

synapse

THE CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL MAGAZINE | 2021 : VOL 1



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.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

We can provide the guidance you need to create realistic strategies for successful weight management and support you on your journey to a healthier lifestyle and weight loss.



Weight Matters – Realistic strategies for those struggling with unwanted weight.

Struggles and Solutions – Monthly support for a healthier lifestyle and weight loss.

Nutrition Counseling (610-738-2835)
Individualized guidance for healthy choices.



SMOKING CESSATION

For many the first step to better health is quitting smoking.

We know it is not easy. Our programs have a proven track record of helping people become ex-smokers.

Stop Smoking Now! – Identify your triggers and develop a plan to quit.

Smoking Cessation Support Group – Help for those who are still trying.

DIABETES EDUCATION

Diabetes is an underlying condition that can complicate your health. The hospital offers programs to help you better understand diabetes and manage your daily health.



Reversing Pre-Diabetes - Reduce your risk of getting type 2 diabetes with healthier choices.

National Diabetes Prevention Program (610-738-2835) – Help for people with pre-diabetes or at high risk for developing diabetes.

Diabetes Self-Management Program (610-738-2835) – Classes and counseling for those with type 1, type 2 or gestational 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.



Prepared Childbirth – Be ready for birth in a four-week series or a one-day class.

Maternity Virtual Unit Tour – Visit labor and delivery, nursery, maternity and NICU.

Calm, Confident Births – Address beliefs, fears and concerns about birth and parenting.

Sibling Class – Help the future big brothers and sisters (ages 3-7) prepare for a sibling.

Newborn Care – Understand how to take care of your baby before your infant comes home.

Prenatal Breastfeeding – Learn to breastfeed and where to find support.

Pumping and Returning to Work - Continue breastfeeding after maternity leave ends.

Childbirth Refresher - For parents who just need a reminder about giving birth.

HEALTHY BODIES

We offer high quality health education programs to address specific chronic health conditions. Special presentations, physician lectures, classes, screenings and support groups are available.



Heart Health – Offerings include cardiovascular health risk assessments, blood pressure screenings, Hands-Only CPR training and cardiac support meetings.

Cancer Support – The Abramson Cancer Center has local support groups and programs focused on the emotional effects of cancer.

Bones and Joints – Programs include pre-surgery education, unit tour and tailored physical therapy.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER REQUESTS

We have dynamic speakers who can address health care topics for your organization. Get started by calling 610-738-2542 to speak to a community health educator. Topics include:

Heart Health (Risk Assessment, A-fib, Strokes and Heart Attacks, Know Your Numbers)



Bone Health (Osteoporosis, Arthritis, Joint Replacement)

Cancer Prevention (Screening recommendations, prevention and early detection)

Women's Health (Breast Health, Women and Heart Disease, Menopause, Pelvic Health)

Senior Health (A variety of topics available)

SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISEASE PREVENTION



Nutrition (Healthy Eating, Diet and Weight Loss, Super Foods)

Diabetes (Prevention, Treatment, Diet and Lifestyle)

Program description, schedules, fees, locations, and registration information can be found at ChesterCountyHospital.org/wellness or by calling 610-738-2300 (unless another phone number is noted).

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▼ DEAR NEIGHBORS



For more than one year, every aspect of our life has been challenged in ways none of us could have imagined. The isolation and uncertainty of the pandemic has caused us to be separated from the ones we love and unable to celebrate so many of life's special milestones. Social unrest has led to introspection, conversation and education as we support those who have been afflicted by intolerance and discrimination.

Through it all, our teams have worked tirelessly to maintain their focus on lifting the burden of disease from our communities while managing the effects of COVID – both at work and at home. They are committed to providing the highest level of care.

In this issue of Synapse, we share their stories which include an Orthopaedic Surgery collaboration with L. Scott Levin, MD, Chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Penn Medicine and Cheston Simmons, MD, Orthopaedic Surgeon at Chester County Hospital.

The COVID vaccine is discussed in our cover story and includes insight from those closest to community inoculation. The capability of our new procedural platform has allowed our Heart and Vascular program to expand which we detail in a feature on the Medtronic MICRA AV Leadless Pacemaker which is now available to qualifying patients. We also celebrate recent achievements of our clinical teams.

In welcoming summer, we are optimistic that the distribution of the COVID vaccine will soon allow us to return to normalcy and be in the company of friends, family and loved ones. It's a long overdue reunion we all look forward to.

Stay well.

Warm regards,

Michael J. Duncan
President and CEO

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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 personal health.

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COVID-19 VACCINE

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AND WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN

After nearly a year of battling a global pandemic, the world collectively breathed its first sigh of relief as COVID-19 vaccines were given the green light to be distributed to the arms of Americans on December 11, 2020. Just days later, on December 16, the injection into the arm of an Environmental Services employee at Chester County Hospital signaled a new and promising phase in the pandemic locally. While the nation and world may still be in the very early stages of a return to normalcy, the vaccine is a hopeful milestone in the fight against COVID-19.



HEATHER PIZZI AND NICOLE PRATTIS OF THE
CCH PHARMACY PREPARE VACCINE DOSES

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COVID

by James Curtis, PharmD



FIRST VACCINE DELIVERED AT CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL

COVID-19 Vaccinations Around the Globe

As of April 6, 2021, over 167 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccination have been administered worldwide — 20.54 million of which were in the US.

(Source: Our World in Data)

Despite this welcome progress, many still have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, including how much it will cost, and what factors prove its safety.

Staying informed is essential to feeling comfortable getting vaccinated. To help, our healthcare experts share their expertise, experiences and what you can expect when it's your turn to get vaccinated.

There's a lot of information out there about the COVID-19 vaccine, and it can be difficult to determine what to pay attention to — and what to ignore.

James Curtis, PharmD, MHA, BCPD, BCCCP, Director of Clinical Value Optimization at Chester County Hospital understands hesitancy surrounding the vaccine. "I encourage individuals to research the vaccine themselves — but to also reach out to the experts in the area," he shared.

1 The COVID-19 vaccines are safe. The major clinical trials for the first two vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) are very robust. They have emergency use authorization, which allows the FDA to make medical countermeasures, like vaccines, available during public health emergencies.

There were nearly 44,000 in the Pfizer trial and 30,000 in the Moderna trial. The efficacy data (how effective the vaccine is) is great, and the adverse event data (any undesirable experiences associated with the vaccine) did not show anything unexpected. Safety is a top priority when developing any vaccine, including COVID-19.

2 There are minor side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine — but that means it's working. In general, the expected adverse reactions were more than your average flu shot and similar to the shingles shot. You might experience injection site pain, fatigue, or headache. The incidence (or frequency) of serious adverse events reported in the trials was very small — less than 0.5%. Reactions are more common after the second dose of the vaccine and with younger participants.

3 Chester County Hospital has a robust plan for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine and has set up a vaccination clinic in the new pavilion. During January, the hospital focused its inoculation efforts on the 1A population as initially defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PDOH) — employees, emergency medical services (EMS), and non-affiliated healthcare workers within the community. Since then, the PDOH has opened up vaccine eligibility to all Pennsylvania residents 12 years and older and the hospital continues to vaccinate residents of Chester and Delaware counties.

4 The COVID-19 vaccine is free and will come at no cost to you, regardless of whether or not you have health insurance.

5 Getting the COVID-19 vaccine does not mean you should stop taking other protective measures.

There are now several studies that have shown that, once fully vaccinated, transmission is reduced by 50-95%. It's very promising, but still too early to make a definitive statement about vaccination and transmission of disease. Therefore, vaccinates should continue to wear masks and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Please continue to practice all of your public health mitigation measures after you receive your vaccine.

From the Perspective of Chester County Hospital Employees: Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

Chester County Hospital employee Jennifer Moulder, Red Coat Ambassador Lead, knows firsthand how important the COVID-19 vaccine is for the community and her own health.

Moulder received her COVID-19 vaccination on the first day they became available at CCH — and she felt a variety of emotions taking part in this historical medical event.

“I was not expecting to be one of the first to receive the vaccine, so I was very excited, nervous, and emotional,” said Moulder. “As the daughter of a PhD microbiologist who devoted over 40 years of his life to vaccine research and development, I was honored and humbled to be among the first to receive the vaccine.”

Swapna Gummadi, MD, a hospitalist at Chester County Hospital, felt “redemption” when receiving her first vaccine dose. “We’re finally getting some type of protection from the virus and I think this will make us better equipped to care for our patients and change the course of this pandemic.”

While many hospital employees were eager and ready for the shot, some still experienced vaccine hesitancy, looking to their loved ones for inspiration.

“Initially I was apprehensive about receiving the vaccine and many of my loved ones were 100% against being vaccinated. I knew they’d prefer to listen to someone they trust when it came time for them to decide whether or not to get the shot. Therefore, educating myself and getting the vaccine would increase the likelihood of my loved ones getting vaccinated, which is what ultimately drove my decision.”

– Rhonda West-Haynes, MHA, BSN, RHIA, CCDS, CCS, CPC, Director of Revenue Operations.

After Rhonda West-Haynes received her vaccine, many of her friends and family called her to discuss the process and ultimately 50% of them changed their views and decided to also receive the vaccine.

The reported side effects after the shot have been a big source of unease for many. Both Moulder and West-Haynes admit that they were nervous about experiencing an immediate reaction. However, Rhonda West-Haynes remembered “after a few minutes during the observation period I began to smile (nobody could see under my mask) because it felt like a huge weight was lifted off my chest.” Neither of the women experienced adverse reactions or severe side effects.

Overall, CCH employees and clinicians encourage those on the fence about the vaccine to ask questions, do their research, look at the data, and take solace in the droves of medical professionals lining up to receive their dose.

“All of the healthcare workers getting vaccinated is a sign of our confidence in the vaccine’s efficacy and our confidence in its ability to help protect you. I hope people take that to heart and really consider getting the vaccine,” Michael He, MD, FASA, Director APS and Regional Anesthesia, Chief Orthopaedic Anesthesiologist at Chester County Hospital said.

Going Beyond Chester County Hospital Employees: Vaccination of Non-CCH Healthcare Workers

While the COVID-19 vaccine has been available at hospital systems across the country since mid-December of 2020, there was initially limited information regarding how other medical professionals, including private doctors and healthcare workers, could acquire one.



SHAFINAZ AKHTER, MD, AND JENNIFER GERVASI, MPH, BSN, RN, OF THE HOSPITAL'S INFECTION PREVENTION TEAM, RECEIVE THEIR SHOTS

In late December 2020, Chester County Hospital became the first hospital in the county to vaccinate emergency medical services workers. Additionally, CCH took the charge of vaccinating community healthcare workers, including private practice physicians affiliated with Tandigm Physician Services.

“Chester County Hospital has been excellent at taking care of our patients, our staff, and our providers,” explained Susan Fleck, Director of Operations at Tandigm Physicians Services. On December 22, she received an email from Chester County Hospital, asking if Tandigm Physician Services was interested in providing the vaccine to their physicians and patient-facing staff through CCH. “We were thrilled at the opportunity to be able to have that because we had no idea when we might be able to get people within our organization vaccinated,” said Fleck.

On Christmas Eve, Fleck opened one of the best gifts she could have hoped for — an email that the vaccination plan was a go. Four days later, physicians and employees from Tandigm Physician Services began walking through the doors of CCH to get their COVID-19 vaccine.

“Chester County Hospital is a perfect example of a community-based hospital doing what’s right for its constituents. They recognize the importance of independent physicians being able to stay healthy and take care of their patients,” Fleck shared.



OFFICER NATHAN YARNALL READY FOR HIS COVID SHOT

The Road Ahead

Hospitals around the country are ramping up COVID-19 vaccine distribution to protect healthcare workers, essential workers, and now, 12 years of age and older Americans from one of the deadliest pandemics in history. During what may be one of the most coordinated and critical efforts in the history of the United States, Chester County Hospital is proud and honored to play its part.

Each day brings us one step closer to protection from COVID-19 — but a complete return to normalcy is not yet here. For now, be patient, take proper safety precautions, and stay healthy.



In late December 2020, CCH became the first hospital in the county to vaccinate emergency medical services workers.

CCH ORTHO TEAM HITS A HOME RUN



“I want to be able to throw to my kids in the backyard or walk up and down stairs without pain. I’m not trying to be a super athlete, but it’ll be icing on the cake if I can play a pickup game of basketball with the guys at work.”



Orthopaedic Surgeons Partner On Complex Knee Replacement

More than half a million Americans undergo knee replacement surgery every year. Few of these cases are as complicated as Ken Strawhecker’s.

On November 20, 2020 Strawhecker had one of the most complex knee replacements ever performed at Chester County Hospital. It was a multi-part procedure that involved two orthopaedic surgeons working together over several months.

Partnerships like this are becoming increasingly common between Chester County Hospital and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania – both members of Penn Medicine. The goal of this “systemness” is to keep more medically complex patients in their own community instead of having them travel downtown for care. Strawhecker was the beneficiary of this philosophy.

“Strawhecker’s medical story began when he was in a car accident at age 19 that caused severe open fractures of his knee and femur,” said Chet Simmons, MD, Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at Chester County Hospital and Vice President of Premier Orthopaedics. “He underwent several surgeries to try to correct his leg injuries, but he was left with severe scarring and bone deformity.”

“The old injury also led to arthritis in his knee, which caused him severe pain that he was managing with medications and braces,” he continued. “A knee replacement was really his only option, but we couldn’t do that safely without first addressing the skin damage and scar tissue in his knee.”

Simmons knew just the specialist for the job: L. Scott Levin, MD, Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Levin also is a plastic surgeon and a world-renowned specialist in microsurgical techniques for soft-tissue reconstruction – a field known as “orthoplastic surgery.”

“A critical factor in successful joint replacement is having an adequate and stable soft-tissue envelope around the bony structures through which to operate safely and ensure proper healing,” Levin said. “In Ken’s case, we performed what’s called a free flap procedure. We took living tissue with its blood supply from his proximal thigh and transplanted the tissue to the knee, connecting small blood vessels using the microscope to assure viability of the tissue.”

▶ TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
www.Chestercountyhospital.org

The procedure, which Levin likened to “reupholstering” the knee, went flawlessly. After three months of recovery, Strawhecker was ready for his knee replacement surgery.

“I knew going into this that it was a two-part process,” said the 48-year-old Strawhecker. “As terrifying as the thought was of having someone cut into your bone and chisel it into the shape they need for the artificial joint, knowing I was halfway there kept me going.”

On the day of the surgery, Levin joined Simmons in one of Chester County Hospital’s newly opened operating rooms. Levin’s role was to carefully

raise the free flap and give Simmons access to the inside of the knee. Because of the existing structural damage in Strawhecker’s knee, Simmons used a specialized implant to help make up for the severe ligament damage and deficiency that was present. Advanced, three-dimensional CT scans taken prior to surgery gave the team a clear roadmap to Strawhecker’s knee and the surgery was a success.

Strawhecker had several months of recovery and rehabilitation ahead of him, but after years of exponentially worsening pain he’s looking forward to a better quality of life.

SURGEONS CHET SIMMONS, MD, CHIEF OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AT CCH AND VP OF PREMIER ORTHOPAEDICS AND L. SCOTT LEVIN, MD, CHAIR OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AT THE HOSPITAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA — CHAMPIONS OF THE CHALLENGING TASK AT HAND.



CREATING A Safe Space



MIKE DUNCAN, CCH PRESIDENT AND CEO AND TIMMY NELSON, CCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER

In partnership with community leaders, CEO Mike Duncan guides the hospital in taking the lessons of social justice to heart.

Timmy Nelson of West Chester, PA, is a former UPS executive who worked his way up from loading trailers to holding several senior-level positions during a successful 40-year career. As the newest member of the Chester County Hospital Board of Directors, he is also a long-time member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council and the Turk's Head

Board, which advises the hospital on real estate matters. He also serves on the board of The United Way of Chester County.

As a Black man in America, Nelson has been subjected to racial profiling. There was the policeman who regularly patrolled his neighborhood and stopped his car outside Nelson's house, one-day asking, "You live here?" He has been pulled over without cause and told it was part of a routine traffic stop. He has given his own children, especially his sons, "the talk" about how to interact with police.

WHEN IT COMES TO RACE

Such injustices have always been part of lived experience for Black Americans. However, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd was slowly suffocated to death in Minneapolis by a police officer, spurring outrage and calls for meaningful change nationwide. There have been numerous incidents since then which, thanks to bystanders' smartphones, have revealed unjust and inhumane actions targeting Black Americans.

Chester County Hospital CEO Mike Duncan says the incidents of last May shook him to his core. "My management philosophy is 'love people, expect excellence.' When Mr. Floyd was killed, I could tell that our Black front-line employees especially were deeply affected by it—angry, fearful, traumatized," he says. "I didn't know what to do."

As many white CEOs issued statements supporting Black Lives Matter, Duncan was at a loss. What could a statement really do? This led to another question: As the leader of a hospital with many Black employees and a duty to care for the community, what could he do to understand the situation and use it as an opportunity?

Start by Listening

Duncan called Nelson for advice and asked him to serve as his mentor. (Nelson notes he was "honored to play that role.") He in turn connected Duncan with other Black leaders in the West Chester community: educators, pastors, local NAACP directors. One such leader was Pastor Kyle Boyer of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Coatesville, who is also a middle school teacher in Norristown,

"My management philosophy is 'love people, expect excellence.' When Mr. Floyd was killed, I could tell our Black front-line employees especially were deeply affected by it."

a Tredyffrin/ Easttown School Board member, and past president of the West Chester National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Black leaders from the hospital's staff also made some introductions for Duncan. For example, Rhonda West-Haynes, MHA, BSN, RHIA, CCDS, CCS, CPC, Director of Revenue Operations, introduced him to Richard Roberts III, founder and CEO of Young Men and Women in Charge (YMWIC) in West Chester, which partners with area school districts to immerse low-income and minority K-12 students in a STEM-based curriculum, expose them to STEM professions, and pave their way toward college.

These leaders became a kind of informal advisory group for Duncan—people he could call for advice and counsel. He went on to invite about 50 Black staff members from across the hospital into his office for what he describes as "unfiltered" one-to-one discussions. "I asked them if they'd be willing to share their

experiences with me, and how they were feeling as a result of the current events," Duncan explains.

What he heard really changed him. "Honestly, like many people I thought we had made much more progress than we have," Duncan says.

Those listening sessions led to a series of first steps this fall and winter to root out any forms of systemic racism—no matter how subtle—at the hospital. In a way, this is a continuation of the work already started by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, just one example being the Legacy Builders Breakfast series for Black women and men from throughout Chester County Hospital and Penn Medicine. But now the work is more intentional, more visible, and focused on raising awareness.

Taking the First Steps

Duncan asked an executive who had met one-on-one with him to consider sharing her story more widely. That led to small-group presentations with roughly 100 members of the management team. "Many said, 'I had no idea they were having this experience,'" Duncan says.

He and his executive team appointed Nelson to the Board of Directors. The hospital will continue efforts to make sure that Black voices are represented in senior-level positions. Pastor Kyle Boyer also presented a workshop on understanding white privilege to members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council, with plans to present to other groups in the future.

The hospital has also committed to mentoring Black employees more

continued >

safe space... *continued*

proactively. An environmental services staff member who expressed interest in a clinical role is now working as an Emergency Department technician. A tech aide has moved into a new role as a sterilization processing tech. “We want to help Black employees grow into these roles and pull them forward,” Duncan stresses.

Forging Community Partnerships

The hospital realizes it can’t do this work alone, and the partnerships Duncan forged have led to productive collaborations. Physicians, nurses, and other staff members are volunteering with YMWIC to educate young people about health and science careers. Some hospital staff served as judges for YMWIC’s Annual Science Expo in March (held virtually). Others have made virtual presentations to students and their families on topics such as COVID-19 and mental health. Post-COVID-19, students will be able to come in for job shadowing.

On Martin Luther King Day, with Nelson’s help, the hospital invited 10 members of St. Paul’s Baptist Church to receive their COVID-19 vaccine and take part in a panel discussion with family medicine physician Dr. Lisa Croft, whose husband is the church’s pastor. The event was recorded so it could be shared with the congregation and other Black churches. Black Americans understandably have been reluctant to take vaccinations, given the history of medical experimentation on Black populations. “The idea was, ‘Here is something you can take back to your churches to try to move the needle for healthcare equity,’” Duncan says. Timmy Nelson is now inviting other churches and community groups to participate in similar COVID-19 vaccination events.

The hospital prepared and recorded a Zoom event about the COVID-19 vaccine and presented it to the West Chester NAACP. Other area NAACP chapters were invited to attend the presentation and given the recording for future use. The hospital also shared it with area churches. For Black History Month in February, the hospital hosted an online speaker series for its workforce featuring 12 influential voices in the Black community. Among them was Pastor Kyle Boyer, who talked about the history of African-American progress in Chester County. Richard Roberts III of YMWIC spoke about his organization and brought in one of his senior scholars to share her experience.

“Mike Duncan seems to have this vision, which is very much aligned with our vision,” Roberts says. “Societal change of this kind is not an overnight thing here. There is an old way of thinking that gets handed down from generation to generation. I am looking to have resources to be on the ground floor to begin to make change. And you have the Mike Duncans of the world who feel the same way.”



“I am supportive of the hospital’s commitment to equity,” says Pastor Boyer. “People may not know the hospital well, but they expect it to be there when they are sick. But underneath that terracotta roof is a leadership team committed to making the world a better place.”

Looking to the Future

Duncan is adamant that these efforts will go on far beyond Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month. “A Black pastor was in the hospital recently visiting some of her parishioners, and she told me, ‘You have to keep this going and make sure it’s not just a one-time event.’ I agree, and we plan to keep making progress over time in various ways.”

Still, the community is taking notice. Duncan was invited to talk about the hospital’s efforts at a Penn Medicine forum as part of its Action for Cultural Transformation (ACT) initiative, focused on ensuring equity and eliminating racism. Black leaders at Chester County Hospital created a new award, the Spirit of Belonging Award, which they gave to Duncan during the hospital’s service awards ceremony on January 14.

“I have never received an award that meant more to me,” he said. **“We have five values here: innovation, collaboration, accountability, respect, excellence.”** Respect is the most important. There is an expectation that everyone is going to be treated with respect. We have a lot to learn about how we are going to do that.

“Still, no matter what is going on in the world, when you get to campus I want you to sigh and feel you are in a safe place,” he added. “You have a voice and you are respected.”

“There are several hospital employees at my church and many have told me they know I am working with Mike on diversity issues,” Nelson adds. “And they say ‘thank you — I think we are going to be better than we are now.’ And that’s really a driving force for me.”

1,000

ROBOTIC SURGERIES

Chester County Hospital General Surgeon Steven Fukuchi, MD, gained his initial interest in robotic-assisted surgery while supporting his urology and gynecology colleagues as they were performing operations. He quickly realized that the technology offered valuable improvements over standard techniques and applications for his own patients and has been an advocate for the innovation ever since.

Recently, Dr. Fukuchi celebrated the milestone of 1,000 robotic-assisted surgeries. "The beauty of it is that you can see and feel everything, gaining an overall sense of the abdomen as if it were fully open, all through a small incision," says Dr. Fukuchi. "It reduces hospital stays, gets patients back to their everyday lives more rapidly, and there is a significant reduction in the need for narcotics to manage pain. I'm fortunate to be able to offer this modality of treatment and to have a great team by my side to assist in the operations." Dr. Fukuchi also noted that he's seen a drastic drop in the need for narcotics with patients recovering from robotic-

assisted surgery versus other methods such as laparoscopic. He estimates 90% of patients that undergo robotic-assisted surgery do not require narcotics, in fact most don't take any medications other than Tylenol.

Patients frequently ask if the "robot" is going to do the surgery to which Dr. Fukuchi explains that there is not a button he can push that says "remove gallbladder" or "take out sigmoid colon." He goes on to assure his patients that he is still manipulating the robotic arms and making intraoperative decisions about what to do next in the operation.

As more robotic-assisted surgery is performed, surgeons become more proficient and more challenging cases are completed with this minimally invasive approach. As Dr. Fukuchi continues to improve patient outcomes through this innovation, we congratulate him on 1,000 robotic-assisted surgeries. Together the team hit 5,000 robotic-assisted cases in April 2021!



CCH Nationally Recognized with an 'A' for the Fall 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade

Chester County Hospital has been awarded an 'A' in the fall 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, a national distinction recognizing the hospital's achievements in protecting patients from harm and providing safer healthcare. The Leapfrog Group is an independent national organization committed to healthcare quality and safety. The hospital was one of just two in Chester County to receive this distinction.

In Pennsylvania, only 57 hospitals received an 'A' grade. The score reflects commitment to reducing errors, infections and accidents that can harm patients.

Developed under the guidance of a national Expert Panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses up to 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,600 U.S. acute-care hospitals twice per year. The Hospital Safety Grade's methodology is peer-reviewed and fully transparent, and the results are free to the public.

CCH Recognized for Excellence with ACC HeartCARE Center Designation Third Year in a Row

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) has recognized Chester County Hospital for its demonstrated commitment to comprehensive, high-quality culture and cardiovascular care. Chester County Hospital received the HeartCARE Center National Distinction of Excellence designation in November based on meeting accreditation criteria, and through their ongoing performance registry reporting.

Hospitals receiving the HeartCARE Center designation from the ACC have demonstrated their commitment to consistent, high-quality cardiovascular care through comprehensive process improvement, disease and procedure-specific accreditation, professional excellence, and community engagement. Chester County Hospital has proven to be a forward-thinking institution with goals to advance the cause of sustainable quality improvement.

Dr. Amanulla Khaji Implants First Medtronic MICRA AV Leadless Pacemaker at CCH

Amanulla Khaji, MD and the Electrophysiology team at Chester County Hospital have recently implanted the hospital's first Medtronic MICRA AV Leadless Pacemaker.

Medtronic's MICRA AV is the next step in the industry's race to develop a completely leadless dual chamber pacemaker. MICRA AV has internal sensing algorithms that detect atrial contractions and adjust pacing in the ventricle to coordinate with the atrium in patients with AV Block. Key to the success with leadless pacing technology is the demonstrated 63% reduction in major complications compared to regular pacemakers. Scars, infection, pocket erosion, venous thromboembolism or obstruction, and tricuspid regurgitation are reduced or eliminated because there is no open surgical wound and no pacemaker leads.

The Electrophysiology team is relentlessly dedicated to developing Chester County Hospital into a regional center of excellence for Heart Rhythm Management. Their ability to provide the industry's latest technology and treatment techniques along with Chester County Hospital's hallmark individualized, quality care, allows our community members to stay right here in Chester County for cutting edge Heart Rhythm Management.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVE HARTMAN, MEDTRONIC PRINCIPLE SALES REPRESENTATIVE; VIVIAN NGUYEN; DR. AMANULLA KHAJI; DELL VANNICOLO; KERRY STRICKLAND; SHARON GILSKY; LAUREN WARONKER; AMANDA LLOYD. MISSING FROM THE PICTURE: MONICA PAMMER; LAURA DENNIN; KERWIN BARDEN.

CCH Receives Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award

Chester County Hospital has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes the hospital's commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence.

Chester County Hospital earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the proper use of medications and other stroke treatments aligned with the most up-to-date, evidence-based guidelines with the goal of speeding recovery and reducing death and disability for stroke patients. Before discharge, patients should also receive education on managing their health, get a follow-up visit scheduled, as well as other care transition interventions.

The hospital additionally received the Association's Target: StrokeSM Honor Roll Elite award. To qualify for this recognition, hospitals must meet quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient's arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator, or TPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke.

Chester County Hospital has also met specific scientific guidelines as a Primary Stroke Center, featuring a comprehensive system for rapid diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients admitted to the Emergency Department.



CCH Receives Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award

Chester County Hospital has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Heart Failure Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes the hospital's commitment to ensuring heart failure patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines founded in the latest scientific evidence. The goal is speeding recovery and improving quality of life for heart failure patients.

The hospital earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of heart failure patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the proper use of medications and aggressive risk-reduction therapies. Before discharge, patients should also receive education on managing their heart failure and overall health, get a follow-up visit scheduled, as well as other care transition interventions.



CHESTER COUNTY HOSPITAL'S HEART FAILURE CARE TEAM CELEBRATES THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

▶▶ TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
chestercountyhospital.org

new physicians

Urogynecology

Jose Maceda, MD

Dr. Maceda received his medical degree from University of Buffalo, School of Medicine and Biomedical Science. He completed a residency at Thomas Jefferson University and a fellowship at Clarian Methodist Hospital of Indianapolis. He is Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and fellowship trained in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery. He sees patients at Axia Urogynecology, King of Prussia.



Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Bradley Belous, DMD

Dr. Belous received his D.M.D from Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. He completed a residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Dr. Belous has extensive training in advanced surgical and anesthesia procedures. Dr. Belous sees patients at Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Associates.

Hospital Medicine

Nicholas Ligato, DO

Dr. Ligato received his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed a residency at Mercy Catholic Medical Center and a fellowship at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Ligato is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and is a hospitalist at Chester County Hospital.

Cardiology

Riya Chacko, MD

Dr. Chacko received her medical degree from Thomas Jefferson University. She completed a fellowship at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Chacko is Board Certified in Cardiology and sees patients at Chester County Cardiology Associates in West Chester and Kennett Square.

Scott Golarz, MD

Dr. Golarz received his medical degree from Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. He completed a Fellowship in Vascular Surgery at Baylor University Medical Center. Dr. Golarz is Board Certified in Surgery and Vascular Surgery and sees patient at Vascular Surgical Specialists in West Chester. Dr. Golarz is known regionally as an expert in the treatment of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome.

Bariatric Medicine

Kristoffel R. Dumon, MD

Dr. Dumon received his medical degree from Katholieke Universiteit Te Leuven and completed his residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He is Board Certified in Surgery and is an Associate Professor of Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Dumon sees patients in Philadelphia and Valley Forge and performs surgery at Chester County Hospital, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Presbyterian, and Pennsylvania Hospital.



Noel Williams, MD

Dr. Williams received his medical degree from Royal College of Surgeons. He completed his residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where he served as chief resident his final year. He is Board Certified in Medicine, and is the Director of Penn Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery Program and sees patients in Philadelphia and Valley Forge. Dr. Williams will see patients at Penn Medicine Valley Forge and perform surgeries at Chester County Hospital.



Internal Medicine

Katherine McDonnell, MD

Dr. McDonnell received her medical degree from Thomas Jefferson University. She completed a residency at Banner University Medical Center. Dr. McDonnell is Board Certified in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine and is a hospitalist at Chester County Hospital.



Ophthalmology

Christine Talamini, MD

Dr. Talamini received her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physician and Surgeons. She completed a residency at Thomas Jefferson University and Jersey Shore Medical Center. Dr. Talamini is Board Certified in Ophthalmology and see patients at Vistarr Laser & Vision Centers.

▶▶ TO FIND A DOCTOR,
CALL 610-738-2300, OR VISIT
chestercountyhospital.org

Critical Care

Jessica DeCollo, MD

Dr. DeCollo received her medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine. She completed her residency at St. Luke's University Hospital. Dr. DeCollo is Board Certified in Emergency Medicine and sees patients at Chester County Hospital.

Nancy MacGarvey, MD

Dr. MacGarvey received her medical degree from the University of Kansas Medical School. She completed a residency at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and a fellowship at Duke University Hospital. Dr. MacGarvey is Board Certified in Critical Care, Pulmonary Disease and Internal Medicine and sees patients at Chester County Hospital.

Neurology

Pasquale Brancazio, DO

Dr. Brancazio received his medical degree from West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed a residency at the Medical College of Virginia where he was named the Distinguished Resident in Neurology. Dr. Brancazio completed a fellowship in electromyography and neuromuscular medicine at the Medical College of Virginia. Dr. Brancazio is Board Certified in Psychiatry and Neurology, as well as Electrodiagnostic Medicine and sees patients at Penn Neurology in West Chester and Kennett Square.



Urology

D. Christopher Brooks, MD

Dr. Brooks received his medical degree from Northwestern University. He completed a residency at Wake Forest University. Dr. Brooks sees patients at MidLantic Urology in West Grove.

Physical Medicine

Katherine Borst, MD

Dr. Borst received her medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine. She completed a residency at Temple University Hospital. Dr. Borst sees patients at Rehabilitation Associates of the Main Line in Malvern.

Department of OB/GYN

Lewis Lo, MD

Dr. Lo received his medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and completed a residency from Montefiore Medical Center in Bronx, New York. Dr. Lo was awarded the 2020 Council on Resident Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology National Faculty Award. He received the Medical Student Teaching Award in 2018, 2019, and 2020. He is conversational in Mandarin and Cantonese. Dr. Lo is Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and see patients at Penn OB/GYN Chester County.



OB/GYN

Beth Maisel, MD

Dr. Maisel received her medical degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She completed her residency at Christiana Hospital. Dr. Maisel is Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and is an OB hospitalist at Chester County Hospital.

Podiatry

Tarek Sayed, DPM

Dr. Sayed received his medical degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine. He completed his surgical residency at Crozer-Chester Medical Center where he served as chief resident. Dr. Sayed sees patients at Podiatry Care Specialists in West Chester.

Siavash Rostami, DPM

Dr. Rostami received his medical degree from Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine. He completed a foot and ankle surgical residency at Jackson South Medical Center, where he served as chief resident during his final year. Dr. Rostami sees patients at Dr. Siegerman and Associates in West Chester.

Dermatology

Sarah Todd, MD

Dr. Todd received her medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine. She completed an internal medicine internship at the University of Maryland and a dermatology residency at Georgetown University Hospital where she was chief resident. Dr. Todd is Board Certified in Dermatology and sees patients at Pennsylvania Dermatology Partners in West Chester.



Welcome

Anna Spivak, DO

COLORECTAL SURGEON
FELLOWSHIP TRAINED

Dr. Anna Spivak, DO, Colon and Rectal Surgeon, is not your typical amateur baker. She leans toward the more complex pastries and desserts, creating decadent treats from French macarons to profiterole cream puffs. She enjoys skiing, playing tennis, reading, yoga, and spending time with her family, including her husband and three daughters.

Her love of challenges comes as no surprise given her dedication to her work. After leaving accounting to pursue medicine, Dr. Spivak chose colorectal surgery—a field that requires significant patience and precise care. On October 1, 2020, Dr. Spivak joined the Chester County Hospital (CCH) community.

Dr. Spivak earned her Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her general surgery residency at Lankenau Medical Center in Wynnewood, PA. She went on to complete her advanced subspecialty training in Colon and Rectal surgery at Allegheny Health Network in Pittsburgh, PA. While in her residency and fellowship, Dr. Spivak participated in research studies and presented at multiple conferences on colon and rectal surgery outcomes and robotic surgery.



▶▶ TO FIND A COLORECTAL SURGEON LIKE DR. SPIVAK, CALL 610.738.2300.

Q&A with Dr. Spivak

MORE ABOUT HER MEDICAL CAREER AND WHAT EXCITES HER ABOUT BEING PART OF THE CCH TEAM

CCH: We know challenging yourself was a key reason you entered medicine. Why did you choose to specialize in colorectal surgery?

Dr. Spivak: I chose colorectal surgery because it allows me to work with patients who suffer from a variety of different diseases- cancer, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and diverticulitis being just a few. Some of these illnesses are life-long while others come into and out of their lives rather quickly. We build relationships and take care of the disease together. I find it to be demanding and very professionally satisfying.

CCH: What are some of those challenging and rewarding aspects of your job?

Dr. Spivak: The most difficult part of the job is telling a patient that they have cancer. It is hard to deliver news like that. But that also goes along with the most rewarding aspect of my job, which is telling patients they are cured. When a patient comes into the hospital with a severe diagnosis and you manage to help them, seeing them recover and go home is one of the most rewarding things professionally for me.

CCH: Let's talk about your patients. What do you admire about them?

Dr. Spivak: Resilience. I absolutely admire patients' ability to recover and keep going while fighting their disease.

Let's say someone comes into the emergency room with a serious issue. They undergo an operation, often followed by a long hospitalization. When they get up and walk around, they smile. It is this strength that I find admirable.

That is ultimately what brings me to work every day—the fact that I can help cure them.

CCH: What is one of the most important things you've learned in your medical career so far?

Dr. Spivak: Surgery is a team sport. It's not just me taking care of patients. It's the nurses, physician assistants, social workers, case managers, office and

support staff in the hospital. But it is the patients and their families who are the most important people in this equation. All of us work together to help the patient heal.

Going into medicine, a lot of people don't realize that, but eventually, they understand, "Oh, it's not just me—it's truly a team effort." You have to work as a team in order to provide the best care for your patients.

CCH: You've been at Chester County Hospital just a few months now. What do you like about it—and what excites you about your future here?

Dr. Spivak: CCH is a well-run community-based hospital with excellent resources, including those from Penn Medicine. We have fantastic pathologists, radiologists, oncologists, radiation oncologists, gastroenterologists, internists, and specialists—there are experts in each discipline.

At the same time, we are within the community, serving the community. We help people stay close to home for their treatment while providing a full spectrum of services that are necessary, as well as the best possible care for their condition. We're able to get patients state-of-the-art care within the community setting.

CCH is a personal place, where everybody knows each other. Ultimately, that affects how people interact and how people are taken care of. There's a feeling to that—it's not a big place where people just pass by one another. People tend to work here for many, many years, and it certainly shows.

I am excited to join an excellent group of physicians at CCH and add my expertise in colorectal diseases to provide an even broader and comprehensive care to the community.

CCH: Last question—if you could tell the Chester County community one thing, what would it be?

Dr. Spivak: Wear your mask, wash your hands, and stay safe. And, of course, call CCH for any of your colorectal needs.

Welcome



Kristina Novick, MD, MS

| RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

Whether to teach, practice law, bake pies, or fly airplanes, children love to follow in the footsteps of their parents. Maybe it's a reflection on passed-down interests and values, or maybe it's simply inspiration from seeing their parents immersed in a job they love.

When it comes to the medical field, physician parents are also known for raising physician children — a pattern both Daniel Altman, MD and Kristina Novick, MD, MS, are familiar with. Dr. Altman's parents were both physicians, and Dr. Novick's father was a physician. And now, both doctors have brought their love for the medical profession right here to the Abramson Cancer Center at Chester County Hospital.

In addition to both recently joining the CCH team, Dr. Altman and Dr. Novick both specialize in oncology (the diagnosis and treatment of cancer). However, cancer is a complex disease with a variety of treatment options, and each physician is focused on a different branch of oncology.

Altman is a medical oncologist, which means he uses chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and other drugs to treat

Daniel Altman, MD

| MEDICAL ONCOLOGIST

cancer. A native of Pennsylvania, he received his medical degree from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine and his fellowship in Hematology (the study of blood and blood disorders) there, as well.

Dr. Novick is a radiation oncologist, which means she uses radiation therapy to treat cancer. She earned her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, then completed her residency at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where she also received a Master's of Science in Biostatistics.

Both physicians share a passion for caring for those affected by cancer and are eager to bring this dedication to the Chester County community. Here's a little more background on your two new CCH physicians, why they love their jobs, and why they're excited to call CCH home.

▶▶ CALL 610.738.2500 TO
TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN
HELP WITH CANCER CARE.

GETTING TO KNOW Dr. Novick & Dr. Altman

CCH: Let's start at the beginning. Where did you grow up, and what do you love about Pennsylvania?

Dr. Altman: I grew up in Montgomery County. Both of my parents are doctors, so we moved there when I was 5 years old for their jobs in the area. My favorite part about Pennsylvania is the diversity in sports. I am a big fan of Philadelphia sports — and I equally dislike Pittsburgh sports. It does create a fun rivalry, however.

Dr. Novick: I grew up in San Diego, California. I first came to the Northeast for college and fell in love with the seasons and greenery. Fall is my favorite season, and I really enjoy all the outdoor activities available in Pennsylvania during the fall. I am excited to explore more of the mountains and lakes in the years to come!

CCH: What are you doing on your days off?

Dr. Altman: My days off are spent with my 1-year-old daughter and my wife. Sometimes, we're doing absolutely nothing and just relaxing. Other times, we're going to a local park. The more time I spend with family, the better.

Dr. Novick: My husband and I are both physicians, so we enjoy spending time at home with the children. I do a lot of running during my free time, as well — increasingly before dawn as the children get older.

I would like to travel more with the kids, but we'll have to wait until it is safe to do so again. A year ago, I might have said that I'd like to travel less, but there are so many amazing places within driving distance here in PA, and I'd really like to share my favorite places with the kids.

CCH: Let's talk about medicine. You both have at least one parent in the medical field and have said that has influenced your decision to become a physician. What made you decide to specialize in oncology?

Dr. Altman: Within medicine, there is a huge range of specialties.

Dr. Novick: When my grandmother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, my father (who is a primary care physician) stepped in and helped guide her treatment and supportive care. It was then that I decided I wanted to go into medicine.

I also wanted to go into a specialty that worked with oncology patients. I wanted to work in a field with complex decision making and coordination of care. Exposure to radiation oncology was limited during my preclinical medical school years, but I did start to see patients who benefited from radiation during my clinical years.

CCH: Being a physician is demanding, and being a physician in oncology must be, as well. What is the most challenging part of your job?

Dr. Altman: Knowing when to stop. We live in an age where there is always another drug to use next. Sometimes, the most challenging thing to do is advise a patient not to be treated, even if it's the right thing to do.

Dr. Novick: Educating patients and their families about cancer and radiation. Patients and families often come to consult equipped with statistics and information acquired from the internet or specialists that may be misleading, incomplete, or false.

My job from the beginning involves educating the patient on the "what" his or her cancer

diagnosis means, the "why" radiation is recommended, the "how" radiation is delivered, the "when" a response may be seen, and the "which" side effects are likely.

CCH: What is the most rewarding part to you?

Dr. Altman: The relationships, no doubt. I get to become part of a patient's inner circle. I am with them in the bad moments, but also the good moments. There is a bond that forms in the beginning and continues to get stronger over time.

Dr. Novick: Working with patients and families to tailor therapy. Medical textbooks are written from the perspective of the clinician. However, real people are far more complex and diverse than textbooks portray. As a result, I am constantly learning how to improve the care I give to patients based on the patient's particular needs and resources.

CCH: What do you appreciate most about your patients?

Dr. Altman: My patients are so strong. I wonder if I would have the strength to do what they do. It's inspiring to see how people rise to the occasion.

CCH: What is the most important thing you've learned in your medical career so far?

Dr. Novick: The importance of positive thinking throughout the course of care. There is a very human tendency to think of all the negative things that could happen as if they have already happened. Many cancer patients survive their disease, but the fear of negative outcomes can be so overwhelming that it impacts their quality of life.

Our team starts with a positive outlook from the beginning, while remaining realistic about the challenges ahead.

Welcome Sherif Sherif, MD

| ORTHOPAEDIC SPINE SURGEON



**CAIRO, EGYPT; SANTA MONICA, CA; BOSTON, MA;
ROCHESTER, NY; CHERRY HILL, NJ; WEST CHESTER, PA**

No, this isn't a list of destinations to add to your future vacations—though it would be an exciting list if it were. This is just a handful of the many places Sherif Sherif, MD, has called home.

Along with his wife, and later, their two daughters, and even later, their three cats, Dr. Sherif has traveled from coast to coast and across the ocean, exploring the world and studying medicine.

Dr. Sherif, specializes in Orthopaedic Spine Surgery, including degenerative spine disease, minimally invasive spine surgery, adult spine deformity, spine trauma, and spine infections and tumors. He joined the Chester County Hospital community this January.

Dr. Sherif brings medical experience from around the globe to Chester County. He received his Medical Degree from Tanta University in Tanta, Egypt, and completed his Orthopaedic residency at Cairo University in Cairo, Egypt. After moving to the United States with his wife, a Texas native, he conducted 5 years of research in Orthopaedics in Southern California—two years at the Hip and Pelvis Institute at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica and three years at the LA Orthopaedic Institute at St. Vincent Medical Center in downtown Los Angeles. Later, he completed four Orthopaedic fellowships with three of them in spine surgery (each focused on

different parts of the spine) at Massachusetts General Hospital, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, the University of Rochester, and finally, at the University of Pennsylvania.

In short, Dr. Sherif is no stranger to new communities—or to the human spine. Here, he answers some of our questions about his medical career, his values, and what makes him excited about becoming a part of the Chester County community.

"Everyone at Chester County has been working very hard to welcome me, and I will not let them down. And for my patients, I will treat you all like my family with love and respect."

▶▶ HAVE NECK OR BACK PAIN,
AND NEED AN ORTHOPAEDIC
SURGEON? CALL 610.738.2300.

Who is Dr. Sherif?

HEART AND SOUL MAKES THIS SURGEON WHOLE

CCH: Let's start at the beginning. Why did you decide to enter the medical field?

Dr. Sherif: My father is a general surgeon, my mother and older brother are pathologists, my uncle is an OB/GYN, my other uncle is a plastic surgeon, my mother-in-law is a pathologist, there is another uncle that is a general surgeon—I was born into this field. All of my life, people grew up to be doctors.

Back home when I was a kid, we had a big hospital right next to where we lived. I remember that one night, I saw one of my dad's friends leaving the hospital. At that time, things were super safe, so we were playing out on the streets until around 2 am. Literally, at 2 am, this guy was leaving the hospital looking so tired—his shirt was untucked, he looked miserable. He had just finished surgery and got in his car. It's really crazy, but I thought, knowing that he most likely had just saved someone's life or made it much better, "That's what I want to do with my life."

I never thought about anything else. It was a no-brainer to be a doctor.

CCH: What drew you to orthopaedic surgery specifically?

Dr. Sherif: I wanted to be a plastic surgeon first. My uncle was a plastic surgeon, and I was very fascinated by plastic surgery in the movies. In my internship, I did two months of plastic surgery—one month in the burn unit and one month in plastic surgery. I didn't like either, and I floated around for a couple of years in general surgery, pediatric surgery,

neurosurgery—everything.

One day, I was moonlighting at a small hospital in Cairo, and we had a patient with a condition that every doctor examined. He had leg pain, sciatica (pain in the sciatic nerve starting in the lower back and down to the legs and feet), and drop foot (difficulty lifting the front part of the foot, causing trouble walking), and he was becoming paralyzed. The neurosurgeon came and saw him, then the neurologist came and saw him. They diagnosed him with a disc herniation (when a part of one of the discs that sits between the bones of the spine is pushed out causing nerve compression) and dismissed the case.

Then, the orthopaedic surgeon came, who thought the patient's exam did not match the diagnosis he was given. He asked for an updated MRI and a CT scan, and the patient turned out to have cancer in his pelvic bone. The orthopaedic surgeon was the only one that diagnosed, operated on, and saved the patient. I thought, "Okay, these people really know what they're doing. I'm going to be an orthopaedic surgeon."

I actually stuck with that doctor. He was my mentor for the next 10 years and he has shaped my whole career. Orthopaedic surgery is life-changing. I love it.

CCH: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Dr. Sherif: Spine surgery. There is nothing in spine surgery that is a simple, small, or easy case. Every single day, and every single patient that I see—it is a big challenge.

A patient comes in with what we think is a small case, like an obvious disc herniation. And for us, it's an "easy" case. I'm going to go in, pluck that disc out, and everything is going to be okay. But you can go into the simplest case and end up in surgery for 3 hours meticulously dissecting a disc fragment that is stuck and adhering to the dural sac that surrounds the nerves.

That's the most challenging part about the spine. You are working right next to the spinal cord and the nerve that makes us move. You have to be 100% focused all the time, working at 100% or even 120% capacity. The difficult and hard cases, and what people call challenging about the spine—that's what I like.

CCH: And the most rewarding part of your job?

Dr. Sherif: Let's reference the same case—someone comes in with what we call a "simple" case of disc herniation with their life literally ruined. They can't walk, they can't move, they can't play sports, they can't pick up their child, they can't do anything. We do the surgery, and the next morning, I see the patient, and they say, "I'm a new human. My leg doesn't hurt—all the pain is gone, and I can move again!" That makes my day.

Just to see the smile on my patients' faces—that's what makes me wake up the next morning, to go make rounds and see the patients I had yesterday. If you do spine surgery for the right reasons, it works like magic.



Call 610.738.2793 to update your mailing information.

Thank You To Our... PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

Chester County Hospital's history of transformational philanthropy and unique culture have shaped the values that still guide us today.

The outpouring of love and support from our dedicated community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been truly inspiring. Generous support from our donors has made a dynamic impact, allowing us to adapt to the ever changing healthcare needs of our community.

As a tribute and testament of our long-standing culture of philanthropy, two wall installations are displayed within The Knauer Family Lobby in the

hospital's main entrance. Historical milestones, impactful gifts and donor stories are featured, inspiring a new generation of compassionate, generous donors to influence tomorrow's advances in healthcare.

The future of healthcare is right here in Chester County. Your investment in the hospital provides essential resources for the very best in health care for your family, friends, and neighbors.

To learn more about giving options, please contact Ashley Kopp at 610.431.5266 or ashley.kopp@penntmedicine.upenn.edu.