

Bump in local  
BIRTHRATES

Through bariatric surgery  
FEELING THE JOY OF LIFE

Healing with  
LIGHT + ENERGY

# synapse

THE CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL MAGAZINE | 2022 VOL 2



*Celebrating* 3000+ BIRTHS



Penn Medicine

# CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL WELLNESS CALENDAR

# PROGRAMS TO KEEP YOU WELL!

## WELLNESS PROGRAMS

*If you are looking to make healthier lifestyle choices, you will benefit from these educational programs offered by Chester County Hospital's Community Health and Wellness Services Department.*

### NUTRITION AND WEIGHT CONTROL

Whether you have a chronic health condition or want to improve your eating habits for your personal and physical well-being, we have the expertise and programs in place to help you.



#### Nutrition Counseling

Meet one-on-one with a Registered Dietitian.

#### Struggles & Solutions

A Dietitian leads a monthly discussion on an interesting, timely, and immediately useful topic about food, activity, and wellness.

#### Weight Management Programs –

- Truth About Weight Loss
- Your Weigh Down
- A Conversation about Emotional Eating

### WELLNESS PRESENTATIONS



We are committed to providing a broad scope of high-quality education programs that address specific life cycle needs and chronic health conditions and topics:

- Cancer
- Diabetes/Pre-Diabetes
- Heart and Lung
- Lifestyle Medicine
- Mental Health



- Nutrition
- Orthopaedics
- Senior Health
- Women's Health

### DIABETES PREVENTION

Approximately 88 million Americans have pre-diabetes. With early detection and awareness, you can take the steps to prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes. Our programs will help you make proven, achievable lifestyle changes to reduce your risk.



#### Reversing Pre-diabetes

A 90-minute program about diagnosing pre-diabetes and what to do to prevent Type 2 Diabetes.

#### Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

A six-week program led by a trained lifestyle coach to help you make lifestyle changes to improve your health.



#### National Diabetes Prevention Program

A year-long program designed by the Centers for Disease Control to help you make sustainable lifestyle changes.

### DIABETES EDUCATION

By learning to manage your diabetes, you can enjoy a long and active life. We have education programs to help you understand nutrition, blood sugar testing, exercise, and coping.

**Diabetes Basics** for Type 2 diabetes.

**Intensive Insulin Management Training**

For anyone on multiple insulin injections.

**Gestational Diabetes Management** for pregnant women who develop diabetes.

### CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Whether you are a first-timer or an experienced parent, we offer carefully crafted and comprehensive programs to support you during pregnancy, labor, postpartum and parenthood.



### SMOKING CESSATION

Our six-week cessation program, Stop Smoking Now! will teach you the tools you need to quit smoking. The class meets virtually weekly to help identify your smoking triggers and deal with withdrawal symptoms.



### SUPPORT GROUPS

We have a wide variety of support groups to provide participants with education, information-sharing, and support:

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart and Lung
- Parent Wellness Network
- Parkinson's Disease



### SPEAKERS BUREAU

We have a panel of healthcare providers and educators who can present to your group or organization for FREE. The format of your presentation can be flexible, ranging from a formal lecture presentation with questions and answers to a more informal/interactive program.



Additional program information, including descriptions, schedules, and registration, call 610.738.2300 or visit [ChesterCountyHospital.org/wellness](http://ChesterCountyHospital.org/wellness).

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## ▼ DEAR FRIENDS



If you are like me, you may have spent the summer months enjoying the company of friends and family. After long months of being a part, it felt good

to be able to vacation and gather in a group setting.

While our Emergency Department continues to navigate the peaks and valleys of varying volume levels, the incidence of COVID-19-positive admissions to Chester County Hospital (CCH) was manageable over the summer – even though our community became less isolated in July, August, and September. But as colder weather approaches, we must remain diligent. Cases of the flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV disease occurs primarily in infants younger than six months during their first fall and winter season of life) will increase. Both exhibit symptoms common to COVID. If you begin to feel sick, get tested for COVID. Kits should be available at your local pharmacy.

Our latest edition of *Synapse* features two patient stories. First, we meet Nicole, who recently had bariatric surgery here. Then Jessica recounts her experience after gynecologic surgery. Both of these local community members were treated by Penn Medicine specialists.

Kevin Sowti, MD, is one of our hospitalists, and in this issue, he tells us about a humanitarian mission he took to Ukraine. We also meet some of the new members of our Medical Staff, and we celebrate our clinical teams for their latest quality achievements in our Points of Pride section.

As fall turns into winter, we will welcome and share many holidays and celebrations in the months ahead. Stay safe as you congregate and embrace the cherished company of others.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Duncan  
President and CEO

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## synapse

SYNAPSE MAGAZINE SINCE 1981

*Synapse* is an award-winning publication produced by Chester County Hospital's Corporate Marketing Department. The articles provided in this magazine are solely for informational purposes. It should not be relied on or used in place of a physician's medical advice or assessment. Always consult a physician in matters of your health.

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**Over the last year, birth rates at Chester County Hospital jumped more than 10 percent. While a pandemic rebound explains part of it, the hospital's comprehensive – and individualistic – care is also a major factor.**

Many unusual things happened in the wake of the first wave of COVID. Among them, the birth rate rose across the United States after trending downward for 15 years. In July, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) announced that the one percent rise in US births in 2021 “was the first increase since 2014.”

There was a caveat: The US birth rate fell to a record low in 2020, the first year of the COVID pandemic. The first few months saw soaring unemployment, stay-at-home orders, and widespread uncertainty, which seemed to force would-be parents to reconsider their plans. Although, that period was short-lived. As restrictions eased and the economy slowly recovered, the US birth rate followed a similar trajectory, increasing four percent over the last six months of 2021, according to the NCHS.

This rebound effect explains a one percent and even a four percent gain in the birth rate, but not a more than

10 percent increase, which is what Chester County Hospital reported. In fiscal year 2021, 2,921 babies were delivered at Chester County Hospital. (*The fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.*) In fiscal year 2022, that number jumped to 3,231.

Katie Luzi Costantini, MSN, RNC-MNN, Director of Maternal Child Services for Chester County Hospital, points to the abundance of new residential construction across the region in recent years and suspects it could have fueled a more substantial rebound effect locally. According to the US Census Bureau, the county's population increased by seven percent between 2010 and 2020.

Amy Latyak, BSN, RN, CCE, CBC, the hospital's Childbirth Education Program Coordinator, attributes part of the rise to a growing awareness of the hospital's elite reputation. In August, Chester County Hospital was one of 145 hospitals nationwide and one of three in Pennsylvania to be included in Healthgrades' list of National Leaders in Obstetrics & Gynecology. The hospital was also recently ranked 10th in the Philadelphia region and 17th in the state by *US News & World Report*.





#grateful  
 THE NURSES  
 STATION BULLETIN  
 BOARD SAYS IT ALL...



LABOR AND DELIVERY CLINICAL MANAGER ANNETTE PAPPAS, MSN, RNC-OB, GREETES A NEW ARRIVAL!

Latyak oversees the hospital's Mother Baby Facebook Group, a forum with more than 2,800 members where expecting parents can pose questions to nurses and specialists at Chester County Hospital. There's also a wealth of posts by new parents who happily share the intimate details of their positive delivery experiences at the hospital. "I think that helps people solidify their decision to deliver here," Latyak says.

We recently asked mothers in the group who delivered a baby at Chester County Hospital during fiscal year 2022 to share some impressions of their experience. Kelly Gabe, who had her daughter, Avery, on May 15, wrote, "Congratulations on your record year. The excellent care provided by your staff is even more remarkable in that light. We could not have had a better birth journey.

A huge thank you to your staff." Kelsey Fraim delivered her son, Owen, on July 22, 2021. "We had such an amazing experience," she wrote. "We're forever grateful for our care team for keeping us all happy and well throughout our stay and even after."

### MEETING PARENTS WHERE THEY ARE

When the time comes for an expecting mother to deliver, she will be admitted to Chester County Hospital's Labor and Delivery Unit, where she'll remain until she has her baby. Soon after, they'll be moved together to a different area of the floor, the Mother and Baby Pavilion, which comprises 24 private patient rooms. But a mother's delivery experience at the hospital typically begins well before those days.

The Childbirth Education Program encompasses nine in-person classes at the hospital and virtually through Zoom. The subject matter spans the full spectrum of an expecting parent's potential concerns: preparation for the birth, breastfeeding basics, newborn care, and postpartum adjustments. There are also virtual tours—in English and Spanish—of the Labor and Delivery Unit, newborn

*continued >*



# celebrating births... *continued*

nursery, Mother and Baby Pavilion, and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. A fee is charged for all classes. Financial assistance is available.

A series of independent study-style e-classes, which cover many of the same subjects, is also offered.

To help new parents adapt to life with their newborn in real time, Latyak helped develop the Parent Wellness Network, which includes resources for lactation counseling and perinatal mood disorders, as well as three free support groups: one for breastfeeding mothers; Moms Supporting Moms, where a maternal mental health specialist moderates open-ended discussions; and a group for new dads that's led by an obstetrician and a physical therapist, both fathers themselves.

The goal of the classes and support groups, Latyak says, is to try to meet parents where they are at every turn.

## COMPASSION RUNS DEEP

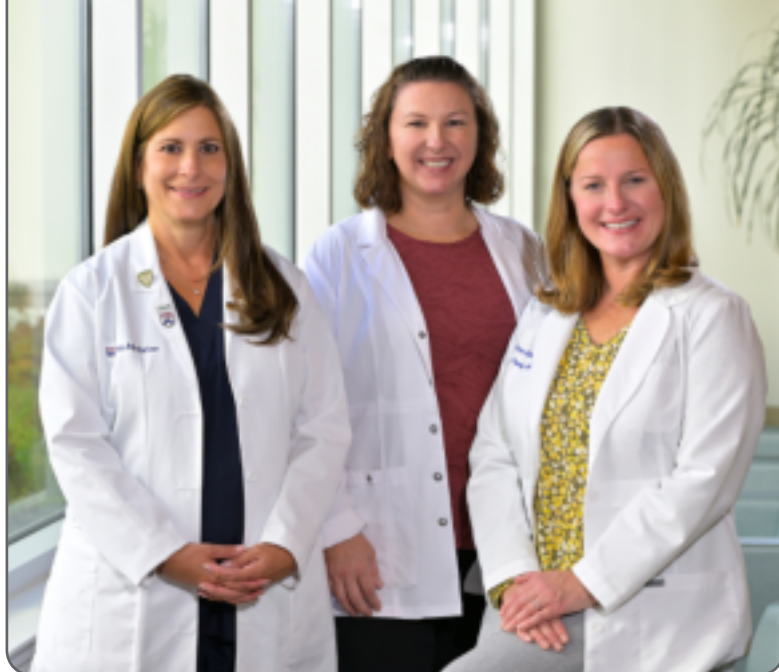
An expecting mother can arrive at Chester County Hospital's Labor and Delivery Unit for various reasons, says Annette Pappas, MSN, RNC-OB, the unit's Clinical Manager.

"Some are admitted for induction, others because there was a complication with their pregnancy," she says. "And some come in on their own."

Nurses and physicians from Labor and Delivery and Mother and Baby meet daily to discuss each patient. This dialogue involves treatment plans, as well as personal needs and wants.

"We get to know each patient's story because we want to provide the best experience for our patients while they're under our care," Pappas says. "If, for example, a patient asks for minimal intervention, we have several ways we can support their choice."

For other mothers, the delivery is the final phase of a closely monitored, high-risk pregnancy. Jennifer Barron, 43, was admitted to Labor and Delivery last December at full term, a feat she credits to Penn Medicine's Maternal-



*Pictured Left to Right:* LABOR AND DELIVERY CLINICAL MANAGER ANNETTE PAPPAS, MSN, RNC-OB; CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR, AMY LATYAK, BSN, RN, CCE, CBC; AND KATIE CONSTANTINI, MSN, RNC-MNN, DIRECTOR OF MATERNAL CHILD SERVICES.



Fetal Medicine Division and her obstetricians, William F. Brazzol, MD, and Justin A. Sloane, MD, FACOG, FCPP.

On Dec. 3, Barron delivered her son, Andrew Vonne Barron Matchett, her "one and only child," as she describes him. In the Mother Baby Facebook Group, she wrote, "There are no words that can explain how wonderful the staff at Chester County Hospital is, from the delivery to postpartum care. I will forever cherish them."

Amy Bergmaier echoed the sentiment. She was diagnosed

with cholestasis of pregnancy, a liver condition that occurs late in pregnancy. It can cause severe itching and, potentially, complications with the developing baby. As a result, she was scheduled to deliver her son, Noah, through C-section at 37 weeks. "All of my nurses were just wonderful," she wrote.

Compassion runs deep among nurses and physicians, Constantini says.

"Every Maternal Child team member cares for our patients like family members. A big part of that recognizes their individuality," she says. "The art of what we do is trying better to understand our patients' different perspectives and philosophies."

Constantini speaks from the experience of both sides. She was appointed Director of Maternal Child Services in



WE HELP NEW PARENTS  
ADAPT TO LIFE WITH  
THEIR NEW BABY  
IN REAL TIME

August. Before that, she was a maternal child nurse at the hospital. And during the early, uncertain days of the pandemic, she was an anxious mom about to give birth to her third child.

She delivered her first two children at the Hospital at the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a maternal child nurse at the time. For her third delivery, she never considered anywhere else but Chester County Hospital.

"The decision was very easy," she says. "I felt like I had advocates all around me looking out for my best interest.

And I knew that this was where I would receive the highest quality care.

"As we left the hospital, my husband was in awe of how personal my care was," Costantini adds. "But all around us, women and their partners were receiving the same kind of attention. That's what makes Chester County Hospital special."





## Nichole Swisher

BARIATRIC SURGERY GOT NICHOLE BACK TO FEELING CONFIDENT AND ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS.

# a new day is here

**After struggling to maintain a healthy weight for much of her life, Nichole Swisher is rediscovering the joy of being active since undergoing minimally invasive bariatric surgery at Chester County Hospital.**

Nichole Swisher had been thinking about bariatric surgery long before she began reading up on it in early 2021. At that point, things progressed relatively quickly.

Swisher homed in on the Penn Medicine Bariatric and Weight-Loss Surgery Program because it's well-regarded and accredited. It also happened to be the most accessible to her.

"I liked that I could have it done at Chester County Hospital because I live in the area," she says. "It made this whole process much easier than if I would have had to go into the city for it."

Swisher, 35, says her weight has always been an issue. She became keenly aware of it as a self-conscious preteen. Her difficulty maintaining a healthy weight was complicated and perhaps exacerbated by a health scare ten years ago. She was rushed into emergency surgery because of a brain aneurysm.

She spent the next month recovering in a hospital. And because she spent much of that time resting in bed and on high doses of steroids that increased her appetite, she says she quickly put on weight.

Swisher has suffered two more aneurysms since then—minor compared to the first. Nonetheless, each entailed hospitalization and surgery. While specialists continue to seek a cause, Swisher struggles with chronic pain, daily headaches, and persistent weight gain.

"At my heaviest, I felt crappy, like I couldn't move," she says.

Swisher has dieted frequently, losing "extreme amounts of weight" but quickly regaining "extreme amounts of weight." She says she didn't realize its toll on her body until she met with Chester County Hospital bariatric surgeon Kristoffel Dumon, MD, in May 2021.

"Nor did I understand that it was going to be harder to lose the weight naturally because of the yo-yo dieting," Swisher says.

Dr. Dumon operated on Swisher on February 28. Six months later, she had lost 85 pounds.

"Before, I felt like I was going to die walking up a hill or stairs," she says. "Now I'm running."

### The path to a life-changing surgery

After discussing her options, Swisher agreed with Dr. Dumon that vertical sleeve gastrectomy was the best fit for her. The minimally invasive procedure reduces the size of the stomach



to three or four ounces, which limits the amount of food you can eat. After the surgery, ghrelin levels, a hunger hormone, also drop, which initially decreases the appetite.

Patients who undergo a vertical sleeve gastrectomy can lose up to 60 percent of their excess body weight.

Before the surgery, Swisher says her health insurance provider required her to meet, on three occasions, with a dietician and registered nurse on the hospital's bariatric surgery team to discuss weight management. She also underwent extensive lab work, received clearance from a cardiologist, psychiatrist, and neurosurgeon, and participated in a sleep study, during which she was diagnosed with sleep apnea. To qualify for the surgery, she needed to use a CPAP machine nightly while she slept.

Swisher says Dr. Dumon's office coordinated all her appointments and tests.

Less than 36 hours after Swisher was admitted for her surgery, she was cleared to return home. In contrast to her recovery from the aneurysm surgeries, Dr. Dumon encouraged her to get up and move around as much as she could.

## “I feel like I got my life back”

During the first week after her surgery, Swisher says her small incisions only seemed to bother her at night. But that was easily remedied with the pain medication Dr. Dumon prescribed. A couple of months later, she developed acid reflux and had trouble keeping anything down.

“I was comforted knowing I could reach out to Dr. Dumon and his team at any point, and my question or concern would be addressed quickly,” she says.

Ultimately, he advised her to try to be patient; the reflux would resolve itself. And it did.

Swisher says her eating habits changed dramatically after her surgery. She was given detailed instructions on how to eat during the initial phase of her recovery, which she says she “followed to a T.” Today, her portions are smaller than they ever were before the surgery. Even then, she may feel full before finishing the meal.

“I never really have much of an appetite,” she says. “I eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner because it’s what I should be doing around those times, not necessarily because I’m all that hungry.”

An admitted pizza lover, Swisher still indulges. Although, she limits herself to pizza once a week and tries to find a healthier option, like a cauliflower crust.

“I believe in balance,” she says. “If you try to tell me I can’t have something, I’m not going to be successful.”

About a month-and-a-half after her surgery, Swisher returned to the gym. She now goes four to five times a week and notices her stamina improving each month. She also enjoys going on three-to four-mile hikes with her partner.

“I’ve always enjoyed doing a lot of this stuff, like being outdoors and hiking. And I never minded working out,” Swisher says. “But I’d just gotten into such a rut; it was hard to do them. Now I’m making them a priority and truly leading an active life.”

She still uses a CPAP machine but says her sleep apnea has improved significantly. When she is retested in February, she no longer expects to need the CPAP machine.



ENJOYING A HIKE ON A LOCAL TRAIL.

Swisher is also reveling in an act that often left her feeling discouraged before her surgery: clothes shopping.

“It’s been so fun buying new clothes. I’ve probably spent too much,” she says, “I’ve been getting things I’ve always wanted to wear but knew I couldn’t before, like overalls. This will probably sound a little dumb, but one of my goals after the surgery was to wear overalls. Now when I wear them, my friends know I’ve made it.”

“And then there’s the confidence that comes from feeling better in my own skin,” she adds.

When asked to describe how the bariatric surgery changed her life, Swisher says, “I feel like I got my life back.”

# finding energy + light

JESSICA RECKNER GETS BACK TO ONE OF HER FAVORITE THINGS SHE MISSED WHILE RECOVERING FROM CANCER, PLAYING WITH HER GOLDENS.



**Like many of the people you might meet in Chester County, Jessica Reckner is a friend, a wife, and a mom to her 7-year-old son, Logan.** She and her family love to hike and ski. They have two golden retrievers, and they all love to spend time in the mountains.

She is a resident of Chester Springs and works as the Director of Patient Marketing for a biotech company. While cancer is a big part of her work life, she never expected it to impact her personal life significantly. **“Cancer is a scary word.”**

Jessica’s journey began during a non-scheduled pap smear in 2016. She and her husband were planning on having a second child, and she wanted to make sure that everything was all right.

“I just wanted to ensure everything was okay,” Jessica says. While she was not considered high-risk at her age, she described having a “weird feeling.”

“I didn’t have any symptoms or signs or anything other than a strange feeling,” she explained. This strange feeling led to a non-scheduled pap smear and her OBGYN noticing something unusual.

After a biopsy on the tissue, Jessica found out a few days later that she had cervical cancer.

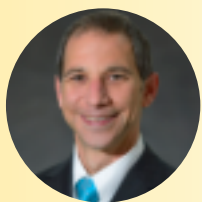
Jessica remembers her initial feelings upon her diagnosis and her fear of the unknown. “I was in

shock,” she says. “I was shocked and scared. Cancer is scary, and it’s easy to gravitate toward the worst-case scenario.”

That changed once she met her oncology team at Chester County Hospital.

**“Once I had a plan ... I felt confident.”**

“After my first appointment with my doctor and his nurse navigator — I had a different perspective of what I was dealing with, what my cancer was, and what the plan was,” Jessica says. “Once I planned how we would go after this, I felt emotionally prepared. I felt energized, and I felt confident.”



Leading Jessica’s team was Penn Medicine surgical oncologist **Robert L. Giuntoli, II, MD** (pictured here). As a nationally recognized surgeon, Dr. Giuntoli specializes in gynecologic cancers and other gynecologic conditions that require surgery.

“Dr. Giuntoli is a brilliant surgeon,” Jessica shared. “He’s compassionate, empathic, and confident, all the things I want in my doctor. He can take complex medical things and translate them to his patients in a way they can understand, which instilled my confidence that I was at the right place with the right doctor and that I had the right team.”

Navigating cancer can be difficult, but with her Chester County Hospital team behind her, Jessica underwent a successful hysterectomy, six rounds of chemo, and later an oophorectomy in 2019 when cancer was discovered in her ovaries. Jessica attributes the success of her treatments not only

to her physicians but to the nursing team — especially January Chaffee-Pasquantonio, CRNP, and Jennifer Cox, BSN, RN.

Nurse navigators at CCH are a resource to families when they are going through a serious medical event — like cancer or a heart issue. Nurse navigators can help explain what services are available, coordinate tests and procedures, and be a bridge between patients and their physicians.

“Oncology nurses are special people,” Jessica says. “Their compassion for their patients is beyond anything I’ve ever seen. Without my nurse navigator, Jen Cox, BSN, RN, I couldn’t have done this.” **“Ask for help — you can’t do it alone.”**

Since her diagnosis, surgeries, and multiple rounds of chemotherapy, Jessica has realized the power of her own story and has made it a point to share that story with others.

“I’ve learned I can help others by talking about it. I also learned how important it is to ask for help,” Jessica says. “You can’t do it alone. I needed help in the form of friends for

emotional support. I needed help from my husband for the smallest things, like just walking a few feet to the bathroom to being present for all of the good, bad, and ugly moments. I needed help from someone to clean my house and make food for my family when I was getting my treatment.”

Jessica also shared that she



# jessica's journey

recommends people seek out help for all the different challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis — even the ones you may not think someone can help with, like getting a wig if you’re going through chemotherapy.

“Not only are you dealing with a diagnosis, but you’re also navigating losing your hair and wondering, ‘How am I going to get a wig? How do I know what fits, and how do I style it?’”

Jessica’s answer came from the SHiNE Foundation at Chester County Hospital, which donated her first wig.

“Not having to worry about my first wig while going through treatment was huge. Knowing that there’s a foundation to help patients and point you in the right direction can be a huge weight off your shoulders.”

**“There’s light. There’s hope. There’s energy.”**

Jessica has been disease-free for three years now. She continues to show up for her community, share her story, and offer her insight into the cancer process to anyone who asks.

“It’s okay to be upset. It’s okay to be sad,” Jessica wants to say to people who may have received their own diagnosis. Through her cancer journey, she also took an emotional journey.

“My advice is to find that moment where you transition that sadness into focus,” she says. “Ask yourself, ‘What’s my plan?’ And then rally your energy, thoughts, and everything you have behind your plan. Because once you make that transition, there’s light. There’s hope. There’s energy. There is a community of people you might not have seen before waiting to support you and cheer you on.”

**JESSICA RECKNER, OF CHESTER SPRINGS IS A GRATEFUL CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL CERVICAL CANCER PATIENT.**

The Iran-Iraq War — which took place from 1980-1988 — remains fresh in the mind of **Kevin Sowti, MD, MBA**. In the aftermath, he and his family fled the only home he had ever known, an experience that continued to influence his life almost 40 years later.

Dr. Sowti, the former chief of staff at Chester County Hospital (CCH) and current medical director of Hospital Medicine and chief of Internal Medicine at CCH, went into medicine to help people. That desire also compelled him to travel far beyond the hospital's walls, too. Through the years, he's assisted in humanitarian aid efforts on nearly every continent.



# Compelled to help...

## Ukrainian Refugees from Thousands of Miles Away



When Russian soldiers invaded Ukraine on February 24, the news immediately snared his attention. The stream of images of refugees — many of them mothers and young children hauling whatever they could fit into overstuffed backpacks and suitcases — rekindled memories of his own family finding their way across Europe. Dr. Sowti knew he had to help. *The only question was: **how?***

### WHERE THERE'S A WILL...

One of his first moves was to contact Shawn Kohl, a friend from Dr. Sowti's undergraduate years at the University of Dallas. Today, Kohl is the director for Central and Eastern Europe for a non-governmental organization (NGO) called International Justice Mission (IJM).



**GROCERY SHOPPING:** *Pictured Left to Right:*

**SHAWN KOHL, AN AMERICAN ATTORNEY AND FRIEND OF DR. SOWTI'S WHO HOSTED HIM IN ROMANIA. KOHL WORKS WITH IJM, SPECIFICALLY IN AFRICA, TO STOP HUMAN TRAFICKING AND SLAVERY. HE TRAVELED TO EUROPE TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ROMANIA AND UKRAINE.**

**KEVIN SOWTI, MD, MBA, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF HOSPITAL MEDICINE AND CHIEF OF INTERNAL MEDICINE.**

"He had many contacts at the Ukrainian border, and he relayed their medical needs, which were mostly over-the-counter medications and antibiotics," says Dr. Sowti, who was asking with the intent of delivering the supplies himself. However, at that point, he was unsure how he would get there.

Meanwhile, George Trajtenberg, MD, the retired chief of Surgery at CCH, introduced Dr. Sowti to his niece, who had been volunteering in Ukraine for years. She shared a list of medications that were needed where she was.

From there, Dr. Sowti consulted Michael Duncan, president and CEO of CCH; Chief Operating Officer Michael Barber; and Heather Teufel, director of the hospital's pharmacy. Together they agreed to donate all the medications on the list Sowti had compiled.

It was early April by this point, and Dr. Sowti had also figured out how to deliver the medications with the help of his wife, Roschanak Mossabeb, MD, a neonatologist at Temple Health. Dr. Mossabeb, who had not seen her parents in person in nearly three years due to the pandemic, had planned an

eight-day trip for their family to visit them at their home in Vienna, Austria. From there, Dr. Sowti planned to head for Bucharest, Romania, where he would meet up with Kohl and drive to the Ukraine border.

"It's only right that I thank my wife here for putting up with me," Dr. Sowti says. "No matter the cause, I know I always have her support."

And so, the family set off for Austria, with Dr. Sowti towing two suitcases full of donated medications.

**COMPASSION ALL AROUND**

In Bucharest, Dr. Sowti and Kohl bought groceries and loaded them into a car supplied by IJM. Then Sowti and an IJM representative made the five-and-a-half-hour drive to a spot along the Romania-Ukraine border, just west of Moldova. Upon their arrival, they left the food with a group of local volunteers who were preparing and distributing meals to Ukrainian refugees situated around the village. They then

*continued >*



**SOWTI IN FRONT OF AN ISRAELI TENT STATIONED AT THE BORDER OF ROMANIA AND UKRAINE.**

## ukraine... *continued*

delivered the medications to two separate shelters housing refugees — one a former homeless shelter operated by IJM. There, Dr. Sowti tended to a few ambulatory patients.

“There were three levels of interpretation to translate everything that was said,” he explains.

The second shelter was run by the NGO with which Trajtenberg’s niece was working.

“Despite the chaos of war, it was all very well-organized,” Dr. Sowti says of the aid operations. “The area didn’t exactly have a wealth of resources, but everyone was pitching in, trying to help. People were cooking and consoling. I’ve never seen anything like it. At the same time, the worst of what people can do was happening just miles from us.”

In many instances, he says, the shelters housed the refugees until transportation could be arranged to take them farther abroad. Dr. Sowti says there was no immediate threat where they were, and he never felt in danger.



“the bigger sin is not  
doing something...”



DR. SOWTI GATHERED WITH ROMANIAN VOLUNTEERS, MOST OF THEM COLLEGE STUDENTS, AT THE BORDER.

After spending a full day at the border, helping wherever he could, Dr. Sowti began the day-long journey back to his family in Austria.

Back home, a month removed from the experience, Dr. Sowti says he continues to feel “blessed.”

“I know that most people around here think war is something that only happens in other, more unstable parts of the world,” he says. “But because of how I grew up, I always think it’s a possibility. And it’s because of that that I’m always active.”

“I still think of myself as a poor immigrant country boy,” he adds. “But I also recognize that I am privileged now with some ability to make a difference. And I think it’s reached a point where it feels like the bigger sin is not doing something. I’m blessed to be working for a health system whose leaders empower all of us to try to change the world. I’m so proud of all the good we’re doing locally and abroad.”

Others across Penn have supported the crisis in Ukraine in a variety of ways — from students collecting donations to other providers coordinating supply drives. Additionally, more than \$300,000 in monetary donations were collected, including

*Pictured Left to Right: HEATHER TEUFEL, PHARM.D., BCCCP, DIRECTORY OF PHARMACY; MICHAEL DUNCAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO; KEVIN SOWTI, MD, MBA, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF HOSPITAL MEDICINE AND CHIEF OF INTERNAL MEDICINE.*



more than \$200,000 from the Penn community and \$100,000 matched by Penn and Penn Medicine. The Penn Medicine Center for Global Health is also seeking physicians and nurses with experience in global health, care of refugee populations, and disaster response, as well as those with ties to Ukraine or with critical language skills for seven to 14 day deployments to Poland.

Dr. Sowti is currently trying to organize medical kits for the Ukrainian fighters. He's also raising money to supply the volunteer cooks along the Ukrainian border with more food.

*Below: DR. SOWTI WORKED WITH COLLEAGUES TO GET MEDICATION TO ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING AID AT THE BORDER OF UKRAINE.*





## Chester County Hospital Among Nation's Top Performing Hospitals for Treatment of Heart Attack Patients

Chester County Hospital has received the **American College of Cardiology's NCDR Chest Pain - MI Registry Gold Performance Achievement Award for 2022**. The award recognizes Chester County Hospital's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients. It signifies that Chester County Hospital has reached an aggressive goal of treating these patients to standard levels of care as outlined by the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association clinical guidelines and recommendations. Chester County Hospital is one of only 81 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor.



## Chester County Hospital is Nationally Recognized for its Commitment to Providing High-Quality Cardiovascular Care

Chester County Hospital has received **FOUR American Heart Association Get with The Guidelines and Mission: Lifeline achievement awards** for demonstrating a commitment to following up-to-date, research-based procedures for the treatment of heart disease and stroke, ultimately leading to more lives saved, shorter recovery times, and fewer readmissions to the hospital.

"Chester County Hospital is dedicated to improving care by adhering to the latest treatment guidelines and streamlining processes to ensure timely and proper care for heart attacks and strokes," said Melissa Spahr, RN, Coordinator at The Chester County Hospital Stroke Program. "The programs – Mission: Lifeline and Get with The Guidelines – make it easier for our teams to put proven knowledge and guidelines to work daily, which helps us ensure more people in Chester County experience longer, healthier lives."



## The Industrialist's Brush A Tribute to Family Artwork in Chester County

A tribute to Chester County's artwork is celebrated in Robin Ashby's new book, *The Industrialist's Brush*. Ashby is the grandson of the late Harry E. Cann (1893-1974), a successful entrepreneur, a 30-year member of the Chester County Hospital (CCH) Board, and a self-taught painter of West Chester, PA. Once Cann retired from the hospital board, he donated eight of his paintings that currently line the walls of the hospital. Ashby's book includes a brief biography of his grandfather's life and a celebration of the artwork he attributed to Chester County.

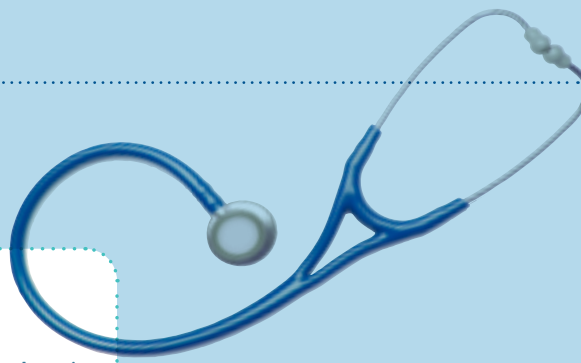
*Ashby was generous enough to donate copies of his book to sell and display in the Women's Auxiliary Gift Shop (WAGS), located in the main lobby of our hospital. This book will serve as a reminder of the years of service Harry Cann gave to Chester County Hospital and the memory he leaves behind within his paintings.*

## Recognized for Excellence in Obstetrics and Gynecology by Healthgrades

Chester County Hospital has earned distinction among Healthgrades' list of National Leaders in Obstetrics & Gynecology, receiving the **2022 Healthgrades Labor and Delivery Excellence Award™ and the Overall Obstetrics and Gynecology Excellence Award™**. Chester County Hospital is one of 145 nationwide named on the list and one of three in Pennsylvania.

"Being recognized as one of the national leaders in obstetrics & gynecology is an honor shared by all at Chester County Hospital," said Mike Duncan, president, and CEO. "We pride ourselves on delivering consistently better outcomes for patients during and after childbirth and across many gynecological procedures."





## Section of Allergy & Immunology

### Angela D'Urso, MD

Dr. D'Urso earned her medical degree from the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine. She completed both her residency and fellowship at University Hospital – UMDNJ. Board certified in the field of Allergy & Immunology, Dr. D'Urso practices at Exton Allergy & Asthma Associates in Exton, PA.

## Section of Breast Surgery

### David Rose, MD



Dr. Rose earned his medical degree from Columbia University. He completed his residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Board certified in the field of Surgery, Dr. Rose practices at Penn Women's Specialty Center Fern Hill in West Chester, PA, and at Penn Medicine Valley Forge in Berwyn, PA.

Hill in West Chester, PA, and at Penn Medicine Valley Forge in Berwyn, PA.

## Section of Cardiology

### Michael Riordan, MD

Dr. Riordan earned his medical degree from Albany Medical College. He completed his residency at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Board certified in Cardiovascular Disease and Internal Medicine, Dr. Riordan practices at Chester County Cardiology Associates, a division of Cardiology Consultants of Philadelphia in West Chester, PA.



## Section of Family Medicine

### William J. Brown, DO

Dr. Brown earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency at Mercy Suburban Hospital. Board certified in Family Medicine, Dr. Brown practices at Ingleside Medical Associates with offices in Thorndale and Parkesburg, PA.

### Michael F. Carnuccio, DO

Dr. Carnuccio earned his degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center. Board certified in Family Medicine, Dr. Carnuccio practices at Ingleside Medical Associates with offices in Thorndale and Parkesburg, PA.

### Sony Philip John, MD, MHA, FAFAP

Dr. John earned his medical degree from the Medical University of Silesia. He completed his residency at Hahnemann University Hospital. Board certified in Family Medicine, Dr. John practices at PentaHealth Family Practice West Chester, formerly Myers, Squire, and Limpert in West Chester, PA.

### Jennifer Keah, MD

Dr. Keah earned her medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine. She completed her residency at Chestnut Hill Hospital. Board certified in Family Medicine, Dr. Keah practices at Penn Primary Care in Exton, PA.

### Monika Kumanova, MD

Dr. Kumanova earned her medical degree from the Medical University of Sofia – Bulgaria. She completed her residency at the Bronx – Lebanon Hospital Center. Board certified in Family Medicine and Obesity Medicine, Dr. Kumanova practices at PentaHealth Colonial Family Practice in Coatesville, PA.

## Section of Endocrinology

### Sirisha Thambuluru, MD

Dr. Thambuluru earned her medical degree from the University of Central Florida College of Medicine. She completed her residency at the University of Alabama Birmingham. Afterward, she completed her fellowship in Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Metabolism at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Board certified in the field of Internal Medicine, Dr. Thambuluru practices at PentaHealth Endocrinology in West Chester, PA.



certified in the field of Internal Medicine, Dr. Thambuluru practices at PentaHealth Endocrinology in West Chester, PA.

### Manish Kumar, DO

Dr. Kumar earned his medical degree from Rowan University. He completed his residency at UPMC Lititz. Dr. Kumar practices at Penn Family Medicine West Chester in West Chester, PA.



### Daniel Selassie, MD

Dr. Selassie earned his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College. He completed his residency at Cabrini Medical Center. Board certified in Family Medicine, Dr. Selassie practices at Penn Primary Care in Exton, PA.

## Section of Hematology

### Zachary L.C. Quinn, MD

Dr. Quinn earned his medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine. He completed his residency at Tulane Medical Center. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Quinn practices at Abramson Cancer Center/Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA, and Kennett Square, PA.



## Section of Infectious Diseases

### Raida Rabah, MD

Dr. Rabah earned her medical degree from Damascus University. She completed her residency and fellowship at Wayne State University Hospital. Board Certified in Infectious Disease, Dr. Rabah practices at Brandywine Valley Infectious Disease Associates, LLC in Coatesville, PA.

## Section of Maternal Fetal Medicine

### Jennifer McCoy, MD

Dr. McCoy earned her medical degree from the University of Chicago. She completed her residency and fellowship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. McCoy practices at Penn Maternal Fetal Medicine Chester County, West Chester, PA.

## Section of Neurosurgery

### Sagi Kuznits, MD

Dr. Kuznits earned his medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine. He completed his internship and residency at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Board Certified in Neurosurgery, Dr. Kuznits practices at Neurosurgical Care in Exton, PA.



## Section of Internal Medicine

### Pamela Cines, MD

Dr. Cines earned her medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine. She completed her residencies at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics. Afterward, she completed her fellowship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Cines practices at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.

### Ankit Goel, MD

Dr. Goel earned his medical degree from Baba Farid University of Health Sciences. He completed his residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center-Mercy. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Goel practices at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.

### Sohi N. Golwala, MD

Dr. Golwala earned his medical degree from the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine. He completed his residency at Christiana Care. Dr. Golwala practices with the Hospitalist Group at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.



### Ramesh Pandit, MD

Dr. Pandit received his medical degree from B.J. Medical College. He completed his residency at The Wright Center. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Pandit practices with the Hospitalist Group at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.



### Evan Stutchin, DO

Dr. Stutchin earned his medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency at Wellington Regional Medical Center. Board certified in the field of Internal Medicine, Dr. Stutchin practices at PentaHealth Internal Medicine West Chester, formerly Gateway Internal Medical Associates West Chester in West Chester, PA.

### Deepika Suri, MD

Dr. Suri earned her medical degree from Christian Medical College. She completed her residency at Good Samaritan Hospital. Afterward, she completed her fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center. Board certified in Internal Medicine and Nephrology, Dr. Suri practices at Penn Family and Internal Medicine Longwood in Kennett Square, PA.



### Zeel Tamboli, MD

Dr. Tamboli received her medical degree from Saint George's University. She completed her residency at SUNY at Stony Brook Medical Center. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Tamboli practices at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.

### Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology

#### Mahsa Hamedi, MD

Dr. Hamedi earned her medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina. She completed her residency at Abington Memorial Hospital. Dr. Hamedi practices at Chester County OB/GYN Associates in West Chester, PA, as well as their other offices in Chester County.

#### Coleen Korzen, DO

Dr. Korzen earned her medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed her residency at Madigan Army Medical Center. Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. Korzen practices at Chester County OB/GYN Associates in West Chester, PA, as well as their other offices in Chester County.

### Section of Occupational Medicine

#### Steven M. Shuchat, MD

Dr. Shuchat earned his medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine. He completed his residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Board Certified in the field of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Shuchat practices at The Occupational Health Center in West Chester, PA.

### Section of Otorhinolaryngology

#### Sinehan Bayrak, MD

Dr. Bayrak completed her medical degree from the University of Arkansas College of Medicine. She completed her residency at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. Board Certified in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Plastic Surgery, Dr. Bayrak practices at Subbio Plastic Surgery in Newtown Square, PA.

### Section of Pulmonology

#### Michael Weinstein, MD

Dr. Weinstein earned his medical degree from MCP-Hahnemann University School of Medicine. He completed his Internal Medicine internship and residency at Temple University School of Medicine. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at Temple University School of Medicine. Board Certified in the fields of Sleep Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, Pulmonary Disease, and Internal Medicine, Dr. Weinstein practices at Advocare Pulmonary and Sleep Specialists in Exton, Lansdale, and West Chester, PA.

### Section of Radiation Oncology

#### Abigail T. Berman, MD, MSCE

Dr. Berman earned her medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. She completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Board Certified in Radiation Oncology, Dr. Berman practices at Penn Radiation Oncology Chester County at Chester County Hospital in West Chester, PA.

### Section of Orthopaedic Surgery

#### Kenan Aksu, DO

Dr. Aksu earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at Florida Spine Institute. Board Certified in Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr. Aksu practices at Premier Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine in Exton, PA.

#### J. Rush Fisher, MD

Dr. Fisher earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He completed his residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Afterward, he completed his fellowship with Henry H. Bohlman, MD, at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Board Certified in Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr. Fisher practices at Penn Orthopaedics Newark in Newark, DE, and at the Penn Spine Center Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, PA.



#### Stephen Sizer, DO

Dr. Sizer earned his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Afterward, he completed his fellowship at Scripps Clinic Adult Lower Extremity Reconstruction. Board Certified in Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr. Sizer practices at Rothman Orthopaedic Institute in Malvern, PA, and Wynnewood, PA.

#### Kimberly Stevenson, MD

Dr. Stevenson earned her medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine. She completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Afterward, she completed her fellowship at the University of Utah Medical Center. Dr. Stevenson practices at Penn Orthopaedics in Exton, West Chester, and at Penn Medicine Valley Forge in Berwyn, PA.

▶▶ TO FIND A DOCTOR,  
CALL 610.738.2300, OR VISIT  
[ChesterCountyHospital.org](http://ChesterCountyHospital.org)



Call 610.738.2793 to update your mailing information.

## GRATEFUL FOR OUR PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

Chester County Hospital stands on a **deep-rooted culture of philanthropy** that has helped shape this institution for over 130 years. We are incredibly grateful for our **wonderful community of supporters** – especially throughout the past few years of unprecedented challenges. Our **healthcare workforce's resilience** and loyal supporters' commitment are truly inspiring. Our **caring community** is what helps keep Chester County Hospital on the cutting edge of medical innovation and enriches our strength as an organization. Thank you to our **dedicated donors, volunteers, and community partners**. You are the underpinning to Chester County Hospital's continued success and our mission to bring **world-class care** to Chester County.

Philanthropy has been a **driving force** in the growth of Chester County Hospital and allows us to **adapt to the dynamic healthcare needs** of the growing communities we serve. Gifts to Chester County Hospital stay right here and help provide essential resources to support the **highest level of care** when you and your loved ones need us most.

*To learn more about giving options, please contact Ashley Kopp, Director of Development at 610.431.5266 or [ashley.kopp@pennmedicine.upenn.edu](mailto:ashley.kopp@pennmedicine.upenn.edu).*