

# CARE

SUMMER/FALL 2019 • RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER • WWW.RUMCSI.ORG

A portrait of Allan Weissglass, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie, sitting at a desk in an office. The background shows a wooden wall and various office supplies.

**BUSINESSMAN BY TRADE,  
HUMANITARIAN AT HEART**  
REMEMBERING ALLAN WEISSGLASS (1935-2019)

**CHANGING LIVES, ONE PATIENT AT A TIME**  
DR. ALEX BARKAN RESHAPES FUTURES AT THE  
BARIATRIC AND METABOLIC INSTITUTE

Allan Weissglass  
*Special Memorial Edition*

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

# A Message From the President & CEO



In this special edition of Care Magazine, we fondly remember Allan Weissglass. Allan was a former board chair and trustee of the hospital. He passed away in February at the age of 84. While it has only been a short time since his passing, his leadership and guiding hand are already sorely missed.

The past few months have seen advancements at Richmond University Medical Center that will benefit Staten Island for years to come. The first is the start of construction on our new emergency department. Behind the hospital building, the initial phases of construction are underway. In the coming weeks and months, construction will intensify, ultimately resulting in a new, 21st century emergency department in approximately 18 to 24 months from now. Increased private treatment rooms, state-of-the-art trauma bays, additional

support space, and specialty areas for pediatrics and urgent care are just some of the features that will redefine emergency medicine for our hospital and our communities.

The second advancement is our new stroke thrombectomy and embolectomy sub-specialty program. Long recognized for its role as a leading provider of care for stroke victims, in early spring, Richmond University Medical Center further advanced its stroke care capabilities by entering into a partnership with Interventional Neuro Associates to perform life-saving blood clot removing procedures on site. This team of board certified physicians removes blood clots from within the brain using small catheters inserted into an artery that are then guided to the blockage where they remove the clot, restoring blood flow. Prior to this partnership, our hospital was only a transfer site for stroke victims in need of a thrombectomy. Within days of finalizing this partnership, several successful thrombectomy procedures were performed within our hospital. This new sub-specialty breathes new life into both our stroke program and neurology department. It's another example of the highest level of quality health care being provided here on Staten Island, in our hospital!

Like many of you, I am looking forward to the warm summer months and the continued development of our hospital as we position Richmond University Medical Center for continued success well into the future.

**Remember the Power of One – You Make a Difference.**

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

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Richmond University 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, Krista Desiderio, Lorraine Scanni and Claire Regan

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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.

COVER PHOTO:

Jan Somma-Hammel/Staten Island Advance



# CONTINUING TO ADVANCE OUR AWARD-WINNING HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR STATEN ISLAND



NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

This past April, work crews arrived at Richmond University Medical Center's main campus in West Brighton to begin construction on what will eventually become the hospital's new 35,000 square foot emergency department. The new ED is the latest long-term project the hospital is undertaking to expand its health care services to the Staten Island community. The plan also includes future expansion of its operating suites, and energy infrastructure enhancements.

When complete, the new emergency department will cover 35,000 square feet and feature increased private treatment rooms, state-of-the-art trauma bays, additional support space, and specialty areas for pediatrics and urgent care. The hospital's current emergency room is only 15,000 square feet and as a designated Level I Adult Trauma Center – meaning it has the level of expertise to treat a high volume of patients for all types of major trauma and critical illnesses – routinely assists over 60,000 people annually.

The emergency department is also an award winning designated stroke center offering expert treatment for those with presumptive signs of stroke, home to the only inpatient psychiatric emergency department in Staten Island for adolescents, and has a full staff of behavioral health providers for substance abuse, psychotherapy, and psychiatric care.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Richmond University

Medical Center is among the leaders nationwide in low wait times, averaging only 12 minutes from the time a person enters the ED to the time they are seen by medical staff. The national average is 25 minutes and the New York state average is 34 minutes. The low ranking is testament to the hospital maintaining adequate resources and staff while still prioritizing patient safety.

To help make the new ED and modernization projects a reality, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) announced this past January the approval of over \$130 million in tax-exempt bonds. The project has also received funding from the City, Borough President James Oddo, Council Member Debi Rose, Council Member Steven Matteo, and other local stakeholders.

“Thank you to everyone involved in supporting our new state-of-the-art emergency department, especially NYCEDC, Council Speaker Johnson, Borough President Oddo, Council Members Rose and Matteo,” said hospital president and chief executive officer Daniel J. Messina, Ph.D., FACHE. “Increasing our capacity is critical to ensuring that residents of Staten Island and the surrounding communities continue to receive the highest level of emergency care during their moments of greatest need.”

Borough President James Oddo said, “Staten Islanders want and deserve state-of-the-art healthcare, and allowing RUMC to continue its mission to deliver a new emergency department is critically important to our borough.”

City Council Member Debi Rose called Richmond University Medical Center “a critical component” of Staten Island's health care infrastructure. “In the absence of a city hospital in our borough, Staten Island's health care system has been severely underfunded for decades. The approval of tax-exempt bonds, combined with funding from the City Council, take us a significant step toward providing Staten Islanders with the state-of-the-art health care facility we need and deserve,” she continued.

“Updating RUMC's emergency department and modernizing its other facilities is critical to the long-term viability of Staten Island's two-hospital healthcare system, and thus critical to the quality of life of our residents,” said City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo.

Later this year, construction will also begin on the medical center's new co-generation power plant. The new plant will be more cost efficient and make the hospital completely self-sustaining for power in the event of an emergency, such as a power outage. When operational, the new power plant will house a pair of new generators to produce electricity for the entire hospital. The steam produced as a by-product will be collected within the generators and used to provide heat in the colder months. In warmer months, the steam will be collected in chillers to provide cooler air throughout the hospital.

# ALLAN WEISSGLASS 1935-2019

STEADY SUPPORTER OF RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, LIFELONG FRIEND TO STATEN ISLAND



Allan Weissglass at the dedication of the Weissglass Pavilion in 2016 with his wife Bobbie, Board Chair Kathryn K. Rooney, and President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.

His name is prominently displayed in the lobby of Richmond University Medical Center. The Allan Weissglass Pavilion Center for Ambulatory Care, dedicated in 2016, was a \$1.5 million gift to the hospital where he was born eight decades earlier – a gift made possible by the foundation he chaired.

A businessman by trade and a humanitarian at heart, Weissglass spent a lifetime supporting dozens of non-profits in his hometown borough and enjoyed a close relationship with the hospital as a past chairman of the board.

But this gentle giant of a man, who died in his Todt Hill home on Feb. 22 at age 84, was even more humble than he was generous.

He was proud of his family's Staten Island roots. In the late 19th century,

his grandfather, an Austrian immigrant, founded Weissglass Gold Seal Dairy, a successful milk processing and ice cream business on Staten Island that would remain in the family and prosper until it was sold in 1975.

Allan Weissglass grew up close to the former St. Vincent's Hospital, on Davis Avenue in West Brighton, and graduated from PS 45 and Curtis High School. Tall and lanky, he played varsity basketball and served as captain of the squad.

He was also president of the geology society and a reporter for the Curtis Log. His name is listed on the Permanent Honor Roll with the Curtis Class of 1952.

"I had an idyllic childhood," he once reminisced. "I was a typical good kid."

He earned a bachelor's degree in dairy

science from Cornell University and an MBA from the New York University School of Business, majoring in corporate finance.

He spent five and a half years in the Army Reserve and devoted his career to the operation of Weissglass Dairy and a second family business, Magruder Color Company, which manufactured pigments for printing ink.

Weissglass enjoyed a lifelong association with the Jewish Community Center that began as a child. He was named to the JCC Board of Directors at the young age of 30, and continued to serve on the board until his death.

He was also chairman of the Staten Island Foundation board and trustee emeritus of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Dozens of accolades included an honorary doctorate from St. John's University, the Albert V. Maniscalco Award, the Project Hospitality Richard E. Diamond Award, and the Snug Harbor Medal for his support of the cultural center as a member of its board. He also served on the boards of Gateway State Bank and the UJA Federation.

Weissglass was mourned by Daniel J. Messina, Ph.D., FACHE, president and CEO of Richmond University Medical Center, who acknowledged his lifetime of support.

"Allan's loss is a very tough one for me and my wife, Debbie," Dr. Messina said. "Upon my arrival at the hospital, I quickly learned that underneath that tall and strong frame was a sensitive, caring, incredibly loving man. While his universe was his wonderful family, Richmond University Medical Center and the JCC, I believe, were his true community loves."

"I was truly blessed that not only did Allan

take me under his wing professionally, he and his wonderful wife Bobbie also took me and my wife into their lives personally," Dr. Messina continued. "He touched the lives of many and he loved Staten Island. A gentleman and scholar, Allan truly made the world a better place."

Kathryn K. Rooney, board chairperson, noted that Weissglass "was touched by the healing mission of the Sisters of Charity," who operated the former St. Vincent's Hospital. "He enjoyed a 40-year relationship with the sisters and the hospital. Being a spiritual man himself, Allan appreciated the hospital's caring mission."

In recognition of the bridge Weissglass built between two faiths, Rooney announced that to honor Allan's memory, a \$25,000 donation was made to the JCC on behalf of the hospital staff.

"What better way to honor Allan than with a group contribution to the JCC?" she said. "Allan was one of my best friends

and one of the greatest people I have ever known. He was Staten Island at our very best."

Rosemarie Stazzone, chief operating officer and chief nurse officer for Richmond University Medical Center, added her appreciation.

"He was such a gentle, kind person. So unassuming" in spite of his success as a businessman, Stazzone reflected. "He was as humble as he was tall."

"His dedication to the Catholic healthcare system came across loud and clear. He had a deep respect for the Sisters [of Charity] and the entire hospital team."

Weissglass is survived by his wife, the former Roberta "Bobbie" Lewin, their two children, Julie and Evan, and three grandchildren.



## REMEMBERING ALLAN WEISSGLASS:

DR. PIETRO CARPENITO, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY AT RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

When I think of Allan Weissglass, I think of a man who was a physician's friend and champion! Allan had a keen sense of intuition of the fundamental value of the medical staff to the success of the hospital. His relationship to the medical staff was one of genuine mutual affection. Allan was always a strong advocate for the issues of importance to the physicians and appreciated the importance of our role.

I felt privileged to get to know Allan from the very first time we met, and I think every physician felt the same. Allan made it his business to get to know every new physician who joined the medical staff.

Warm and gracious with an engaging sense of humor, he would approach the new doctor on the block. It was Allan's goal to find out what their passion was; at the same time, he would share his

own history on Staten Island and his relationship to the hospital for close to five decades.

The physicians bonded with Allan, and always wanted to know if he was going to attend our medical functions. They looked forward to seeing him, speaking with him, learning from him, and at the same time felt reassured by his presence and participation.

I regret not having spent more time with him personally, learning more of his philosophy, beliefs and values which reminded me, "It's not about us, it's about doing the right thing." Allan was a good listener and interested in everything I brought to his attention. His famous four words were: "How can I help?"

Allan encouraged me — a diehard Italian food lover — to appreciate German food. We dined at Schaffer's Tavern and Nurnberger Bierhaus right near the hospital and before I realized it, I had switched from Italian wine to the finest vodka.

Allan will always hold a unique and special place in my heart and mind — and for the entire medical staff at Richmond University Medical Center.

▼ "He was Staten Island at our very best." ▲

– Kathryn K. Rooney



# NEW STROKE THROMBECTOMY PROGRAM IS SAVING LIVES



Beth Kohn with the nursing staff and administrators on call when she arrived at the hospital after suffering a stroke on April 6th.

Beth Kohn was at home on a Saturday morning in April when she started having trouble speaking and experienced paralysis on her right side. Her husband and son rushed her to Richmond University Medical Center, where the stroke team jumped into action and administered TPA, a clot-busting drug.

She also underwent a mechanical thrombectomy, in which a special device is threaded through the blood vessels to the site of the stroke-causing blood clot in the brain. The device grabs the clot and removes it, restoring blood flow to brain tissue -- and dramatically improving outcomes.

Ninety minutes after arriving at the hospital, the artery was reopened and Beth was talking to nurses. "I want to tell all the people on the team that I am forever grateful," said Beth, who became the first patient at Richmond University Medical Center to undergo the life-saving procedure. Today she continues her successful recovery with therapy.

"The most cutting-edge treatment for strokes is now available to the people of Staten Island, enhancing their lives," said Alan Perel, MD, board-certified director of the hospital's neurology/stroke team. Calling it a "revolutionary treatment," Dr. Perel points out a thrombectomy can restore quality of life to ischemic stroke patients who previously faced death or long-term nursing care.

Certain patients can benefit from this minimally invasive procedure up to 24 hours after the onset of stroke symptoms. Previously, the window for this treatment was only 6 hours. "Endovascular thrombectomy is a revolutionary treatment for ischemic stroke," Dr. Perel said. "We at RUMC now have the most up-to-date, cutting-edge technology to treat patients with an acute stroke, and improve their function post-stroke."

"Our goal is to give every patient the chance to get back home in the best possible condition," added Jeffrey Farkas, MD, the board-certified radiologist of Interventional Neuro

Associates who performed Beth's mechanical thrombectomy.

During a stroke, a clot stops blood flow to an area of the brain and the organ starts to die very quickly. The goal is to restore blood flow as fast as possible in any manner possible, Dr. Farkas explained. "Every minute counts," the surgeon emphasized. "Time is brain."

Until 2015, with the release of five major trials, TPA was the primary stroke treatment. But according to the National Institute of Neurologic Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), patients with severe strokes only have an 8 percent likelihood of achieving clinically significant improvement with TPA alone.

In the last four years, there has been a major shift toward thrombectomy, Dr. Farkas noted, and he has "made it my life's work" to make the "miraculous procedure" more accessible. "I wondered, why can't we do what we do for the heart what we do for the brain? The goal is minor damage with a great recovery."

"Providing effective stroke procedures in time is critical," Dr. Farkas said. "Being able to partner with Richmond University Medical Center to offer this new line of care to the residents of Staten Island will enhance patient outcomes because they will no longer need to travel long distances, away from home, which would delay what may very well be a life-saving procedure."



Dr. Jeffrey Farkas, who performed the first thrombectomy in the hospital's history and Richmond University Medical Center's director of neurology, Dr. Allan Perel.

# DR. ALEX BARKAN HELPS PATIENTS LOSE WEIGHT, GAIN SELF-CONFIDENCE

Kristen Plattner was so self-conscious about her weight, she avoided posing for photos with her three children when they were babies.

“I was embarrassed about how heavy I had gotten,” she remembers. “I was always a plus size. I wasn’t able to chase my kids around. And I was also developing diabetes, which runs in my family.”

The single mother’s fear about not being there for her children became a turning point.

“I just wanted to be healthy. I just wanted to guarantee a spot in their future.”

“Dr. Barkan was supportive the whole way through,” she says. “I was interested in the lap band procedure but he advised me I needed something a little more aggressive, something that would give me a better outcome for the amount of weight I needed to lose.”

“I appreciated that he was honest,” she adds.

After successful bariatric surgery, Kristen has stayed on track and is maintaining a healthy weight.

Dr. Alex Barkan, MD, MBA, FACS, FASMBS, is Richmond University Medical Center’s chief of bariatric surgery. He is also director of the hospital’s Bariatric and Metabolic Institute. He knows developing a relationship with his patients is critical to the program’s success. There are emotional and psychological components to the weight-loss journey, he points out.

## OBESITY ON THE RISE

Obesity is a term used to describe patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. It is considered a serious, chronic disease that can lead to a range of adverse health conditions including high blood pressure, diabetes and more. While its causes are often difficult to pinpoint, they can include poor dietary habits, genes, metabolism and certain endocrine disorders and diseases.

Statistics show that the past several decades have seen a significant increase in the likelihood of obesity in men, women and children. In New York alone, the adult obesity



Alex Barkan, MD, MBA,  
FACS, FASMBS  
Chief of Bariatric Surgery

rate rose from 16 percent in 1997 to 25.5 percent in 2016.

And according to the National Institute of Health, more than one-third of all American adults are currently obese. Approximately one-third of all children in the United States between the ages of 2 and 19 are also considered overweight or obese.

The most common procedures are sleeve-gastrectomy and gastric bypass, Dr. Barkan confirms.

Today, bariatric surgery is minimally invasive, resulting in a faster recovery. Patients stay one or two nights in the hospital after a procedure, Dr. Barkan says, and no catheters or drains are needed. Richmond University Medical Center offers a support group, and regular follow-ups with the surgeon for weight maintenance.

Since joining Richmond University Medical Center in August 2018, Dr. Barkan has been working toward earning the prestigious “center of excellence” designation for the Bariatric and Metabolic Institute.

Centers of excellence are specialized programs within healthcare institutions which supply exceptionally high concentrations of expertise and related resources centered on particular medical areas and delivered in a comprehensive,

interdisciplinary fashion.

“There is a need on Staten Island” for the comprehensive weight-loss program offered at the Institute, Dr. Barkan says. There is no longer the need to travel to Manhattan for state-of-the-art care, he adds.

Dr. Barkan is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.

In 2017, he added MBA to his list of academic accomplishments, earning the degree from Adelphi University.

His experience in the operating room is extensive. As a general surgeon, Dr. Barkan performs over 400 operations a year. And he has performed several thousand bariatric surgeries during his career.

His patients, who range from teenagers to 80-year-olds, enjoy a 100 percent success rate and a new lease on life, he points out. To learn more, call 718-818-4020.



Kristen, actual patient  
of Dr. Alex Barkan





Members of the inaugural National Diabetes Prevention Program. Left to right, back row: Wayne McDougall, Durell Morris, Yuhanna Hafeez, Gail DeGannes-Hoyte, Kareem Shittu. Left to right, front row: Michael McGill, Christine Turner.

## Support program puts the emphasis on diabetes prevention

*By Alex Lutz – Director of Public Relations and Marketing*

For years my father struggled with diabetes. I watched him do his own insulin shots every day in his right or left arm. A Vietnam veteran, he was exposed to the Agent Orange chemical while serving “in country” from 1968-1969. His exposure resulted in him going from a healthy

young man before deployment to a diabetic in a few months after returning stateside. Over the years, it led to further complications that designated him as a 100 percent disabled veteran by the Veterans Administration, and ultimately led to his death at the age of 60.





A few months ago, with my father in mind, I think of him whenever I am dealing with something associated with diabetes, I attended the last meeting of the inaugural group participating in the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) provided by Richmond University Medical Center. Throughout 2018, this group of pre-diabetic individuals met to better understand the risk factors for diabetes, make better diet decisions, and become more physically active. In other words, to take control of their lives before diabetes did. At this meeting, I met a “family” of six individuals who accomplished just that and all agreed that who they were a year ago, is not who they are now, and all for the better.

Yuhanna Hafeez, Wayne McDougall, Michael McGill, Durell Morris, Kareem Shittu, and Christine Turner all live on the north shore of Staten Island; St. George, Stapleton, West Brighton communities to be more exact. All of them found through blood tests, such as an A1C test, that they were pre-diabetic. The A1C test measures your average blood sugar levels over the past two to three months. If your A1C level is between 5.7 and 6.4 percent, you have prediabetes which means you have a high risk of developing diabetes in the future. All agreed to do something about it and enrolled in the NDPP.

“People assume they know, but they don’t really know what the numbers mean when they get test results,” Shittu said. “I realized how important it is to really know what my levels were and what the good and bad levels were for each test so I could compare on my own.”

The NDPP is a Center for Disease Control recognized evidenced based lifestyle change diabetes prevention program for adults with prediabetes. The program consists of 16 weekly sessions of core classes, one hour per week, and is followed by monthly maintenance sessions for the combined duration of one year. The objective of the NDPP is for participants to lose at least seven percent of their body weight and to adopt a healthier lifestyle. The class at Richmond University Medical Center was facilitated by Gail DeGannes-Hoyte, RN who is also a certified diabetes educator and lifestyle coach.

The curriculum’s core principles involved getting active and increasing physical activity, healthy eating, reducing stress, and staying motivated. Every session participants weighed in, logged their weekly activities, and completed food logs.

“The last year was particularly stressful for me,” McGill said. “In addition to learning about my health issues I also lost my sister. Coping

with her loss and the stress associated with that, I neglected my own health. Thanks to this program I’m getting better and it’s getting easier.”

Listening to each person it was as if the room was filled with six certified dieticians. They spoke in depth about how to read labels, the dangers many of us are unaware of by not looking at nutritional labels, and each described what sodium, sugar, and carbohydrates can do to your body in detail.

“I’m much more informed about food and how eating plays a role in diabetes,” McDougall said. “It has made me more aware of what’s going into my body and I try to impart this knowledge to my family and friends.”

Through working together, staying on course, and completing 150 minutes or more of physical activity a week, almost each person lost between eight and 24 pounds. Not surprising, as the group celebrated its final meeting over breakfast, fruit, water, and yogurt were on the menu of options.

Before I left the meeting, I had an opportunity to share my father’s experiences with the group. While I cannot say for certain that my father would have been able to manage his diabetes better given how he developed it, what I can say for certain is he would have joined DeGannes-Hoyte and the group in getting the message out to others about the importance of getting your blood sugar checked and taking steps that lead to a healthier lifestyle.

While this particular NDPP program is run through Richmond University Medical Center’s 800 Castleton Avenue location, it is also offered at its ambulatory sites around Staten Island. Those programs are under the direction of Theresa Catania, certified life coach, certified wellness coaching specialist, and certified lifestyle coach for NDPP. Her group is seeing similar positive results. One participant in Catania’s group, Jeannine Cacioppo has achieved great success.

“I lost 30 pounds, lowered my triglycerides, cholesterol and A1C in under six months as a result of the National Diabetes Prevention Program,” Cacioppo said. “Saying thank you doesn’t even begin to express the appreciation and gratitude I have for this program.”

**To learn more about the NDPP programs call 718-818-7117 or 718-818-1274.**

# Cancer Liaison Physician Named One of the Country's 40 Under 40 in Oncology



*Dr. Nisha A. Lakhi*

Richmond University Medical Center's cancer liaison physician, Dr. Nisha A. Lakhi, was selected as one of the country's 40 Under 40 in Cancer for her contributions to help cancer patients lead longer, healthier lives. The only Staten Island physician named to this select group, Dr. Lakhi, 38, was selected as one of the recipients by a panel of judges that reviewed hundreds of candidates from across the United States.

"Through research, quality improvement, and my leadership role in the cancer program, I am passionate about helping patients and their families afflicted by cancer," Dr. Lakhi said. "It truly is a privilege to be part of a patient's cancer journey. I am very grateful to the sponsors of 40 under 40 for this recognition, and will continue to dedicate my career to advancing the care of cancer patients as well as championing the cancer program at Richmond University Medical Center."

Sponsored by The Lynx Group, McGivney Global Advisors, Upstream Partners, and

Swim Across America, the 40 Under 40 in Cancer is an initiative to identify and recognize contributions being made across the field of cancer by rising stars and emerging leaders under the age of 40. Dr. Lakhi was presented with her award at a reception in Chicago in early June. Dr. Lakhi was celebrated with her fellow award winners who hail from leading research and health care programs across the United States, including Memorial Sloan Kettering, and Yale University.

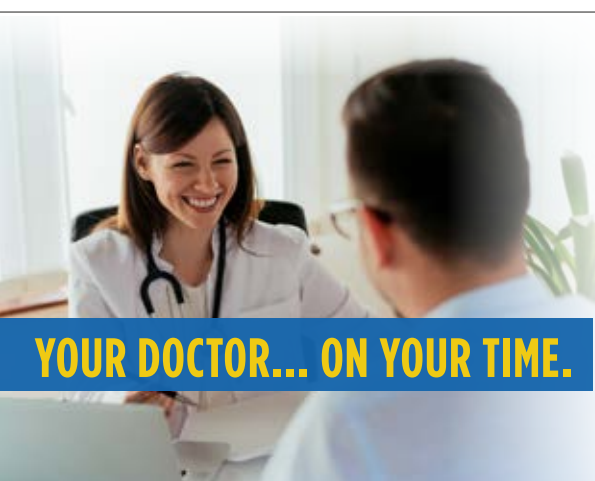
As Richmond University Medical Center's cancer liaison physician, Dr. Lakhi leads a large multidisciplinary cancer program that consists of a diverse group of physicians, nurses, and psychiatrists committed to improving the delivery of cancer related services.

Dr. Lakhi assumed the role of cancer liaison physician while maintaining her other responsibilities. She currently also serves as a faculty attending physician, fellowship director of the Empire Clinical Investigator

Research Program (ECRIP), and director of research in the department of obstetrics and gynecology. She also serves as the hospital's director of gynecologic oncology tumor board. While much of her focus is on oncology, her specialty is obstetrics and gynecology.

Outside of the hospital, Dr. Lakhi has performed cervical cancer screenings in the community for the underserved using portable exam tables and volunteer staff. Her latest endeavor is enhancing the medical center's research and genetic testing resources for cancer patients.

Dr. Lakhi completed her residency at Richmond University Medical Center in obstetrics and gynecology. She also completed a fellowship in pelvic surgery at Atlanta Gynecologic Oncology in Georgia. Dr. Lakhi has also been published in peer reviewed publications, book chapters, and textbooks.



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Dr. Mark L. Brandon

## FIRST SUCCESSFUL SURGERY USING NEW BONE VOID FILLER PERFORMED AT RUMC

In a first for Richmond University Medical Center, in early April successful hip replacement surgery was performed using a new calcium sulfate bone void filler called InterSep. Board certified orthopedic surgeon, Mark L. Brandon, MD, FAAOS performed the surgery. Dr. Brandon and an orthopedic surgeon in Florida are the first two surgeons in the country to complete procedures using the new material.

According to Pacific Bioceramics, the product's manufacturer, InterSep is a 100 percent synthetic calcium sulfate bone void filler that fully resorbs and replaces bone during the healing process. InterSep can be used in a variety of bone and joint replacement surgeries, including at infected bone sites.

"This new product can help minimize the risk of infection associated with joint replacement surgery such as total knee, total hip, total shoulder and reverse shoulder replacements," Dr. Brandon said. "The risk of infection with these surgeries is increased in Staten Island because we have higher rates of obesity and diabetes compared to New York City and national averages."

According to Dr. Brandon, Intersep consists of calcium sulfate beads that slowly dissolve over the course of six weeks. As the beads dissolve antibiotics are released, reducing the possibility of infection which can cause further complications and hinder the patient's healing process.

InterSep is manufactured by Pacific Bioceramics and distributed exclusively by Exactech, a developer and producer of bone and joint restoration products. It is currently available at select hospitals and medical facilities throughout the country. The other surgery using Intersep was performed at The Orthopedic Institute in Ocala, Florida.

"By using this product which releases antibiotics in a time-release fashion, Richmond University Medical Center is helping our Staten Island patient community by greatly reducing complications such as infection," Dr. Brandon said.



With Philip Otterbeck, MD,  
Chief of the Endocrinology  
Division

### Healthy Living Tips

## FACILITATE WEIGHT LOSS BY ADDING THESE ITEMS TO SUMMER MEALS



### MULBERRIES

These sweet, juicy summer berries are tasty both fresh and dried in trail mix or in a salad. Fresh mulberries consist of 88 percent water and only have 60 calories per cup (140 grams). They're also chock full of potassium, fiber and resveratrol, a phytonutrient shown to protect the heart. And they contain alkaloids that activate macrophages — white blood cells that stimulate the immune system, putting it on high active alert against health threats.



### CILANTRO

An herb that is related to parsley, cilantro is a tasty addition to soups and other dishes. Like many fruits and vegetables, cilantro is a good source of antioxidants. It may increase the production of digestive acids, which can stimulate the gut to move waste out. A healthy digestive tract is important for weight loss, experts agree. Using cilantro to flavor food can also help to cut down on sodium intake and protect skin against sun damage.



### PINEAPPLE

This sweet tropical fruit contains the proteolytic enzyme bromelain, which aids in the digestion of protein and blood clot formation. As an anti-inflammatory super food, pineapple can help reduce swelling, which can lead to a flatter belly. It's the perfect ingredient for summer smoothies and juices.



### JICAMA

Also known as yam, this Mexican turnip is great for weight loss because of its high fiber-to-sugar ratio (32 grams of fiber per medium jimaca -- almost a whole day's worth). Tasty and crunchy, the jicama is also a good source of potassium, an essential mineral that helps maintain water balance in the body. Jicama can be eaten raw, but remember to peel the plant before eating; the thick outer skin contains a toxic compound to protect the tuber from underground predators.

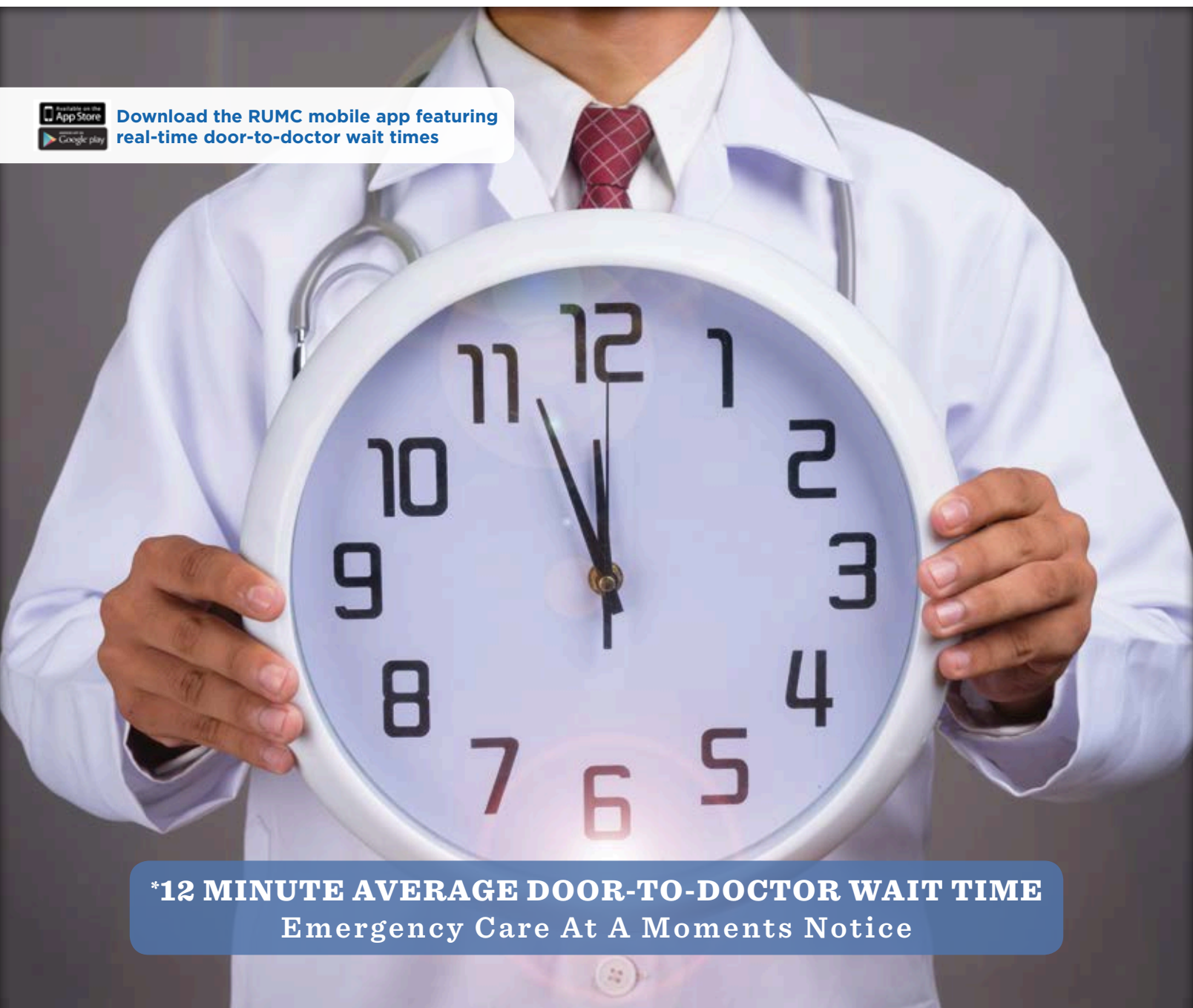


### MANGO

High in fiber, magnesium, antioxidants and iron, the mango is a perfect snack for those who may have iron deficiency or anemia. It aids in digestion and is a great way to satisfy a sweet tooth while warding off other cravings. It cleanses the skin from deep inside the body, treats pores and gives skin a healthy glow.



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\*Average wait time according to (CMS) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. National Avg: 25 minutes, New York State Avg: 34 minutes.