

## Richmond University Medical Center Unveils Exhibit Commemorating COVID-19 Pandemic Response



*The title of the new exhibit adorns the wall along with a welcome from hospital leadership.*

On June 25, Richmond University Medical Center unveiled its new exhibit memorializing the hospital's response to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. The exhibit, located on the main floor adjacent to the lobby, is intended to shine a light on RUMC's frontline workers who worked tirelessly to provide continuous care to its patients as well as the generosity and support the hospital received from the community.

"One of the amazing things was the work ethic put forth by the team and no one complained. Amazing, amazing stuff," RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, said.

A timeline of dates and events captures pivotal moments from the pandemic on a global, national, regional, and local level. Visitors are also able to view videos about staff and patients, see artwork sent during the pandemic from local schools, and read letters received from a grateful community.

"We witnessed something truly remarkable: a team that never once said 'that's not my job,'" Chief Medical Officer Philip Otterbeck, MD, said. "Your humanity, most importantly, will never be forgotten."

A "hotbed" for COVID-19 positivity in New York City, RUMC admitted its first COVID-19 positive patient on March 14, 2020. Less than three weeks later, over 200 patients were admitted, many in need of advanced care, some placed almost immediately on ventilators to assist their breathing.

"We were applying our knowledge to cure people," Francesco Rotatori, MD, President of the RUMC Medical Staff, said. "But we are also human beings, so

I get very emotional when I recall that time and what we did for people."

The exhibit also pays special tribute to three RUMC employees who passed away during the pandemic due to COVID-19: William Langley from the Dietary Services Department, Mary Ellen Porter, a longtime nurse and nurse administrator, and Margerat Venditti from the Medical Records Department.

The exhibit was designed in partnership with the Staten Island Museum and DavidHenry Marketing & Media, with support provided in part by the Richmond University Medical Center Auxiliary.



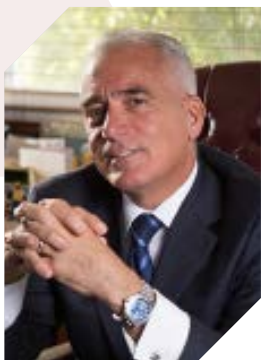
*Medical professionals who were on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic help President and CEO Daniel J. Messina cut the ribbon to open the new exhibit.*

"I know this content is difficult to revisit," Janice Monger, Executive Director of the Staten Island Museum, said. "There was such tremendous loss, but there was also so much coming together."

"It was a true honor for our team to be able to participate in the creation of this heartfelt tribute to the RUMC heroes of the pandemic," David Fink, President and Chief Communications Officer for DavidHenry Marketing & Media, said. "Working with the RUMC marketing team is always a pleasure and collaborating with them and the Staten Island Museum to bring this special initiative to life, to help educate and present the events that occurred and the lives that were saved at the hospital, makes this project a treasured moment for us at DavidHenry Marketing & Media."

*For a collage of photos from the ceremony, see page 8.*

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



As many of you have heard, President Donald Trump has officially signed into law what he has called a “big, beautiful bill” that will have significant implications for hospitals and the healthcare industry at large. This legislation includes sweeping changes to Medicaid reimbursement models, new

incentive structures for hospitals that demonstrate measurable quality and efficiency improvements, and a national emphasis on reducing regulatory burdens that many providers have long struggled with.

In addition, the bill introduces pilot programs encouraging the use of technology to streamline patient care coordination and shifts certain federal funding streams into performance-based payment mechanisms. It also aims to expand flexibility for states in managing Medicaid populations, with a focus on local innovation and accountability.

While these changes bring new challenges, they also bring opportunity, and at Richmond University Medical Center, we will meet this moment as we always do: with strength, unity, and a deep commitment to those we serve. We have faced turbulent times before, and we have emerged stronger each and every time.

We are already evaluating the bill’s implications closely, working in partnership with our consulting and academic partners to navigate each component effectively and strategically. The road ahead will require adaptation, collaboration, and laser focus, but I have every confidence in our ability to rise to the occasion as we have done so many times before.

Our leadership team and Board of Trustees are fully engaged, and your voices will be part of the conversation every step of the way. I know this team, our RUMC Family, and I know our collective spirit will continue to push us forward, regardless of the landscape.

We will keep you informed as implementation unfolds, and I promise you that our commitment to transparency and an open dialogue will remain unchanged. Thank you all for your continued dedication, resilience, and support.

**Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. Messina".

**Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE**

President and  
Chief Executive Officer

## Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

“I just moved to Staten Island, and this hospital did not disappoint me. As soon as I sat in the emergency room, the doctor came to assess my needs. Every medical person I encountered made me feel welcome.”

— Q.H.

“Excellent visit for pre-appointment blood work. Was in and out in 15 minutes.”

— F.C.

“Had a partial thyroidectomy here performed by Dr. Sivarajah and the nurses here were very nice and accommodating. They made my procedure a smooth one.”

— N.A.

“Dr. Sabia Akbar is an excellent doctor. She is very gentle and has a great bedside manner. I highly recommend her.”

— A.P.

“Receptionists were pleasant and helpful. Dr. Naing explained all my test results. She is very easy to talk to and explains all test results.”

— R.A.

# RUMC Receives Accreditation from College of American Pathologists



*Svetoslav Bardarov, MD, Chair, Department of Laboratory Medicine*



*AnnMarie Brown, Laboratory Administrative Director*

Richmond University Medical Center earned accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) for its high-quality care of lab specimens and tests, as well as its strict adherence to quality control measures developed for its Department of Laboratory Medicine. Just over 8,000 facilities worldwide, including RUMC, have earned this accreditation.

“Earning accreditation from the College of American Pathologists is a significant achievement for Richmond University Medical Center,” said Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer of RUMC. “It reflects the outstanding work of our Department of Laboratory Medicine and their unwavering commitment to excellence. This recognition underscores the high standards we uphold in specimen handling, testing accuracy, and quality control, ultimately reinforcing the trust our patients place in us every day.”

The CAP Accreditation Committee awarded accreditation to RUMC based

on results of a recent on-site inspection as part of the CAP’s Accreditation Program. During the CAP accreditation process, designed to ensure the highest standard of care for all laboratory patients, inspectors examined RUMC’s laboratory records and quality control procedures. CAP inspectors also examined laboratory staff qualifications, equipment, facilities, safety programs and records, and overall management.

In 2024, RUMC’s Department of Laboratory Medicine performed over 1.725 million lab tests and nearly 9,600 pathology procedures including surgical biopsies and autopsies. These were increases over the previous year, in 2023, when the department performed over 1.5 million lab tests and nearly 9,300 pathology procedures.

“Achieving CAP accreditation is a significant milestone that reflects the exceptional dedication, professionalism, and teamwork of our laboratory staff,” Svetoslav Bardarov, MD, chair of RUMC’s Department of Laboratory Medicine,

said. “We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality and patient care, and this recognition from the College of American Pathologists reaffirms that commitment.”

As the world’s largest organization of board certified pathologists and leading provider of laboratory accreditation and proficiency testing programs, the College of American Pathologists serves patients, pathologists, and the public by fostering and advocating excellence in the practice of pathology and laboratory medicine worldwide.

“The CAP is pleased to recognize Richmond University Medical Center as meeting the high standard set as part of the CAP’s Laboratory Accreditation Program,” said Richard M. Scanlan, MD, FCAP, chair of the CAP’s Council on Accreditation. “RUMC joins the thousands of others that are committed to raising the quality of laboratory services nationally and internationally.”



## RUMC Auxiliary Holds Spring Brunch, Installs New Officers

On June 5, the RUMC Auxiliary held its annual Spring Brunch. The event was held at LiGreci's Staaten and was attended by over 100 people including Auxiliary members, hospital leadership

and staff. Proceeds from the event will support the Auxiliary's 2025 grant program. Also last month, the Auxiliary installed its slate of officers for the 2025-2026 session. The incoming officers are

Lucille Forlenza, President; Sharon Mineo, Vice President; Diane Scanlon, Recording Secretary; Debra Messina, Treasurer; and Jennifer Dominguez, Corresponding Secretary.



*Attendees for the 2025 Spring Brunch were encouraged to wear festive hats.*



*The new RUMC Auxiliary officers for 2025-2026.*

## RUMC Pediatric Endocrinologist Installed as President of Richmond County Medical Society



*New officers with outgoing president Dr. Ana Mendez (far right). They are Dr. Melissa Grageda, Treasurer; Dr. Charles Sineri, President-Elect; Dr. Ishita Kharode, President; Dr. Lance Austein, Secretary; and Dr. Victoria Forte, Vice President.*

On June 18, the Richmond County Medical Society installed its new slate of officers, which included Ishita Kharode, MD, as its 219th President. Dr. Kharode is a pediatric endocrinologist at Richmond University Medical Center.

"I am excited to be taking over as 219th president of the Richmond County Medical Society," Dr. Kharode said. "My main focus will be the issue of health

literacy, which I hope to highlight during upcoming meetings and events throughout the year. I look forward to working with our new executive board and medical society at large. I would also like to invite those who are eligible to join the medical society in our endeavors."

Dr. Kharode is a pediatric endocrinologist at Richmond University Medical Center

and also provides outpatient care as a member of RUMC's Richmond Health Network. She is board certified in both General Pediatrics and Pediatric Endocrinology. Dr. Kharode received her medical school degree from St. George's University. She completed her pediatric residency at SUNY-Upstate Medical University/Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital, and her pediatric endocrinology fellowship at New York - Presbyterian Hospital/ Weill Cornell Medical Center.

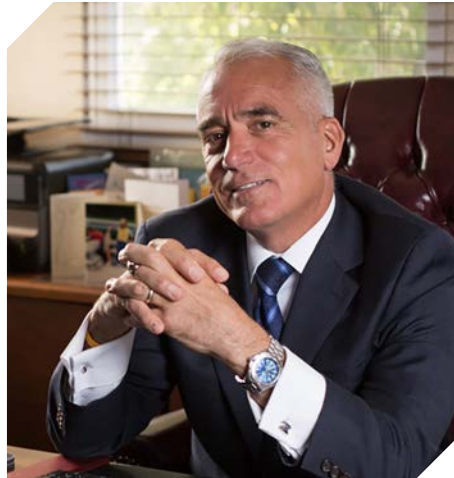
Also installed as new officers for the Society were Charles Sineri, MD, as President-Elect; Victoria Forte, MD, as Vice President; Lance Austein, MD, as Secretary; and Melissa Grageda, MD, as Treasurer. Dr. Sineri, Dr. Forte, and Dr. Grageda are all physicians at Richmond University Medical Center.

Serving Staten Island for over 200 years, the Richmond County Medical Society's mission is to enhance healthcare delivery and influence legislation that may impact delivery of those services. The Society's members include physicians from both hospitals, medical groups, and private practices across Staten Island.

## RUMC President and CEO Re-Elected to Board of Statewide Hospital Association

President and Chief Executive Officer of Richmond University Medical Center Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, has been re-appointed to the Board of Governors for the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA). The Association represents nearly 300 hospitals and healthcare systems across New York State, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

"I am honored to be reappointed to the Board of Governors of the Greater New York Hospital Association, Messina said. "GNYHA plays a critical role in advocating for high quality, equitable healthcare, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside an outstanding group of leaders to support our hospitals, providers, and the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to champion innovation, resilience, and improved access to healthcare for everyone."



Messina, who has served on the board since 2017, will continue to serve for another three-year term. The GNYHA Board of Governors comprises industry leaders and helps shape healthcare policy at the local, state, regional, and federal levels.

"We are very fortunate to continue to have Dan Messina on the GNYHA Board of Governors," said GNYHA President Kenneth E. Raske. "He is a proven leader, and his vision and experience are invaluable during these challenging times for New York's health care community. I look forward to working closely with Dan on a host of important hospital issues in the months to come."

A lifelong resident of Staten Island, Messina has more than 30 years of healthcare leadership experience. He has served as President and CEO of RUMC since 2014. Prior to RUMC, Messina served for 10 years at Hackensack University Medical Center as Vice President for Operations and 13 years as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at CentraState Health Care System in New Jersey.

## Drs. Bibawy and Saverimuttu Honored by New York State Women Inc.

On June 2, the Staten Island Chapter of New York State Women Inc. held its annual Women of Distinction Breakfast. Among this year's honorees were Suzy Bibawy, MD, Medical Director of our Outpatient Department, and Jessie Saverimuttu, MD, our Chief of Quality Improvement, Department of Medicine. Dr. Saverimuttu is also Clinical Chair of our Infection Control Committee. Many of their RUMC colleagues were in attendance.

Formerly known as the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, founded in July 1919, New York State Women Inc. helps connect and support women personally, professionally, and politically through career advancement resources, work/life strategies, leadership development, and personal as well as professional connections.



*Dr. Jessie Saverimuttu accepting her award.*



## July Observances

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

### Month-Long:

Cord Blood Awareness Month  
Healthy Vision Month  
International Group B Strep Awareness Month  
Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month  
National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month  
National Hemochromatosis Awareness Month

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month  
Sarcoma Awareness Month  
UV Safety Month

### Recognition Days:

July 11: World Population Day  
July 22: World Brain Day  
July 23: World Sjogren's Day  
July 28: World Hepatitis Day



## Nurse Honored for Supporting Organ Donation Program at RUMC

Surgical Intensive Care Unit nurse Peace Ali, RN, was recently recognized with a Certificate of Recognition by LiveOnNY for her outstanding contributions to the organ donation process. This prestigious honor was awarded to only a handful of nurses out of the 86 acute care hospitals within the LiveOnNY service area.

Working closely with LiveOnNY staff, Peace was recognized for playing a pivotal role in educating her co-workers about the organ donation process and guiding the overall donation experience within the unit.

LiveOnNY is a nonprofit organization that facilitates organ donation and transplantation in the greater New York City area. The organization partners with hospitals and transplant centers to deliver the “gift of life” to the nearly 8,000 New Yorkers currently waiting for an organ transplant.



## New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Tolu Adeyemi — *RN Extern*

Sarah Altreache — *RN*

Giovaonna Anselmo — *RN Extern*

Kemila Barrett — *Respiratory Therapist*

Phyllis Beck — *Clinical Research Manager*

Felix Broisovskiy — *Respiratory Therapist*

Peter Burgos — *Desktop/Network Cable*

Laura Chillelli — *Outreach Specialist*

George Cordaza — *Food Service Worker*

Juliet Demarco — *Ultrasound Tech*

Anaëlle Florent Sr. — *Benefit Specialist*

Silas Frost — *Paramedic*

John Fuchs — *Mental Health Technician*

Margarita Garcia — *Receptionist*

Maria Gayed — *RN*

Susan Glaper — *Medical Assistant*

Gabrielle Greeley — *RN Extern*

Leslie Griffith — *Dir. HRIS/HRIT*

Nicholas Hope — *Central Sterile Tech*

Tinamarie Howe — *Mental Health Technician*

Fabia Jackson — *Ultrasound Tech*

Francesca Kusayev — *Administrative Director of Nursing*

Jillian La Fata — *RN*

Marie LaTrace — *Administrative Director of Nursing*

Ardijana Lekperic — *RN*

Alex Li — *RN Extern*

Ricky Lugo — *RN Extern*

Chrystina Mecca — *Secretary*

Ruann Mohammed — *RN Extern*

Justine Molinari — *RN Extern*

Mary Okedoyin — *RN Extern*

Faustinus Onyekaonwu — *Respiratory Therapist*

Jade Perez — *RN Extern*

Dominick Peterson — *RN Extern*

Andrea Rivera — *EMT*

Xiomara Rodriguez — *RN Extern*

Kassandra Sai — *Licensed Acupuncturist*

Anthony Sutura — *RN Extern*

Bilal Tariq Clinical — *Lab Technology*

Arta Topalli — *RN*

Clifford Weimer — *RN Extern*

Asia Wickramanayake — *RN Extern*

## Celebrating Excellence in Residency and Fellowship Program Honoree

Each month, one or more residents and/or fellows are selected for their exemplary service, and for embodying RUMC's commitment to fostering a collaborative culture that enhances patient care and professional excellence. Honorees are nominated by their colleagues and selected by the Office of Graduate Medical Education's Wellness Council.

This month's honoree is **Emanoil Magdy Shafik, DPM. Dr. Shafik** is a PGY-3 in the Podiatry Department. He was born in Cairo, Egypt, and graduated in 2023 from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine.



## Congratulations to our employees of the month:

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### Donna Bartolo

Patient Information/ Reception Desk

### Stacey Ryan

Patient Information/ Reception Desk

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# Richmond University Medical Center Unveils Exhibit Commemorating COVID-19 Pandemic Response



*The timeline of events, items associated with the pandemic including PPE, masks, and an at-home COVID-19 test kit.*



*President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, spoke of the unity shown by staff throughout the entire pandemic response.*



*Artwork sent to the hospital from local schools during the pandemic. The drawings were sent by students to uplift the spirits of the hospital staff.*



*New York State Assembly Member Charles Fall*



*Staff and visitors viewing the exhibits timeline of events.*



*President of the RUMC Medical Staff, Francesco Rotatori, MD*