

RUMC Earns Multiple National Stroke Awards, Continues Certification as Advanced Primary Stroke Center

Richmond University Medical Center (RUMC) has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines - Stroke Gold Plus quality achievement award for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines. This year's award was accompanied by several additional stroke-related certifications including RUMC's re-certification as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center, a designation RUMC has held since 2019.



qualify for this additional recognition, RUMC met specific criteria that reduce the time between an eligible patient's arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster medication alteplase.

RUMC also received the American Heart Association's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll award. This award recognizes RUMC for its specialized care of stroke patients with Type 2 diabetes, who are at higher risk for complications due to their diabetic condition.

"These certifications and recognitions validate the tremendous work and preparation it takes to achieve these distinctions," RUMC's Chief of Neurology Allan Perel, MD, said. "Treatment of stroke is an extremely high priority at RUMC since stroke is the number one cause of significant disability in the United States."

Stroke is the number 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the United States. Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability, and accelerating recovery times. RUMC cares for over 400 stroke patients a year.

Get With The Guidelines helps ensure patient care is aligned with the latest evidence and research-based guidelines. It is an in-hospital program for improving stroke care by promoting consistent adherence to these guidelines, which minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and even prevent death. To earn the award, RUMC's physicians, nurses, and medical personnel demonstrated the hospital's continued commitment to providing quality care for stroke patients from arrival at the hospital to recovery at home.

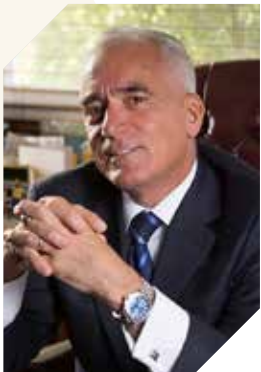
In addition to the Gold Plus quality achievement award, RUMC received the American Heart Association's Target: Stroke Honor Roll award. To

"Diabetes is a prevalent condition and a potent risk factor for strokes," RUMC's Chair of Medicine and Chief of Endocrinology Philip Otterbeck, MD, said. "We are pleased that our award recognizes the meticulous attention we pay to all our patients who suffer a stroke, but especially for those with concomitant diabetes."

RUMC also met specific guidelines to once again be designated an Advanced Primary Stroke Center by the American Heart Association, American Stroke Association, and The Joint Commission. To earn this distinction, which RUMC has held since 2019, the hospital demonstrated its comprehensive capabilities to quickly diagnose and treat stroke patients admitted to the Emergency Department.

"As such a designation implies, being an Advanced Primary Stroke Center means our hospital is home to state-of-the-art medical technology and that we are blessed to have a skilled medical staff who have extensive experience in providing comprehensive care to patients suffering from strokes of all severities," RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.

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



August is National Eye Exam Month as well as Children's Eye Health and Safety Month. Nothing is more important than your eye health and that of your family. The health of your eyes has a major impact on every area of your life, from work and education to enjoying time with family and recreation. Fortunately, our hospital provides comprehensive vision and eye care in our full service Ophthalmology Center, located on the fifth floor of our hospital.

The importance of eye care, how to care for ocular emergencies, and understanding glaucoma — a disease that damages the optic nerve causing visual impairments or blindness — were the topics of conversation in two recent episodes of our informative podcast series, *RUMC Connections*. The episodes, which feature optometrist Joseph Muscente, OD, can be heard on our website, RUMCS.org, and on several streaming services.

About 3 million Americans have glaucoma, which has no cure. What is startling, and concerning, is that half the people with glaucoma do not realize they have it because it presents almost no symptoms. Anyone can get glaucoma, but certain groups are at higher risk. These groups include African Americans over age 40, all people over age 60, people with a family history of glaucoma, and people who have diabetes.

Recently, our board certified Chair of Ophthalmology David Mostafavi, MD, was interviewed about one of his many areas of expertise: ocular inflammation, often called uveitis, which is inflammation of the uvea or the pigmented layers of the eye. Mostly the result of a pre-existing autoimmune disorder, viruses,

or bacteria that manifest in our eyes, uveitis can affect the front, middle, back, or entire eye. To read more about how Dr. Mostafavi and his team diagnose and treat uveitis, visit [SILive.com's Sponsored Content](#) section.

Our Ophthalmology Center features skilled experts who can diagnose and treat changes in vision, uveitis, glaucoma, cataracts and many other conditions and diseases that affect our eyes. Led by Dr. Mostafavi, our team, including Dr. Muscente, features experienced optometrists and ophthalmologists who treat adult and pediatric patients providing routine and diabetic eye exams and glaucoma screenings, while also performing cataract surgery, corneal transplants, retinal detachment repair, and minimally invasive glaucoma stents (MIGS).

So please use August as National Eye Exam Month and Children's Eye Health and Safety Month to schedule an eye exam for you and your family. To make an appointment and for more information on eye and vision care, contact our Ophthalmology Center at 718-818-4848. Along with an annual physical and dental checkup, make having an eye exam a priority to ensure continued good health. And as always, thank you for your continued commitment to providing exceptional patient care.

Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!

Sincerely,

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

Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

My visit to RUMC's Emergency Department was a surprisingly pleasant experience. I walked in filled with anxiety and walked out much relieved. From start to finish, the staff was excellent! I had a wonderful Dr. Cooper and equally wonderful nurse, Laura. In addition, the visit took only one hour. Thank you very much!

— C.

Over the course of several months, our family witnessed firsthand the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the entire medical staff including doctors, nurses, and support personnel. The compassionate care and unwavering commitment shown towards our father/husband left an indelible mark on our hearts.

Your team's expertise in managing his complex medical

condition, combined with their willingness to take the time to explain his treatments and procedures, alleviated our concerns and provided us with a sense of comfort.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the nursing staff who tended to our father/husband's needs with compassion and kindness. We would also like to express our gratitude to the doctors who skillfully guided the treatment plan and tirelessly pursued every possible avenue to improve his condition. Their expertise and unwavering commitment were a source of reassurance to our family in this difficult time.

The exceptional professionalism, empathy, and dedication from everyone reflect the true spirit of healthcare and serve as a testament to the quality of service provided at Richmond University Medical Center. You have left an everlasting impact on our lives.

— The Goldberg Family

RUMC Earns Highest Honor for Care of Most Severe Heart Attack Patients



Members of the RUMC Cardiovascular Department (L to R): Sean Galligan, MD; Nay Htyte, MD; Srinivas Duvvuri, MD; Fiona Shehaj, MD; Francesco Rotatori, MD, Chief, Cardiovascular Department; and Iwona Gargala, PA.

Richmond University Medical Center (RUMC) has earned the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline STEMI Receiving Center Gold recognition for its continuous commitment to offering rapid, research-based care to people experiencing a specific type of heart attack known as an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), known to be more severe and dangerous than other types of heart attacks. Gold is the highest level a healthcare institution can earn from the American Heart Association.

"This is an incredible achievement for our cardiovascular team," Chief of the Cardiovascular Department Francesco Rotatori, MD, FACC, said. "It means that our team has been providing excellent and timely care for patients with this life-threatening cardiac condition."

According to the AHA, each year nearly 285,000 people in the United States experience a STEMI, the result of a complete blockage in a coronary artery. The term STEMI comes from how this type of heart attack appears on an electrocardiogram (ECG), a diagnostic test that uses sensors to monitor the heart's electrical activity and records it on a line graph. A patient experiencing a STEMI will have an increase in the ST segment of the ECG. The ST segment shows the heart's activity in a wave pattern. When a person has a STEMI heart attack, this segment will appear

abnormally elevated, instead of flat. This indicates a total blockage.

A STEMI occurs when a fatty substance called plaque builds up in the coronary arteries, which supply blood to the heart. Stress caused by the plaque causes a tear in the artery, which leads to clotting. The clotting can lead to a complete blockage in the artery. The part of the heart serviced by the blocked artery will quickly suffer from lack of oxygen and begin to die, resulting in a heart attack. Since a STEMI is so severe, it is critical that treatment begin as quickly as possible to unblock the artery and limit damage to the cardiac muscle. Treatment may include medication to stabilize the heart, reduce pain, and stop clotting; oxygen therapy to increase the supply of oxygen to the tissues; angioplasty, a minimally invasive surgery that repairs the impacted artery; and/or stenting, which involves the insertion of a mesh tube to reopen the blocked artery. Nearly 40 percent of people who go to the emergency department with acute coronary syndrome, a sudden or rapid decrease of blood flow to the heart, are diagnosed with a STEMI. According to Dr. Rotatori, RUMC treats nearly 100 STEMI patients a year.

The American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline program is a national initiative focused on improving care for patients and streamlining processes to speed the

delivery of proper treatment for time sensitive, neuro-cardiovascular conditions. The Mission: Lifeline Receiving Center award is earned by hospitals that demonstrate a continuous commitment to treating patients according to the most up-to-date, research-based guidelines for STEMI care as outlined by the American Heart Association.

"The cardiovascular expertise at RUMC has always been among the best in the metropolitan area and this latest recognition from the American Heart Association confirms what many of our patients already know, that our team is among the very best in their field" President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.

The certification from the American Heart Association is the latest national recognition for RUMC. In May of this year, RUMC received the American College of Cardiology's NCDR Chest Pain-MI Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award. RUMC is one of only 400 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor, which recognizes the hospital's ongoing commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients. RUMC is also one of only 1,144 hospitals nationwide named a High Performing Hospital by US News & World Report for providing the highest quality care to patients experiencing heart failure.

Engaging Our Community



The Junior Giving Circle at IS 75 Frank D. Paulo Middle School organized a mental health drive during the month of May to provide various items to RUMC's Adolescent Behavioral Health Inpatient Unit. They donated word searches, coloring books, art supplies, Lego sets, puzzles and board games, among other items. Thank you to IS 75 and to the club's moderators Ms. Stephanie and Ms. Rosalie.

June was Gun Violence Awareness Month and on June 29 the RUMC Trauma Team, along with officers from the 120 Police Precinct's Community Affairs Unit, held a Gun Violence Awareness event in the hospital's lobby. Each year more than 43,000 people are killed and 76,000 are injured by gun violence in the United States. The event at the hospital was to raise awareness of this epidemic and inspire people to speak out in support of solutions that will help to end it.



RUMC recently welcomed Marie Macias and Gabriella Cowlan from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Patients, guests, and staff had an opportunity to learn more about the services provided by the Society, take home some giveaways, and register for the Staten Island Light the Night Walk at the College of Staten Island on October 14. To learn more about LLS and the Light the Night Walk, visit www.LLS.org.

On July 9, RUMC participated in the School's Out for Summer street fair on Castleton Avenue. The event highlighted local businesses and organizations along the avenue. RUMC provided several different health screenings and information on services. Among those representing RUMC were Joanne Pietro, RN, MS, assistant vice president, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science and Anastasia Ciluffo, also from the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science.

Richmond University Medical Center Installs New Board Officers, Welcomes New Trustees



Timothy C. Harrison



Kenneth E. Corey



Wing L. Law



Joseph Torres



Robert Urs

The Board of Trustees for Richmond University Medical Center (RUMC) has installed new officers and welcomed four new faces to the board. Timothy C. Harrison assumes the role of chair while Kenneth E. Corey, Wing L. Law, Joseph Torres, and Robert Urs are new trustees who will help guide the hospital.

"It is an honor and privilege to serve RUMC's leadership team, medical staff, and the thousands of other employees and volunteers that comprise the RUMC family," Harrison said. "This is an exciting time for all of us. Thanks to the vision and commitment of each member of the Board of Trustees, under the extraordinary leadership of our President and CEO, Dan Messina, PhD, FACHE, and my predecessors and mentors, Kate Rooney and Ron Purpora, RUMC is nearing completion of \$300 million of vital capital improvements, including new emergency and operating room facilities that are not just state-of-the art, but also the envy of the medical community of New York City and New York State."

Harrison is the principal of TCH Realty & Development Co., LLC. The company's focus is the clean up and restoration of contaminated and blighted real properties in the Mid-Atlantic states. He graduated cum laude from Dartmouth College, with highest distinction in government. He has a Juris Doctor degree from University of Virginia Law School, where he was a Hardy Dillard Fellow, and a master's degree in tax law from New York University School of Law. He is a member of the bars of the State of New York and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

"We are excited to welcome Tim as our new board chair, our new officers, and our new trustees," President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "Their diverse areas of expertise will continue to help shape the future of our hospital and continue to position RUMC at the forefront of healthcare in the New York and New Jersey metropolitan area."

Harrison assumes the role of chair previously held by Ronald A. Purpora, who stepped off the board after 15 years of service. Purpora was voted chair emeritus at the June meeting of the board in recognition of his long service to RUMC. In addition to Harrison being named chair, also installed as new officers of the board were John C. Santora as vice chair; Thomas DelMastro as treasurer; Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD, as secretary; and Pankaj Patel, MD, as assistant secretary.

At the same meeting, the Board of Trustees welcomed the following new members:

Kenneth E. Corey began his career with the New York City Police Department in 1988 and retired as chief of the department, where he was responsible for the coordination and management of the agency's operational bureaus. As the former commanding officer of Patrol Borough Staten Island, he was applauded for his community engagement strategies and strengthening relationships between the NYPD and traditionally marginalized communities. Under his leadership, shooting incidents and homicides decreased more than 50 percent, while major crimes decreased by 11 percent.

Wing L. Law was born in Hong Kong and became a foreign student in 1969 at California State University at Fresno. In 1973, he continued his educational pursuits by attending Pace University graduate school. He began his professional journey in 1977 at Topps Chewing Gum, Inc. There, he rose from junior analyst to director of financial planning. Throughout his time at Topps, he developed annual and long-range financial plans, enabling the company to accomplish its goals until his departure in 2008.

Joseph Torres was born and raised less than a mile from RUMC. A proud graduate of Monsignor Farrell High School, he entered the field of financial planning and asset management upon graduating from New York University in 1992. Joe currently manages his advisory practice at Merrill Lynch on Staten Island. From 2015 to 2019, he served as chair of RUMC's successful capital campaign to develop the hospital's new, 35,000 sq. ft. state of the art James P. Molinaro Emergency Department, which opened in January of this year.

Robert Urs was born in Staten Island at St. Vincent's Hospital, now RUMC. He is a second-generation family member to serve the hospital and is the current president of the RUMC Foundation Board. His belief in community and giving back is the driving force behind his dedication to RUMC and the continuation of his family legacy. Robert is a licensed real estate associate broker practicing at Robert DeFalco Realty. He has achieved designations in Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI) and Seniors Real Estate Specialist (SRES). He is an active member of the National Association of Realtors and the Staten Island Board of Realtors.

All Eyes on Ocular Inflammation



David Mostafavi, MD, Chair of Ophthalmology

Inflammation, the body's reaction to a perceived threat from a foreign invader (e.g., bacteria, viruses, etc.) or damaged tissue, can be an important part of the healing process. However, ongoing inflammation also can be a symptom of chronic disease and can manifest itself anywhere, even in the eyes in the form of "ocular inflammation."

"Inflammation can occur in the joints, lungs, or any other part of the body, including the eyes," said David Mostafavi, MD, chair of ophthalmology. "One of the most serious types of ocular inflammation is uveitis, or inflammation of the uvea, which is the pigmented layers of the eye."

According to Dr. Mostafavi, there are different types of uveitis. "The eye is broken down into three different compartments," he said. "'Anterior uveitis' occurs in the front of the eye, 'intermediate uveitis' occurs in the middle part of the eye, and 'posterior uveitis' happens in the back of the eye, while a fourth type, known as 'panuveitis,' refers to inflammation in all three of those areas. Inflammation also can occur on the surface or 'skin' of the eye, as in the case of conjunctivitis, which is very common, or below that in the thicker part of the eye known as the sclera in the form of scleritis.

"The majority of inflammatory conditions of the eye are associated with such

symptoms as pain, redness, and light sensitivity; blurred vision also can be a symptom, especially for more advanced types of ocular inflammation that have progressed deeper into the eye," said Dr. Mostafavi, who added that certain cases of uveitis can cause significant vision loss if left untreated.

At the same time, "some patients can experience uveitis in a more asymptomatic or unexpected way," he said. "For example, patients who visit an eye doctor because they believe they need a stronger prescription in their glasses to address their blurry vision may be surprised to learn that they actually have uveitis, although that's more uncommon."

Causes and Treatment

"The majority of cases of ocular inflammation are autoimmune-related, the result of the body seeing its own tissues as foreign and attacking them," Dr. Mostafavi said. "Most patients who come in with ocular inflammation affecting the sclera or uvea will be referred for a blood workup and chest X-ray to determine if they have an underlying autoimmune condition that's either been inherited or that has developed.

"Other cases are triggered by certain types of bacteria and viruses in the body that manifest in the eye," he said, adding that shingles is a common virus affecting the eye. "Other conditions that can manifest in the eye and cause ocular inflammation include lupus, sarcoidosis, Lyme disease, ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, syphilis, and parasites affecting the eyes (the latter of which are more common in developing countries)."

Dr. Mostafavi said that treatment of uveitis begins by making the correct diagnosis and determining whether the condition is caused by an autoimmune disorder or an infection. "This is where bloodwork, testing, and an ophthalmologist's experience come into play," he said. "Once the specific cause is determined, we'll treat it with the appropriate agent."

For most types of ocular inflammation, "treatment often starts with steroid eye drops, though more advanced or dangerous cases occurring in the middle or back of the eye may be treated with an oral steroid such as Prednisone, which will suppress the immune system more effectively and faster than eye drops, and help prevent the patient from losing vision," Dr. Mostafavi said. "While oral steroids work right away, however, they can cause such side effects as sleep issues, weight gain, and the development of osteoporosis and hip issues over time, so we now work closely with rheumatologists to administer a new class of medications that help suppress the immune system without triggering those side effects.

"Depending on their situation and treatment, patients can see improvement of their uveitis in anywhere from a few hours to days or weeks, while others may have a lifelong battle with the condition," he said. "Since eye tissue is very thin and delicate, our number one priority is to help patients prevent vision loss without creating more toxicity and side effects in their body from the medication used to treat their condition, which is a fine balance.

"Ultimately, we hope that people with any symptoms of uveitis will take it seriously and see an optometrist or ophthalmologist to determine exactly what's going on, because the earlier the condition is diagnosed, the more easily and successfully it can be treated," Dr. Mostafavi said.

"Autoimmune disorders can absolutely manifest in the eyes," he said, "and individuals with an existing autoimmune disorder should have an eye exam every one to two years to ensure that nothing is being missed. As the old adage says, the eyes are the windows to the soul and an eye exam can offer great insight into one's overall health."

The hospital's Ophthalmology Department can be reached at 718-818-4848 or by visiting www.rumcsi.org/services/ophthalmology/.

August Observances

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

Month-Long:

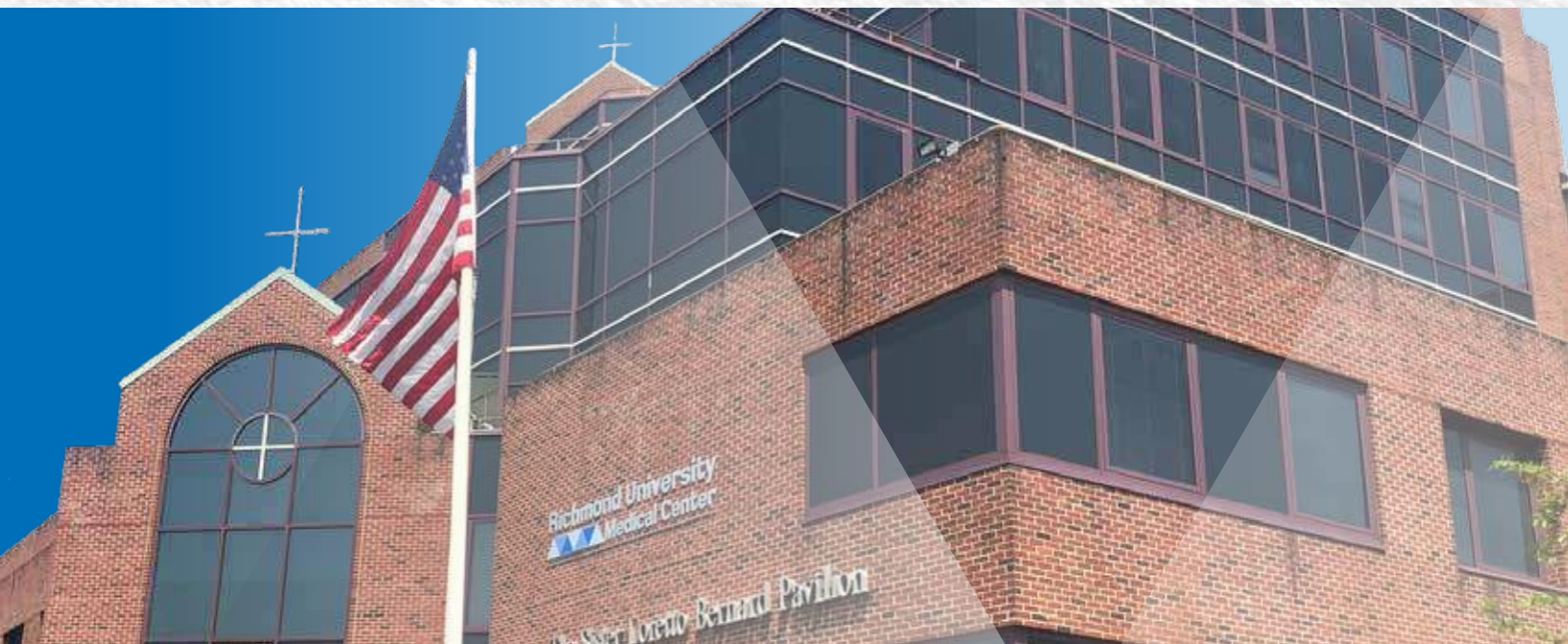
Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
Digestive Tract Paralysis Awareness Month
Gastroparesis Awareness Month
National Breastfeeding Month
National Eye Exam Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
Psoriasis Action Month
Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month
Summer Sun Safety Month

Week Long:

World Breastfeeding Week: August 1 to 7
National Health Center Week: August 6 to 12
Contact Lens Health Week: August 20 to 26

Recognition Days:

World Lung Cancer Day: August 1
National Minority Donor Awareness Day: August 1
Cloves Syndrome Awareness Day: August 3
World Breast Cancer Research Day: August 18
World Humanitarian Day: August 19
National Grief Awareness Day: August 30
International Overdose Awareness Day: August 31



Congratulations to our Employees of the Month!



John Cornago
ED Pharmacy Tech



Denuka D. Wijesundara
Nursing Aid - Seton 3-1

Blankets of Love and Support Donated to Patients at RUMC's Center for Cancer Care



Photo: Staff from RUMC's Center for Cancer Care join RUMC President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, (3rd left) in accepting a donation of blankets and financial support from Island Auto Group, Subaru of America, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Patients receiving care and treatment at Richmond University Medical Center's Center for Cancer Care can thank Subaru of America, Island Subaru, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society for making their cancer treatment more comfortable thanks to new blankets donated to the center, along with financial support of over \$27,000.

"Subaru of America, Island Subaru, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society have always been there for our cancer patients," President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said. "For our patients undergoing treatment, the comfort of a blanket, whether to keep someone warm or just be a source of security, has a more profound impact than many realize. We are blessed to have community partners who continually step up to be part of the cancer care process and who want to remind our patients and their families they are not alone in their fight."

In addition to the donation of over 250 new blue and white blankets, Subaru of America and Island Subaru also presented a check for \$27,165 to the Richmond University Medical Center Foundation. The amount, based on a percentage from auto sales last year, will support RUMC's operations.

"Thank you to Subaru and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society for the lovely, comforting blankets and financial support for our cancer patients. It will certainly provide warmth and love during our patients' brave journeys," Victoria A. Forte, MD, cancer service line director, chief of hematology-oncology, and program director hematology-oncology fellowship, said.

Often patients undergoing cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy, experience chills due to a heightened sensitivity to temperature and/or iron deficiency. For pediatric cancer patients, wrapping themselves in a blanket, like those donated, also provides a sense of security.

"Island Auto Group is proud to be partner with Subaru of America in the Share the Love Program," Island Auto Group partner and RUMC Trustee Marcello Sciarrino said. "Island Auto Group, with Subaru, has donated close to \$273,000 since 2017. Island Auto Group shares Subaru's commitment to the community and appreciates its true partnership."

Celebrating five years of service to the community this year, RUMC's Center for Cancer Care is a state-of-the-art outpatient facility providing the latest medical and radiologic treatments and therapies. Located at 1000 South Avenue, the center has received national accreditations from the American College of Radiation Oncology (ACRO) and American College of Radiology for constant high quality patient care and safety. RUMC's oncology program has also been accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer for over 80 consecutive years, making it the longest consecutively accredited cancer program on Staten Island.