free and feeling healthier than ever, Noreen has been busy traveling with her husband of 35 years, Guy, a retired NYPD sergeant.

Their first post-surgery trip six weeks out was to Nebraska to visit their daughter, Lauren, who serves in the Air Force. Since then, they’ve been to Universal Studios, Myrtle Beach, Nashville, Mount Rushmore and Jamaica.

They’re getting ready for a 10-day trip to Italy to visit their daughter who is now stationed at Aviano Air Base, and there’s a plan to return to Jamaica at the end of the summer.

Noreen feels like she’s making up for lost time with a healthy lifestyle and regular walks in Clove Lakes Park.

Now 56, the lifelong Staten Islander credits the early diagnosis at Richmond University Medical Center for her new lease on life.

“It’s because of the screening program that I’m here today. Without those scans, I don’t know where I’d be today. I feel extremely fortunate. It really saved me.”





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With Philip Otterbeck, MD,  
Chief of the Endocrinology  
Division

Healthy Living Q&A

## GOING GREEN

RELIES ON THE FOOD YOU EAT

There's nothing like a cool, crisp salad on a steamy summer day, best served outside on a picnic table with a pitcher of lightly sweetened iced tea. Eating a salad a day provides a natural source of fiber, helps with weight control, builds strong bones, stimulates muscle performance, improves skin tone and protects the heart.

### Q. Which greens are best?

- A. The carotenoids found in spinach, romaine and red lettuce help the eyes adjust from bright to dark and filter out intense light levels. Spinach leaves also help build strong bones and improve the performance of the mitochondria – tiny structures inside our cells that produce energy and power our muscles. High levels of folate and fiber in romaine lettuce protect the heart muscle and assist in the prevention of stroke and cardiovascular disease. Kale and spinach are the most nutrient-dense leafy greens. The water found in salad veggies improves skin tone and various bodily functions.

### Q. What are the healthiest toppings for my salad?

- A. First, what to avoid: Cheese, meat, dried fruit, salted nuts and bacon bits. Broccoli tops the list as a source of the anti-cancer enzyme sulforaphane. Add roasted chickpeas, beans or tempeh for a savory, cancer-fighting flavor boost. Wheatgrass offers vitamins B, C and E. Lentils are excellent protein sources and unsalted sunflower seeds are high in healthy fats, fatty acids, fiber and minerals. Instead of croutons, toast a piece whole grain bread and crumble it into small pieces. Watch the salt and fat contents of store-bought salad dressings and consider swapping them out with a simple mix of extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

### Q. Are there any benefits to eating iceberg lettuce?

- A. Despite its reputation as a nutritional zero, it does offer some benefits. It's not as rich in nutrition as many other greens and it's low in fiber, but its high water content makes it a refreshing choice during hot weather. Iceberg lettuce provides calcium, potassium, vitamin C and folate.

To submit your question to Dr. Otterbeck, Chief of the Endocrinology Division, email it to [info@RUMCSI.org](mailto:info@RUMCSI.org), subject: Q&A. Your question could appear in our next issue!

## The Giant Cancer-Fighting Salad

Courtesy of [chrisbeatcancer.com](http://chrisbeatcancer.com)

To strengthen your body's ability to fight cancer, eat what blogger Chris Wark calls "the biggest, baddest, healthiest salad on the planet," which will fill you up without zapping your energy. Important to note: Absolutely no cheese, meat or store-bought salad dressing allowed.

### Chop and mix these organic ingredients:

Dense, dark leafy greens (kale and spinach are best)  
Broccoli (promotes liver detoxification)  
Broccoli sprouts  
Cauliflower  
Purple cabbage (good source of antioxidants)  
Slice of red onion  
Leeks  
Artichokes  
Red, yellow or green peppers  
Bella, cremini or shiitake mushrooms  
1/2 an avocado  
Squash  
Zucchini  
Raw sunflower seeds (sprouted is better)  
Raw almonds  
Sprouted garbanzo beans  
Sprouted mung beans  
Sprouted red or green lentils

Top it off with Bubbies Naturally Fermented Sauerkraut or kimchi, a spicy Korean version of sauerkraut – both sold in the refrigerated section. Fermented foods are great for digestion and repopulate your intestinal flora with beneficial bacteria, Chris points out.

**Richmond University  
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# VITAL

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