

Richmond University Medical Center

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Then & Now: James P. Molinaro Emergency Department Celebrates One-Year Milestone



THEN (January 2022)



NOW



THEN



NOW



THEN



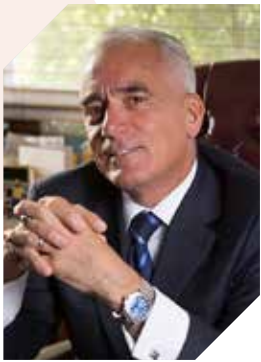
NOW

On January 20, 2024, Richmond University Medical Center's James P. Molinaro Emergency Department celebrated its One-year anniversary. Over the course of its first year in operation, the Emergency Department, a Level I Adult and Level II Pediatric Trauma Center, treated over 52,000 people. The Emergency Department is staffed by a team of over 20 board certified emergency physicians and close to 20 physician assistants in affiliation with the Mount Sinai Health System. The Emergency Department's patient volume in 2023 increased 5 percent over the previous year.



Donor wall located in the main lobby of the Emergency Department

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



As we celebrate February as American Heart Month, there is no denying that the growing rate of heart disease in the United States is troubling to say the least. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is the leading cause of death nationally. High blood pressure and cholesterol are two of the primary causes of heart disease. Approximately 27% of Staten Island adults have high blood

pressure and/or high cholesterol, a slightly lower proportion than the nation overall. Yet despite this finding, Staten Island has historically had a higher rate of death due to heart disease than the rest of New York City.

While modern medicine has yet to find a way to prevent heart disease, we have become very effective at addressing it once diagnosed, and providing fast, life-saving care when cardiac emergencies occur. Here at RUMC in 2023, under the direction of Francesco Rotatori, MD, FACC, our Cardiovascular Department Chief, more than 500 cardiac catheterizations and close to 200 percutaneous coronary interventions were performed. Ninety minutes is the time our physicians guarantee a heart attack will be treated with balloon angioplasty, when needed. That is ninety minutes from the moment the ambulance is called to the patient's home, to the moment the patient undergoes the procedure in our cardiac catheterization lab. So it's no surprise that in the past year our Cardiovascular Department has earned national awards and accreditations from the American College of Cardiology, American Heart Association and US News and World Report, to name a few.

Our best weapons against this disease remain education and early screening. Scheduling an annual physical, whether you are at an elevated risk for heart disease or not, is also critical

to overall good health and can catch something early before progression where advanced intervention, including surgery, may be necessary. Last year, through the combined efforts of our Cardiovascular Department, Public Relations and Marketing Department, and many others, over 1,000 free health screenings were provided across Staten Island. Free blood pressure checks and EKGs were among the screenings offered at community events and health fairs. Dr. Rotatori and his team also spoke at many community events, spreading the word about good heart health. These educational opportunities along with screenings have undoubtedly led to a new level of awareness for many people. Please feel free to join us as volunteers when we conduct these screenings, we can always use your help.

Later this year we will begin construction on the Joan and Alan Bernikow Heart and Vascular Institute. Named for our longtime trustee, the late Alan Bernikow and his wife, this new state of the art institute will feature a world-class cardiac catheterization lab. Housed within the lab will be one of the most advanced forms of interventional medical technology: a new \$1.8 million biplane-imaging machine. The biplane will allow our medical staff to identify and treat cardiac and neurovascular blockages, aneurysms, and additional abnormalities that could lead to stroke, hemorrhaging, and other neurovascular complications. Yet another facility that will benefit our community for many years to come! More to come as this latest chapter in the future of our hospital unfolds.

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

"I had the best experience with Dr. Adams, Dr. Lee, and every technician. They are friendly and respectful, and the facility was clean, calm, and conveniently located for me to balance treatment with work. Staten Island is lucky to have this state-of-the-art facility to care for our community in our time of need."

— Center for Cancer Care Patient

"I had an emergency visit here and I just have to say that the service here was outstanding. Dr. Pourshariati and staff were amazing. Very kind group of ladies that made me feel heard and comfortable during my stay. Dr. P was very patient and listened to what was bothering me. I have a fear of hospitals,

but she reassured me every step of the way. I also have a fear of needles, but the nurse who attended me was super funny and kind. Hopefully I don't have to come again, but if I needed to, I'd definitely come here."

— Emergency Department Patient

Dr. DiMizio was awesome. He was super attentive and listened carefully to all of my concerns. He didn't rush me or dismiss me like other doctors have. He has helped me so much with my pain and understanding my condition already. Thank you!

— Actual Patient of Daniel DiMizio, MD, Chief of Rheumatology

RUMC Medical Staff Honors Two at Annual Celebration



President of the Medical Staff, Francesco Rotatori, MD; Brian Gilchrist, MD; and Chair of Surgery, Loren Harris, MD.



President of the Medical Staff, Francesco Rotatori, MD; Richard Salhany; and Chief Medical Officer, Pietro Carpenito, MD.

On January 11, the medical staff at Richmond University Medical Center held their annual holiday party. The event is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and celebrate select individuals for their contributions to their colleagues and the hospital's patients.

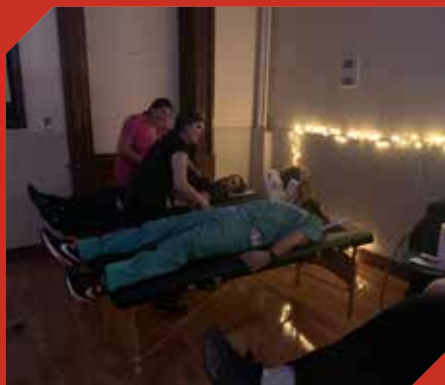
This year, the Dr. William Frederick Award was bestowed upon board certified Chief of Pediatric Surgery, Brian Gilchrist, MD.

The inaugural Humanitarian Award of Excellence was presented to former Chief Administrative Officer and President of

the Richmond Health Network, Richard Salhany. The award will be presented to a non-medical or clinical individual who has supported the medical staff and embodied the mission of Richmond University Medical Center.

Annual Spa Day Held for Hospital Residents

Self-care is critical to avoid burnout and reduce stress. Each year, Richmond University Medical Center's Graduate Medical Education (GME) Department hosts a spa day for the medical staff and residents. Chair and table massages, meditation, healthy foods, and snacks were part of this year's spa day. Over a dozen baskets were also raffled off during the event. Baskets contained movie tickets, cooking materials, beauty products, blankets, and additional items.



RUMC's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program Provides Community with Education, Advocacy, and Treatment

First identified in the U.S. in the early 1980s, "human immunodeficiency virus" (HIV) attacks cells that help the body fight infection, making individuals who are HIV-positive more vulnerable to other infections and diseases. Once considered a death sentence for many victims whose HIV developed into "acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (AIDS) and fraught with stigma based on misconceptions about who it affected and how it could be contracted, HIV can now be effectively treated with a range of medications that can significantly reduce the presence of the virus and enable patients to lead a normal life.

Richmond University Medical Center's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program is an outpatient clinic located at 800 Castleton Avenue that has been supporting patients since the initial outbreak of the AIDS crisis over 40 years ago. The clinic helps educate residents about HIV, treats and advocates for those who are HIV-positive, and works to prevent further spread of the virus.

"We currently have 80 patients in our program, which falls under a broader program that treats infectious diseases," shared Carole Harte, MSN, FNP, board certified nurse practitioner and coordinator of the hospital's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program. "Our internal medicine specialist, Dr. Muratha Arulthasan, sees patients with such conditions as urinary tract infections, Lyme disease, osteomyelitis (bone infections), and other infection-related issues, while I see and treat patients with sexually transmitted conditions such as syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes and HIV/AIDS."

While HIV and AIDS have historically been perceived as afflicting gay men, Harte is quick to note that 70 percent of her current patients are in fact heterosexuals, both male and female. "Because HIV can be contracted from others who unknowingly have it, the Department of Health recommends that anyone from age 13-64 should be tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime because they

could have it and not even know," Harte said. "It's important to catch it early, before it advances to AIDS and can then lead to multisystem implications such as cancers, cardiac issues, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML), pneumonia, and other potentially serious conditions."

Serving as a primary care provider for most of the program's HIV patients, "I begin treating each patient by doing a full physical assessment complete with appropriate blood tests, which include a



basic metabolic panel, tuberculosis test, t-cell test, and viral load RNA test," Harte said. "We also oversee our patients' annual dental check-ups, ophthalmology visits at the eye clinic within the main hospital, and age-appropriate screenings for other conditions/co-morbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer."

Funded by a grant from The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, "our clinic works with two well-known organizations on Staten Island that manage HIV and offer navigators and peer support — Project Hospitality and Community Health Action of Staten Island," said Harte, who receives many of her clinic's patients through referrals from those two organizations. "(In 2023), we've had six new HIV diagnoses, which is higher than usual" — a trend which she attributes to increased testing by health providers, private doctors, clinics, and hospital ERs on Staten Island as well as to community behavior and social media sites which make it easier than ever for people to connect and meet up.

According to Harte, symptoms of HIV — which can include fatigue, malaise, cough, fever, unexplained weight loss, sore throat, and headache — often mimic those of the common flu and can be easy to ignore.

"People may feel better after taking cold or flu medication, but all the while the virus is multiplying in their body," she said. "Months later the symptoms could arise again, or the virus can advance, so people need to be alert."

Treatment and Prevention

Thankfully, treatments for HIV have advanced dramatically over the past several decades.

"Current treatments are made up of two or three medications in one pill that attack the virus at different levels of replication," Harte said. "They kill the virus and prevent it from multiplying and spreading, often bringing viral loads down to near-imperceptible levels in many patients."

"At our clinic, we have access to one of the best, newest, and most effective medications and can begin administering it on the day of diagnosis once the patient agrees to start treatment," Harte said of a protocol recommended by both the Department of Health and the CDC. "As a prevention strategy, anyone with an HIV diagnosis in New York State will get medical insurance to cover doctor's visits, bloodwork, and medication to stop the spread."

With their clinic successfully achieving viral load reduction in 92 percent of their patients, Harte is eager to continue educating the public and further reducing the spread of HIV. "One of my goals is to get more people on PREP, a medication given to partners of those with HIV to decrease their risk of contracting it," she said. "We hope to identify more HIV-positive patients in the community whose diagnosis is unknown to them, or who are no longer receiving the care they need for HIV, to help prevent the spread and address these cases before they progress to AIDS."

For more information, contact Richmond University Medical Center's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program at 800 Castleton Ave. at 718-818-1094

New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Feven Abriha — *Resident PGY 1*

Lisa Allende — *RN Extern*

Salvatore Aspormonte — *Apprentice*

Evgeny Belilovskiy — *Paramedic*

Brianna Berjaoui — *RN Extern*

Melinda Bojkovic — *RN Intern*

Thomas Bossert — *RN Intern*

Jean Cetoute — *Nurse Practitioner*

Thomas DePrimo — *Custodian*

Victoria DeWindt — *Classroom Substitute*

Manuel Encarnacion — *RN Extern*

Heba Gerges — *Clinical Lab Tec*

Henris Gonzalez — *Storeroom Manager*

Shamiya Guirie — *RN Extern*

Andrew Hennawy — *RN Extern*

Tayer Hilton — *LMHC*

Reduan Hossain — *Nursing Assistant*

Daniel Hoxha — *Food Service Worker*

Hardy Juarez — *Classroom Sub*

MD Nazmul Khan — *Project Manager*

Stacey Kindos — *Receptionist*

Brandon King — *EMT*

Milana Levitan — *RN*

Carla Muccillo — *Mamo Tech*

Azizjon Odiljonov — *RN Extern*

Anthony Olivio — *EMT*

Kristen Padell — *Delivery Room Tech*

Janet Pica — *RN*

Christine Pirozzi — *Mamo Tech*

Tatiana Richards — *RN Extern*

Kimberly Rodriguez — *RN*

Felicia Roseto — *Respiratory Manager*

Anita Stapor — *Social Worker*

Sujani Sunanayaka — *Mental Health Tech*

Victoria Tomeo — *RN Extern*

Samantha Tse — *Occupations Therapist*

Adina Yenas — *RN Extern*

Inna Youssef — *AVP of Quality Mgmt*

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to our employees of the month



Felicia Cook, RN

Surgical Intensive Care Unit
Not pictured

Kristina Gotyer, RN

Surgical Intensive Care Unit
Center, left

Cindy Pietromonico, RN

Surgical Intensive Care Unit
Center, right

Tayler Swanberg, RN

Surgical Intensive Care Unit
Not pictured

Chief of Women's Cardiovascular Health Working to Combat Disparities in Treatment of Heart Disease Among Women



Fiona Shehaj, MD,
*Chief, Women's
Cardiovascular Health*

According to a recent study by the National Institutes of Health, women ages 18 to 55 who suffer a heart attack are at significantly greater risk of rehospitalization compared to men — likely the result of inadequate medical monitoring and

management of such risk factors as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and depression following their cardiac event.

It is a disparity that Fiona Shehaj, MD, RUMC's chief of women's cardiovascular health, is working diligently to address. In the following interview, Dr. Shehaj discusses the double standard that persists nationwide when it comes to treating women with heart disease and the extensive measures she and her colleagues take to ensure that women at risk for heart disease receive the personalized care and proactive follow-up needed to safeguard their health and prevent one or more cardiac incidents.

What trends have you witnessed when it comes to women and heart attacks?

Dr. Shehaj: Heart attacks used to be associated with women ages 60 and older, but over the past decade, we've seen a lot of younger women in their 40s and 50s suffering coronary events, often because their underlying risk factors aren't being adequately managed or controlled in their 20s and 30s.

What are some of the risk factors for heart disease or heart attack that require proactive management?

Dr. Shehaj: High blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol can all negatively impact heart health, as can environmental factors like smoking, low socioeconomic status, and high stress at home or on the job; letting these factors go unchecked in their 30s leads to more women in their 40s and 50s suffering a heart attack. The

experience of having had a coronary artery event is then the number one risk factor for a second one. Given that a coronary artery event results in scar tissue that weakens the heart, a second heart attack or blockage compromises even more muscle tissue, further weakening the heart and increasing the risk of heart failure down the line.

After a woman suffers a heart attack and, for example, receives placement of a stent, she should undergo aggressive management and control of such factors as blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes, but we're still not seeing that across the board. There's been a great deal of research into why many providers aren't as aggressive with women as they are with men when it comes to medical follow-up after a coronary artery event. For reasons that are still somewhat unclear, female heart attack patients are more likely than men to be discharged from the hospital without being placed on statins to control their cholesterol or insulin therapies to address their diabetes; they're less likely to be instructed on the diet and exercise regimen they need to pursue for their health, and studies show that they're also less likely to be referred for cardiopulmonary rehabilitation after a cardiac event. Many experts attribute this shortfall to the fact that some doctors don't take women's symptoms as seriously as men's. We've also witnessed that a woman's chances of developing depression following a heart attack are higher than a man's, possibly because their inability to care for their family and/or return to work immediately triggers feelings of anxiety and guilt.

How does Richmond University Medical Center target cardiac services toward women and proactively support women at risk of a first or second cardiac event?

Dr. Shehaj: We have built-in systems within our discharge process that will automatically refer cardiac patients — regardless of gender — for rehab at Richmond University Medical Center's state-of-the-art Cardiopulmonary

Rehabilitation Center on Kissel Avenue, and other checks throughout the discharge process will ensure that they're prescribed the proper medication for heart disease. Because the days following their release from the hospital are a vulnerable time for cardiac patients, every cardiac patient receives a post-cardiac follow-up within one week of discharge. Patients can be very overwhelmed by their cardiac event and may not register all of the information shared with them in the hospital, so this follow-up session is designed to reiterate their care plan, address any questions they may have, and ensure that all of their medical appointments, referrals, and medications are in order. For those patients who don't have transportation or are unable to take off from work to attend a doctor's appointment in-person, Richmond University Medical Center can accommodate them virtually via telehealth.

What final message would you like to share with women who are at risk of a first or second heart attack?

Dr. Shehaj: We encourage women with risk factors to ask for help. Our team will be happy to explain the protocol they should follow, work with them on a personalized care plan, and organize follow-up visits in-person or via telehealth. As a community, we can tackle this gender disparity to help ensure that women get the support they need, are taken more seriously by the medical community, and can advocate for their own health. We do a great deal of community outreach designed to help educate women on risk factors for heart disease and how we can proactively combat this critical issue together. It all starts with education.

Appointments with Dr. Shehaj or any member of RUMC's Cardiovascular Department can be scheduled by calling 718-818-7425. Outpatient services are provided on the lower level of the Dr. Krishna Urs Medical Pavilion, located at 1161 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, N.Y., 10301.

NEW FACES

Felicia Roseto Respiratory Manager

Felicia brings a wealth of experience and a passion for ensuring top-notch patient care. In her previous position as a supervisor at Staten Island University Hospital, Felicia demonstrated leadership in overseeing various departments and actively contributing to policy updates and inspections. Her extensive background as a respiratory therapist, coupled with proficiency in managing critical care units and utilizing various respiratory devices, makes Felicia a valuable addition to the RUMC team. Felicia earned her bachelor of science degree in respiratory care from Long Island University in 2013.



February Observances

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

Month-Long:

American Heart Month
Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Month
Gallbladder and Bile Duct Cancer Awareness Month
International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month
Low Vision Awareness Month
Marfan Syndrome Awareness Month
National Cancer Prevention Month
National Children's Dental Health Month
National Self-Check Month
Raynaud's Awareness Month

Week Long:

February 5 to 11: Tinnitus Awareness Week
February 7 to 13: African Heritage & Health Week
February 7 to 14: Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week
February 11 to 17: Heart Failure Awareness Week
National Cardiac Rehabilitation Week

February 11 to 17: Sepsis Survivor Week:

February 26 to 29: National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Recognition Days:

February 1: World Aspergillosis Day
February 2: Go Red For Women
February 2: Rheumatoid Awareness Day
February 4: World Cancer Day
February 7: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
February 12: International Epilepsy Day
February 14: National Donor Day
February 14: National Impotence Day
February 16: National Caregivers Day
February 22: National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day
February 22: Recreational Sports & Fitness Day
February 27: National Protein Day
February 28: International Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day
February 29: Rare Disease Day

Richmond University Medical Center



SAVE THE DATE

May 20, 2024
Richmond County
Country Club



For more information, please visit www.rumcsi.org/golf or contact Gina Ferreri at 718.818.2106