

RUMC's Mother/Baby Unit Renamed in Partnership with Richmond County Savings Foundation



Leaders from Richmond University Medical Center and Richmond County Saving Foundation cut the ribbon for the new Richmond County Savings Foundation Mother/Baby Unit.

On December 14, leaders from Richmond University Medical Center and Richmond County Savings Foundation officially unveiled the new Richmond County Savings Foundation Mother/Baby Unit, located on the first and second floors of the hospital. The renamed unit is in recognition of the foundation's gift of \$1.5 million to support the hospital's labor, delivery and maternal care services.

The two floor Mother/Baby Unit features nine birthing suites; a labor and delivery triage center; 36 maternal care beds; and multiple nurse stations. A major modernization project is currently underway in the Mother/Baby Unit that will enhance the mother-baby bonding experience through new spacious and completely private, single bed patient rooms. In addition to enhanced privacy, this conversion of all rooms from semi-private to private will address the health concerns of many families created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since all of the current rooms with two beds will be converted to single-bed, RUMC is adding additional rooms from underutilized space to ensure there is no change to the number of families the hospital can accommodate.

In addition to the new enhanced privacy factor, the new rooms will also include modern amenities such as new bathrooms, flooring, windows, and lighting. The first phase of the three phase project, renovations to existing rooms to single occupancy, is currently underway. Completion of the entire project is anticipated in early 2023.

"I want to thank our friends at Richmond County Savings Foundation for their tremendous support

of our hospital," President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "The Foundation has been a longtime friend of RUMC and this is just the latest example of their commitment to not only our hospital, but to the health and wellbeing of our entire community. Today's renaming is a prelude to exciting changes coming to our mother/baby unit over the next year that will further enhance the patient experience and further cement RUMC's role as the hospital of choice when it comes to caring, compassionate care for mothers and their babies.

Nearly 3,000 newborns are welcomed into the world each year at RUMC, which is the only hospital on Staten Island to carry the "Baby Friendly" certification from the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Since 2016, RUMC has been Staten Island's only certified "Baby Friendly" hospital. RUMC is one of only 39 healthcare facilities in New York State with this certification and one of only 24 in New York City.

"Richmond County Savings Foundation gives out \$3 million a year. So to commit a million and a half to any one project...that has to be a very special project and this is," Richmond County Savings Foundation Executive Director Cesar Claro said. "The hospital touches 100,000 people a year between the emergency room and just patients in general. That's important to us. It's a significant institution, it's a significant employer and has a big impact on the borough. And all that was taken into consideration, along with Dan Messina's vision for the future of this hospital, and that's why we made such a big commitment."

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



As we all usher in a new year, which brings with it new hope and promise, resolutions, and a chance to write a new chapter in our lives, it may feel like we are traveling down a familiar path with the latest COVID-19 surge. However, we are in a far better place – as odd as that may sound when you look at the number of cases throughout New York City and our country. If you recall the winter and

spring of 2020, we had no vaccines, we were far less educated about our enemy, and many of the medical treatments now readily available were yet to be confirmed as truly effective or were not in existence.

Today that is not the case. While we continue to learn more each day, especially about new variants, we have a baseline to work with. We have highly effective vaccines and boosters available to almost everyone. In this respect, our hospital has played a crucial role in improving the well-being of our community. Since last year we have administered over 40,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, vaccinating more than 20,000 people. More encouraging is that each week these numbers continue to grow. For those in need of advanced care, primarily the elderly, those with co-morbidities, and the unvaccinated, we are providing the latest medically-proven effective therapies and treatments. For individuals who are still experiencing symptoms or health issues after a COVID-19 infection, our Investors Bank Post COVID-19 Care Center is helping with their short- and long-term prognosis. Our hospital is now one of the most comprehensive COVID-19 care facilities in New York City. From prevention to immediate care to post-exposure treatment, our community could be in no better hands than those of our skilled, compassionate, and experienced physicians, nurses, and medical specialists here at Richmond University Medical Center.

But we cannot let our guard down. We must protect the progress we have made. So this month, please indulge me if you have read or heard what I have said before. I encourage everyone to continue being vigilant and smart when going about your lives. Wear a mask, maintain social distancing whenever possible, and get tested if you believe you may have been exposed. If you or someone you know has not been vaccinated yet, there is no time like the present. Get vaccinated here at RUMC or at any of the many sites across Staten Island, but please, get vaccinated. If you are eligible, please also get your booster shot. The vaccines continue to hold up against serious illness and death. Yes, there will be breakthrough cases, but no vaccine is completely effective and getting a mild case is certainly much better than the alternative.

The pandemic continues with the latest omicron variant, but we are in a far better place than when COVID-19 first appeared on the world stage. But only together, working hand in hand, can we finally put this pandemic behind us. Continue to do your part and we will pull each other through. I know we can do it! And let's not forget what is before us, as our exciting state-of-the-art capital improvement and modernization projects begin to transform our campus into a beacon of modern healthcare for Staten Island and beyond.

Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel J. Messina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer

Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

I came to this hospital for an emergency treatment about a week after Thanksgiving. I could not have been treated more respectfully or efficiently. The room where I had received my treatment was beyond sanitary and the nurses assigned to me were very educated and helpful with all my questions/concerns. I was never at this hospital before this visit, I came here off of a recommendation and I am glad that I did.

— Dan Bav

Great experience with response time, great communication from all staff involved with care and great overall treatment for my condition was received. I must really commend the Nursing Assistant taking care of 4A26 on 11/27 and 11/28 day shift. She was so awesome, so helpful, so kind and made the hospital experience so comfortable. Overall, just a great experience.

— Racky Allen

Richmond University Medical Center Celebrates 1-Year Anniversary of COVID-19 Vaccine Center



*“We are very proud to be celebrating the one year mark of our vaccination center here at Richmond University Medical Center
— Rosemarie Stazzone
RN, MS*

Vaccine Center staff thanked volunteers Sharon Mineo, Judy Hafner and Connie Lane for the countless hours they have spent assisting the center over the past year. All three are members of the RUMC Auxiliary.

On December 16, Richmond University Medical Center celebrated the one year anniversary of its COVID-19 Vaccination Center. Hospital leadership and staff held a ceremony to honor the Vaccination Center’s staff and volunteers who have made it possible for RUMC to administer over 40,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines in the past year. Most recently the hospital has begun administering vaccinations to children ages 5 to 11.

“We are very proud to be celebrating the one year mark of our vaccination center here at Richmond University Medical Center, RUMC’s Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nurse Officer, Rosemarie Stazzone, RN, MS, said. “The efforts of our entire team have enabled us to vaccinate over 20,000 individuals by successfully administering more than 40,000 doses of vaccine to people ages 12 and over. More recently, we have also administered over 100 doses to children ages 5 to 11. We are proud of our efforts to best serve our community, helping make everyone healthier and safer during these unprecedented times. Vaccination remains a key factor in fighting this pandemic and Richmond University Medical Center remains committed to this cause. We encourage everyone to get fully vaccinated and to then receive a booster dose as soon as you are eligible.”

Special certificates of appreciation were presented to Sharon Mineo, Judy Hafner, and Connie Lane. All three are members of RUMC’s Auxiliary and each has volunteered countless hours in the Vaccination Center registering patients and welcoming people as they arrive.



EMTs Angela Ciocia, Jim Terravecchio and Deborah Piergiovanni. All three have administered vaccines over the past year to thousands of residents.

The Quality and Patient Safety “Q Corner”

From Joan Gleason Scott, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, CPHQ, CPPS
Vice President Quality, Infection Prevention, Patient Experience, Language Services



Joan Scott Gleason

For the New Year...

A patients' experience of their care has a greater impact on care clinical outcomes than we think about each day. While the importance for public perception is obvious, the less obvious are what studies have demonstrated in the health care literature. Positive patient

experience outcomes have been shown to lead to lower 30-day readmission rates, lower inpatient mortality rates, and decreased utilization of care services.

At Richmond University Medical Center, our primary tool to measure our overall patient satisfaction is the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (CAHPS), a national standard administered under the authority of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Press Ganey is our survey and patient satisfaction vendor and they work with thousands of hospitals across the country.

Realizing this vital impact on our patients, RUMC leadership and staff work each and every day to increase our patients' and families' satisfaction. The data demonstrates the positive outcomes these efforts have made. Since 2018, we have had steadily improved in four major satisfaction domains:

- ▶ Communication with Nurses: Improved 38 percentage points
- ▶ Communication with Physicians: Improved 30 percentage points
- ▶ Responsiveness of Staff: Improved 31 percentage points,
- ▶ Communication about Medications: Improved 35 percentage points.

Thanks to everyone at RUMC who work every day with patients and families, especially during these unprecedented times. RUMC remains committed to delivering the highest quality and safest patient care every day to those that we serve.

I will start 2022, by remembering a favorite quote of Albert Einstein: “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.” May all of you have a Happy, Healthy, and Peaceful 2022!



In Memoriam: Brian Demarest, EMT

We remember Brian Demarest, RUMC EMT, who served the city for 28 years. Brian passed away on Dec. 10 at the age of 46. Brian leaves behind his wife, Danielle and 3-year-old daughter, Avery.



For head, neck cancer patients, RUMC's new surgical approaches bringing greater outcomes than ever



Christopher Lisi, MD, board certified
chief of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery



Sam Trosman, MD, board certified
otolaryngologist, head & neck cancer surgeon

*“Richmond University Medical Center continues to bring leading-edge technology, top-notch specialists with advanced training and the utmost in care to the Staten Island community and avoid their need to travel to Manhattan,
— Dr. Lisi*

Thanks to the specialized team of experts at Richmond University Medical Center and their leading-edge surgical techniques, patients with head and neck cancer are benefitting from more minimally invasive approaches and experiencing greater outcomes than ever before. Among the advances making headlines are the following:

▶ **Robotically Assisted Surgery** — “Patients with tumors located on the back of the tongue used to require a radical surgery that involved opening the neck by performing a tracheostomy and potentially splitting the jaw in order to get access to that hard-to-reach area,” shared Sam Trosman, MD, board certified otolaryngologist, head & neck cancer surgeon at RUMC’s Center for Advanced ENT Care. “But for certain patients with small tumors and those with more hidden cancers located in the back of the throat or on top of the voicebox, robotically assisted technology via our leading-edge da Vinci tool enables better visualization and ergonomics to remove tumors through the mouth.” Approved by the FDA in 2005, “robotic technology incorporates specialized flexible instruments and angled telescopes that allow surgeons to access

previously difficult-to-see areas and perform surgery with greater precision,” Dr. Trosman said. “For patients, it offers a minimally invasive approach to an otherwise maximally invasive procedure and patient recovery is faster while also being less disfiguring.”

▶ **Fiber Optic Endoscopes for Visualization** — “We use the latest in fiber optic endoscope technology to diagnose and treat tumors of the head and neck, and, thanks to dramatic improvements in these high-definition endoscopes and the quality of the images and videos they generate, we can diagnose these cases right in the office without having to put someone under anesthesia,” said Christopher Lisi, MD, chief of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery. “Many of these cancers used to be diagnosed in late stages, but by coming to a doctor in a timely manner and undergoing fiber optic endoscopy, we can see them at a much earlier stage.”

▶ **Fiber Optic Endoscopes for Minimally Invasive Biopsies** — Dr. Lisi noted that newer fiber optic endoscopes and advances in office anesthesia

procedures can also enable physicians to perform a quick biopsy of many of these cancers right in their office rather than in an operating room to enhance patient comfort and expedite care. “Advanced endoscopes with instrument attachments allow us to perform biopsies, work with our team to expedite pathology studies, and quickly confirm a diagnosis,” he said.

“There’s close coordination between our ENT surgeons, radiation oncologists, and medical oncologists, all of whom are located at our Center for Cancer Care on South Avenue; between those three specialties, we can treat almost any head or neck cancer,” Dr. Trosman said of the hospital’s multidisciplinary approach to care.

“Richmond University Medical Center continues to bring leading-edge technology, top-notch specialists with advanced training and the utmost in care to the Staten Island community and avoid their need to travel to Manhattan,” Dr. Lisi agreed. “Outcomes at our hospital have never been better and the patient experience has been enhanced by having access to this kind of advanced, comprehensive care in our own backyard.”

A year in the life: Jay Nfonoyim, MD, Reflects on key lessons learned during a year like no other



Jay Nfonoyim, MD, MPA, FACP, FCCP, CPE, Vice Chair, Department of Medicine; Chief of Critical Care; and Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency.

From shortages of PPE, ICU beds, health care workers, and more, Staten Islanders are no strangers to the pandemic's many challenges since 2020. But one thing there's been no shortage of over the past year have been lessons learned. In the following interview, Jay Nfonoyim, MD, MPA, FACP, FCCP, CPE; Vice Chair, Department of Medicine; Chief of Critical Care; and Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency, and the first member of the hospital's staff to be vaccinated on Dec. 15, 2020, shares some of the top takeaways he and his expert team of frontline heroes have learned over the past year as well as his best advice for protecting yourself against COVID-19 and its variants.

Please share some of the key lessons you've learned over the past year regarding the medical and logistical care of patients with COVID-19.

Dr. Nfonoyim: We've learned a great deal throughout the past 20 months and are able to manage COVID-19 surges more efficiently. Overall, we've put in place specific protocols and utilize a range of therapies at our hospital, which have significantly improved the management of our patients. One of our most effective therapies among hospitalized patients requiring oxygen is the use of dexamethasone, which is a steroid, as well as an antiviral medication called remdesivir. Sicker patients benefit from suppression of the immune system

with medications such as baricitinib and tocilizumab.

Hospitalized patients are also 'proned,' a process in which the patients are placed lying on their stomach for certain amounts of time to help promote better gas exchange and blood flow in the lungs. We're also currently administering monoclonal antibodies through the emergency department. When administered to COVID-positive individuals who aren't sick enough to be hospitalized, these antibodies decrease their chances of getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying.

In terms of our hospital processes, we learned how to make accommodations for possible surges and have the physical ability to expand our ICU capacity if needed. And from the staffing side, we always have contingency plans enabling our expansion.

What's the current state of the COVID-19 crisis in our area and what advice do you offer community members to help protect them from contracting COVID-19?

Dr. Nfonoyim: COVID-19 cases started ticking back up in late September/early October and we're currently seeing a significantly higher number of COVID-19 patients — a reality, which speaks to the importance of getting vaccinated. The fact is, vaccines do work and they save lives, so we should all continue to work tirelessly to get our community vaccinated. At every opportunity I have, I encourage people who are hesitant to get a vaccine. Most people appreciate that I took the time to speak with them about it or went with them to get their shot. I try to alleviate their anxieties by giving them the opportunity to discuss their concerns without fear of being judged, because in the end, everyone wants to protect themselves and their families and keep them safe. Many of the concerns that are shared with me revolve around the perception that the vaccine was made in a rush; I tell them that the technology for this vaccine has been studied previously and there's abundant data available about its

efficacy among vaccinated Americans. For those individuals who are concerned about having an allergic response to the vaccine, I assure them that there are no egg products or latex in the vaccines. In other instances, I also assure people they that can't contract COVID-19 from the vaccine because it doesn't contain live virus.

Do the current vaccines provide effective protection against COVID-19 and/or the new omicron variant?

Dr. Nfonoyim: While the vaccine doesn't eliminate the risk of a COVID-19 infection entirely, the risk of having a serious infection or experiencing complications are significantly less among the vaccinated than among the unvaccinated. With the recent uptick in cases involving the new omicron variant, it's especially important to get your vaccine and booster now. It's known that vaccination provides some level of immunity against the new variant; this protection is greater among those who have gotten a booster, making them less likely to experience serious disease. Omicron won't be the last variant of COVID-19. Vaccines and masks remain our best defense.

What final message would you like to share regarding COVID-19?

Dr. Nfonoyim: COVID-19 has been with us for almost two years and over that time, we've experienced surges in cases followed by periods of low activity. Among the vaccinated, however, we've seen low rates of hospitalization and death. COVID-19 remains a threat to us and continues to evolve, so getting vaccinated and boosted will go a long way toward reducing the impact of new variants. In the meantime, we're keenly following data regarding omicron.

To make a COVID-19 vaccination appointment at RUMC, download the free RUMC CARES mobile app from the Apple Store or Google Play.



New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Rachael Rodriguez-Russo — *RN*
 Adetola Adeyemo *Nursing Assistant*
 Joyce Taverner — *RN*
 Doaa Yahia — *RN*
 Ereny Abdelmalek — *RN*
 Yulia Ladanova — *RN*
 Julia D'Alessio — *RN*
 Ronnell McGill — *Nursing Assistant*
 Jacquelyn Maher — *RN*
 Chyna Harper — *Unit Clerk*
 April Hinton — *Nursing Assistant*
 Samantha Sinodinos — *RN*
 Djenie Jean Philippe — *Nursing Assistant*
 Kahee Kanneh — *RN*

Judie Yeppez — *RN*
 Michael Aro — *Admin Assistant*
 Shannon Quirk — *OT*
 Dorota Kowalska — *Case Manager*
 Robert Es-Haq — *VP*
 Elaine Cates — *Quality Manager*
 Brien Mosley — *Registrar*
 Christi Cataldo — *EMT Driver*
 Kafayat Bello — *EMT Driver*
 Barbara Alaimo-Merzlyakov — *Payroll Clerk*
 Jacqueline Scaglione — *Nuclear Med Tech*
 David Strusman — *Respiratory Therapist*
 Teja Nobin George — *Respiratory Therapist*
 Joseph Rotondo Sr. — *PA*
 Bonny Zuckerberg Sr. — *PA*

Andrea Kpelapauue — *Rehab Aide*
 Courtney Moore — *LMSW*
 Musa Resuljani — *LMSW*
 Valerie Okocha — *Care Manager*
 Debbie Grant — *MHT*
 AnMarie Freeman — *MHT*
 Natasha Gray — *RN*
 Joshua Cintron — *Security Guard*
 Michael Shedwell — *Painter*
 Shazad Alam — *Painter*
 Marek Brzysli — *Painter*
 Elizabeth Fuchs — *Security Guard*
 Antonio Barreto — *Security Guard*
 Rasha Mahrous — *Asst Teacher*
 Raquel Hurtado — *Cook Helper*

January Observances

Please join us in acknowledging the following health-related observances for the month of January:

Month-Long

Cervical Health Awareness
 Glaucoma Awareness
 National Birth Defects Prevention
 National Blood Donor Month
 National Eye Care Month
 Thyroid Awareness

Week-Long Observances

National Non-Smoking Week: Jan. 16 to 22

Recognition Days

World Braille Day: Jan. 4
 National Pharmacist Day: Jan. 12
 Intravenous Nurse Day: Jan. 25
 World Leprosy Day: Jan. 30

An Annual Tradition at Richmond University Medical Center Continues

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, several local community organizations and agencies donated new toys and books to the hospital's pediatric unit. Among them were Cops Who Care for Kids, the Department of Sanitation for New York City (DSNY), Kids Against Cancer, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and P.S. 23 in Richmondtown.



Santa and Mrs. Claus drop off toys courtesy of Kids Against Cancer and the MTA.



Members of the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) making a special delivery.



Pamela Noia a teacher from PS 23 dropping off toys collected by her 4th graders as part of a school wide toy drive.



NYPD Lt. Naveed Chaudry, his wife Sarah and their two daughters, along with some uniformed helpers.