

Health



An Overview of
Our Cancer Center

**LaShon's
Perplexing
Heart Case**

**We're a U.S. News
and World Report
Best Regional
Hospital**

Letter from the president.

Dear Neighbor,

It is hard to believe that it is already August; time really does fly by, and I am sure you have been staying busy enjoying these last few weeks of summer. We have also been busy, working tirelessly to provide exceptional care for our patients and I am pleased to report that our efforts have been recognized with several recent national awards, including the 2023 Healthgrades Specialty Excellence Award for Coronary Intervention, the 2023 Healthgrades America's Top 100 Award for Coronary Intervention, and the 2023 Get with the Guidelines® - Stroke GoldPlus Award with Target: Type 2 Honor Roll. Additionally, we were the only hospital in Prince George's County and in the southern Maryland region to be named a U.S. News and World Report Best Regional Hospital for 2023-2024, and we were also recognized as high performing in seven conditions/procedures. You will have the opportunity to learn more about these awards and why we received them in this issue.

Speaking of how time flies, it has been over three years since the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center opened its doors to our community. Unbeknownst to any of us, the COVID-19 pandemic would shut everything down only a few months later and change life as we knew it. Yet, through these trying times, our commitment to delivering the highest level of expert cancer care to the southern Maryland region

never changed. Three years later, our cancer center continues to bring hope and access to world-class cancer treatments and specialists to patients and families right here, close to home.

You will read in our latest profile how our cancer center has grown over the years to deliver on the promise of exceptional community-based cancer care. We've added several oncology providers to our talented team as well as expanded the physical space. In this issue, we introduce you to our breast surgeon and new radiation oncologist, both offering the very latest, cutting-edge techniques typically seen in academic or big-city cancer centers. Cancer is a recurring theme in this issue of *Health*. You'll also hear from one of our otolaryngologists about the strides in head and neck cancer treatments and organ-sparing therapies. We're truly proud of our team of oncology providers, specialists, and staff who provide an exceptional patient experience and promising outcomes.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue of *Health* magazine as well as the last dog days of summer with your loved ones and friends.

In good health,

Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



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Tidbits

1

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Named a Best Regional Hospital by U.S. News and World Report



MedStar Southern Maryland is the only hospital in Prince George's County to receive this ranking.

We are proud to announce that MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is the only hospital in Prince George's County and in the southern Maryland region to receive a Best Regional Hospital ranking from U.S. News & World Report for 2023-2024. This year, 494 hospitals in 49 states and 92 metro areas were recognized as Best Regional Hospitals.

MedStar Southern Maryland is also considered high performing in seven procedures/conditions for 2023-2024, including Heart Failure, Heart Attack, Stroke, Kidney Failure, COPD, Diabetes, and Pneumonia. According to U.S. News & World Report, hospitals that are not nationally ranked but that scored high enough in a specialty to put them in the top 10% of the analyzed centers are recognized as high performing. Hospitals are ranked from 1 to 50 in each specialty, with hospitals not in the top 50 but still in the top 10% of all rated hospitals receiving a designation of "high performing."

2



We're Baby Friendly

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has achieved the prestigious international Baby-Friendly designation from Baby-Friendly USA. This honor demonstrates that MedStar Southern Maryland adheres to the highest standards of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. Read more about this exciting designation on page 14.

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Meet Our New Chief Nursing Officer

Welcome to Karen Wyche Latham, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CENP, the hospital's new vice president of nursing and chief nursing officer (CNO). Meet Karen and learn more about her on page 15.

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Stroke Gold Plus Award

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is proud to be a recipient of the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke GoldPlus quality achievement award and the American Heart Association's Target: Type 2 Honor Roll Award. To learn more about these honors, please turn to page 15.



A Perplexing Heart Case

One Woman's Elusive Heart Condition is No Match for Groundbreaking Technology at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

If it wasn't for a groundbreaking new technology and the expertise of the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's interventional cardiology team, patient LaShon Bennett may not have received a definitive diagnosis for her crushing chest pain.

Ms. Bennett, who had been experiencing chest pain and what

felt like severe heartburn on and off for several weeks, wound up in the emergency room (ER) when the pain became so intense that she knew she needed immediate attention.

"I was experiencing chest pains off and on for a couple of weeks which got progressively worse. The pain would last about five minutes and then subside. I thought it

was heartburn, so I didn't worry too much about it until the day the chest pain was so intense, I knew something was wrong," said Ms. Bennett.

By the time her husband drove her to the ER, however, her chest pain was gone. But, because she exhibited many of the classic signs and symptoms of a heart attack, physicians performed a battery of

tests. Ms. Bennett's bloodwork, which looked for a possible injury to the heart, came back elevated and her EKG showed some changes that indicated a possible blockage in the heart.

The next day, Ms. Bennett was taken to the hospital's cardiac catheterization lab where an angiography was performed to look for a blockage in her main coronary blood vessels.

A Perplexing Case

"With Ms. Bennett's classic symptoms of heart attack, we expected to see a blockage in one of her large coronary arteries," explained Brian Case, MD, interventional cardiologist. "But her vessels looked normal with no evidence of a blockage, which was a bit perplexing."

Fortunately for Ms. Bennett, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is one of the only hospitals in the region equipped with a new technology called the Coroventis CoroFlow Cardiovascular System, a new software technology that measures the blood flow through the microvessels of the heart most often affected by a lesser-known condition called coronary microvascular dysfunction (CMD). CMD affects the smallest coronary arteries which do not relax properly, resulting in a lack of oxygen-rich blood flowing to the heart.

CMD symptoms often mimic those of heart disease or a heart attack including chest pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Traditional tests such as coronary angiography only visualize the three main large blood vessels of the heart to assess for blockages or disease, which is why it is so beneficial for patients like Ms. Bennett to have access to the CoroFlow System.

How the CoroFlow Cardiovascular System Works

While she was in the cardiac catheterization lab, the CoroFlow procedure was performed on Ms. Bennett. Under light sedation, a pressure wire was guided down the vessel of her heart to the microvascular system. The CoroFlow software measured the blood flow in these microvessels, which showed evidence of CMD. The entire procedure took about 30 minutes.

"Before we had the technology to evaluate for CMD, patients were often frustrated when they were sent home without a definitive diagnosis. With the CoroFlow System, we now have the tools needed to assess the tiniest coronary arteries to make the CMD diagnosis and manage these patients successfully with medications."

As for Ms. Bennett, she is back to her normal daily activities free of any chest pain or other worrisome symptoms. Her condition is effectively managed through medication. "Evidence shows that patients with CMD who are medically managed have a decreased risk for cardiovascular events in the future compared to people who have undiagnosed CMD," said Dr. Case. "Ms. Bennett's prognosis for the future is very positive."

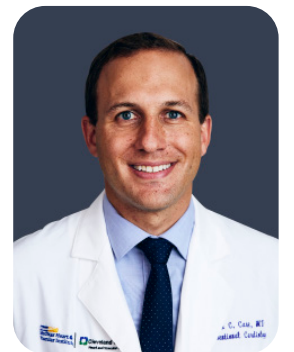
"I feel great and haven't had any chest pain since," said Ms. Bennett who gives this advice to anyone experiencing symptoms that are out of the ordinary: "Don't ignore your body's warning signs. Get checked to make sure everything is okay. I should have gone to the doctor before my symptoms got so bad. If something isn't normal, there's usually a reason."



We are in Healthgrades America's Top 100 Hospitals for Coronary Intervention!

We are proud to announce that MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is one of the recipients of the 2023 Specialty Excellence Award for Coronary Intervention from Healthgrades, with only two other hospitals in Maryland also receiving this recognition.

MedStar Southern Maryland was then further recognized as one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Coronary Intervention, making it the only hospital in Maryland to advance to this prestigious list.



To make an appointment with Dr. Case, please call **301-877-5677**.





Matthew E. Witek, MD, MS, Joins MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's Radiation Oncology Team



"Zap-X and Halcyon are sophisticated technologies that enable the delivery of high doses of radiation to the therapy target while sparing critical normal structures. Beyond precise delivery of radiation therapy, these advanced technologies are patient-friendly as they minimize the impact of radiation treatment on patients' everyday lives."



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is pleased to welcome Matthew E. Witek, MD, MS, radiation oncologist, to the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. Dr. Witek specializes in treating patients with cancers of the central nervous system, base of the skull, head and neck, and skin.

Dr. Witek has a special interest in advanced radiation technologies and treatment approaches that minimize treatment side effects and improve patient outcomes. This includes Zap-X®, the first radiosurgery system of its kind dedicated to the treatment of brain tumors, and Halcyon™, a radiotherapy system that offers greater precision of radiation delivery to the tumor site while sparing healthy nearby tissue.

"Zap-X and Halcyon are sophisticated technologies that enable the delivery of high doses of radiation to the therapy target

while sparing critical normal structures. Beyond precise delivery of radiation therapy, these advanced technologies are patient-friendly as they minimize the impact of radiation treatment on patients' everyday lives," he said.

In addition to patient care, Dr. Witek is very active in head and neck cancer research with areas of interest that include radiographic biomarkers to guide therapy intensity, advanced technologies to limit normal tissue toxicity, and biomarkers to guide treatment approaches. His efforts have led to the completion of two investigator-initiated trials, serving as a co-principal investigator on an international cooperative group study, leadership positions within several radiation therapy collaborative groups, and the publication of 50 peer-reviewed articles.

Dr. Witek's care philosophy is focused on a multidisciplinary approach to patient care and

evidence-based decision-making integrated into years of clinical experience. He said, "I believe in a shared decision-making approach between patient and doctor and maximizing cure while minimizing side effects."

Dr. Witek received his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College. He completed his residency training in radiation oncology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and an advanced radiation therapy fellowship at the University of Maryland.

Dr. Witek sees patients at:
MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
7501 Surratts Road, Suite 108
Clinton, MD, 20735
P: 301-877-4673



Demystifying Head and Neck Cancers

While many types of cancers have set screening methods—mammograms for breast cancer, PSA checks for prostate cancer, and colonoscopies for colon cancer—head and neck cancers are identified differently. Seema Pai, MD, MPH, otolaryngologist, explained that diagnosis is about symptom awareness and knowing when to see an ear, nose, and throat specialist (ENT) for evaluation.

Symptom Awareness is Critical

Be aware of symptoms and changes in your body such as:

- Hoarseness for more than 2-3 weeks without a previous illness such as a cold or cough
- Chronic throat pain for more than 2-3 weeks without a previous illness such as a cold or cough
- Progressive difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Coughing up blood
- Swelling in the neck (lymph nodes) that doesn't go away after treatment
- Any of these symptoms accompanied by unexplained weight loss

"We see a higher rate of head and neck cancer in people with a history of smoking or alcohol overuse," explained Dr. Pai. "We've also seen an increase in

the incidence in non-smokers related to infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). Any symptoms that are out of the ordinary or persist longer than 2-3 weeks should be assessed by an ENT physician." A visit with an otolaryngologist includes a thorough physical exam, often with a flexible nasal camera, to check for lesions in the mouth, nose, and throat.

Multidisciplinary Approach to Treatment

"Treating head and neck cancers is different and perhaps more challenging. We're not just treating for a cure, we're also focusing on preserving organs like the tongue and larynx to help ensure that patients maintain swallowing function, self-expression, and the abilities to eat and talk," said Dr. Pai. Treatment typically includes a multi-modal approach of surgery and/or chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Otolaryngologists work closely with partners in radiation oncology and medical oncology.

Post-treatment recovery is an important part of the process and may include working with speech and language pathologists, audiologists, pain management, and lymphedema services. Throughout the treatment and surveillance period, patients see their ENT provider anywhere from every 4-6 weeks or every 3 months for up to five years post-treatment.

"Our goal is to prevent the

recurrence of cancer, so we follow our patients closely and emphasize the importance of follow-ups with all the different therapies. There are many players on our team working seamlessly together for our patient's long-term health and the best possible outcomes," added Dr. Pai.

Schedule an appointment with one of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital's otolaryngologists (ear, nose, and throat specialists):



Seema Pai, MD, MPH



Ronak Dixit, MD

Office locations:
13950 Brandywine Road
Brandywine, MD 20613
P: 301-782-2220
3062 Waldorf Marketplace
Waldorf, MD 20603
P: 301-843-3888



Breast Cancer Surgery—What Does This Mean for Women Diagnosed with the Disease?



Q&A



with Patricia Wehner, MD, Breast Surgeon and Site Director at MedStar Regional Breast Health Program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

Q: When is surgery necessary for a breast cancer patient?

A: Surgery is almost always part of the treatment plan for breast cancer patients. It is the standard of care. The only women who generally do not benefit from surgery are those who have metastatic or stage 4 breast cancer (cancer that has spread).

Q: What are the different types of breast cancer surgeries?

A: The two types of breast surgery are partial mastectomy or lumpectomy meaning removing the area where the tumor is plus some healthy tissue versus removing an entire breast, called a mastectomy. The procedure a patient undergoes is typically based on the tumor's location, type of cancer, size, and a woman's preference. We also discuss whether breast reconstruction will be needed or desired as part of the surgical process and if the patient wishes to have implants or use autologous tissue, meaning tissue from someplace else on the body to reconstruct the breast.

Additionally, any time we perform a lumpectomy, we almost always recommend radiation therapy as part of the treatment program. For a

mastectomy, whether radiation therapy is recommended after the surgery depends on the tumor sizing and nodal involvement.

Q: Are the long-term survival rates impacted by the type of surgery a woman has?

A: There is a major misconception that if a woman has a mastectomy or a bilateral mastectomy (removal of both breasts) then they won't need to worry about the cancer coming back. This is not true. Many things factor into whether a woman will have a recurrence or not. A recurrence of breast cancer has to do more with the biology of the tumor and less about the type of surgery a woman undergoes.

Q: What surgical techniques and advances are available to women at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center?

A: We have the capabilities to perform any type of surgical treatment including reconstructive breast surgery and advanced prophylactic options including a sophisticated procedure called a lymphatic venous bypass. For women who have involvement of the lymph nodes, our breast surgeons work with our microvascular plastic

surgeon to perform the lymphatic venous bypass, which may help reduce the development of lymphedema, a chronic condition that causes swelling in the affected area of the body.

Another exciting procedure currently in trials that is available at our hospital is called nerve grafting with nipple preservation. For women undergoing a nipple-sparing mastectomy, we save the nipple and the surrounding nerves to try and maintain nipple sensation. While this innovative technique is still new, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is one of the few hospitals around the country employing this new technique.



For information on breast cancer diagnosis and treatment or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Wehner, please call MedStar Health: Breast Health Program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center at **301-877-5607**.

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Tips for Keeping Kids Healthy This Back-to-School Season



With the start of a new school year approaching, Rachele Barrett Toman, MD, Family Medicine physician, shares important tips to help keep kids healthy and on track for physical, mental, academic, and social success.

- 1. Support the immune system.** Back to school means back to being exposed to all sorts of viruses and germs in the classroom. Make sure children of all ages are up-to-date on their vaccines and boosters.
- 2. Catch some Zzz's.** Sleep helps keep the immune system strong. About one week before school begins, get children back into a sleep routine with regular bedtimes. Helping kids reset their internal clocks before school begins will prepare them for earlier mornings.
- 3. Nutrition and hydration.** Start your child's school day with a nutritious breakfast that includes lean protein and some fruit to get them through to lunchtime. Staying hydrated throughout the school day is also very important, especially with many schools eliminating public water fountains. If possible, send your child to school with a reusable water bottle.
- 4. Stay active.** Physical activity is very important for children physically and mentally, especially as screen time increases. Incorporate outdoor playtime or sports activities as part of the after-school routine to encourage movement and fun.
- 5. Keep hands clean to reduce the spread of germs.** Hand sanitizer with greater than 60 percent alcohol content eliminates germs when plain soap and water are not available. Drop a small, fun-scented bottle of hand sanitizer in your child's backpack for easy access.
- 6. Cover your sneeze.** With younger kids, practicing the "Dracula sneeze" by showing them how to sneeze into their inner elbow is a great way to help them prevent the spread of germs.
- 7. Protect young backs.** Make sure backpacks are less than 10 percent of a child's body weight to protect their backs and necks and avoid future injury.
- 8. Limit device time.** Set age-appropriate time limits for devices to help children manage their time and balance responsibilities such as homework, physical and extracurricular activities, family time, and sleep.
- 9. Understand mental health issues and social media.** We've seen an increase in anxiety over the past several years, from separation anxiety in younger students

possible, send your child to school with a reusable water bottle.

to social and performance anxiety in older students. This is exacerbated by how much time kids spend on social media. Developing limits for social media in school-aged children and finding a balance for tweens and teens whose connection with peers relies heavily on messaging and social platforms is critical. Try waiting until age eight before introducing a basic phone, gradually introduce social media, and monitor your child's usage and activity.

10. Encourage kindness. Many kids deal with stressful situations among their peer groups, from bullying to racism and sexism. Conversations about the value of kindness go a long way as does helping your child feel positive about themselves.



Rachele Barrett Toman, MD



Dr. Rachele Barrett Toman sees patients at



9440 Marlboro Pike, Suite 200, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772



To schedule an appointment, please call **301-780-4855**.



Spotlight on Mental Health Care at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

At MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, healthcare goes beyond the physical. Recognizing the importance of integrating mental health care within the community hospital setting not only addresses patients' physical and mental well-being but also offers accessible and comprehensive mental health attention. With professionals trained to handle psychiatric emergencies and manage mental health conditions, the hospital can provide timely assessment, stabilization, and referral services to patients in need.

Inpatient Mental Health Care

The hospital's dedicated inpatient mental health unit is staffed with specialists including clinical social workers, mental health technicians, nurses and nurse practitioners, a physician and physician assistant, as well as a recreational therapist. The inpatient team also includes a utilization manager to help patients navigate through their insurance coverage upon discharge from the hospital. An addiction counselor helps patients with dual diagnoses enter rehabilitation directly from the hospital to help improve their chances of recovery.

On the unit, new support groups

have been incorporated based on patient input including mindfulness and exercise meet-ups, the addition of games, as well as individual headphones to help minimize overwhelming external stimuli.

Partial Hospitalization Programs Helps Patients Thrive

The hospital's partial hospitalization program (PHP) is one example of a program that is supporting patients with mental health conditions in a structured and intensive treatment environment. The program, run by licensed clinical social workers, helps those individuals who do not require 24-hour care but benefit from an intensive and supportive environment that is focused on stabilizing people with a mental health diagnosis including bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety.

According to Corina Freitas MD, MSc, MBA, department chair and medical director of psychiatry, "While most other PHPs closed during the COVID pandemic, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's program not only stayed open but is now back in-person in a newly designed space."

Reducing the Stigma Surrounding Mental Health

MedStar Southern Maryland

Hospital Center also serves as a site for the local first responder Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. This training focuses on the importance of recognizing the emotional and psychological effects of a person in crisis to prevent misunderstandings and wrongful arrests. The program also helps provide local law enforcement and first responders with a new perspective on how to respond to people with mental illness during an emergency call.

"Mental health conditions affect individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Our goal is to provide patients with the help and resources they need to function within the community to the best of their ability," said Dr. Freitas.



For more information on the partial hospitalization program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, please call **301-877-5617**.



"Mental health conditions affect individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Our goal is to provide patients with the help and resources they need to function within the community to the best of their ability."

—Corina Freitas MD, MSc, MBA



For more information about behavioral health services at MedStar Health, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/BehavioralHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BehavioralHealth).



Bringing Hope to Southern Maryland—Three Years of Exceptional Care at Our Cancer Center

Since opening its doors three years ago, the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has continued to expand its scope of services as well as its physical footprint to deliver excellence in cancer care to the southern Maryland region. Today, the center is comprised of diagnostic imaging; radiation therapy; medical oncology, which includes treatment planning and infusion therapy services; a women's imaging suite as well as a dedicated breast cancer surgeon; and a connection with the Washington, DC region's only National Cancer Institute designated comprehensive cancer center, the Georgetown University's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, meaning access to the most up-to-date treatment options.

Multidisciplinary, Collaborative Care Under One Roof

According to Andrew Satinsky, MD, clinical director of radiation oncology services, "The patient experience is comprehensive, collaborative, and convenient—having all services under one roof with access to a multidisciplinary team."

Diagnostic services, pathology, and treatment protocols including surgery, infusion therapy, and radiation oncology are all in

one place. "Our patients are given all the information they need including their follow-up appointments. Patients know that their team is all working together on their care, which is always tailored to each patient's needs," added Dr. Satinsky.

Collaboration is an aspect of care that happens behind the scenes but has an incredible impact on the overall care experience. A bi-weekly tumor board for breast cancer and monthly general cancer tumor conference meetings bring together medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, surgeons, and radiologists to discuss patient cases and work together to develop individualized treatment plans.

"It's this collaboration among the entire team at MedStar Southern Maryland's cancer center and with the oncology subspecialists at MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute that allows us to provide services that are far beyond any community hospital," stated Ankit Madan, MD, FACP, FAPCR, medical oncologist/hematologist.

Medical Oncology Services

Over the last three years, the capacity to deliver infusions has increased with the addition of five new bays in the infusion center going from eight bays to thirteen. Infusion services

include chemotherapy and immunotherapy, as well as iron infusions for pregnant women and those patients with severe anemia, and therapies for benign hematology conditions. The cancer center also recently added new providers, expanded the clinic space, and offers access to advanced treatment options including clinical trials in the future.

Cutting-Edge Radiation Therapy

For patients who require radiation as part of their treatment plan, the cancer center's radiation therapy department offers one-of-a-kind technologies such as Zap-X®, the first radiosurgery system dedicated to the treatment of brain tumors by delivering stereotactic radiosurgery inside the skull with pinpoint accuracy. The Zap-X system was the third one of its kind ever built and is the only one of its kind available in the region.

The facility also offers Halcyon™, a type of radiotherapy offering faster, more accurate treatment for general radiation therapy. Halcyon's image guidance system delivers radiation with greater efficiency and greater comfort for the patient - all with the same precision, allowing our team to direct radiation to the tumor while sparing surrounding healthy tissue.

Advanced Breast Cancer Surgery

The addition of renowned breast surgeon Patricia Wehner, MD, has increased the center's capabilities in complex breast cancer surgery. This includes the delivery of advanced stereotactic breast surgery techniques, which increase the surgeon's ability to precisely locate the tumor in the breast and utilize breast-sparing techniques to save healthy tissue.

Working in tandem with a renowned reconstructive plastic surgeon, women have more options for surgical care. This advanced surgical component, coupled with the center's outpatient women's diagnostic suite which offers 3D mammography, breast ultrasound, stereotactic and ultrasound biopsy capabilities, and bone density scans, offers necessary breast services conveniently in one location.



To make an appointment at the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, please call **301-877-HOPE (4673)**.

Tidbit



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Achieves Prestigious Baby-Friendly Designation

After many months of hard work, determination, dedication, and a rigorous review process, MedStar Southern Maryland has achieved the prestigious international Baby-Friendly designation from Baby-Friendly USA, the organization responsible for bestowing this certification in the United States.

Why is this Designation So Important?

This honor demonstrates that MedStar Southern Maryland adheres to the highest standards of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

These standards are built on the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, a set of evidence-based practices recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for optimal infant feeding support in the precious first days of a newborn's life. The positive health effects of breastfeeding are well documented and widely recognized by health authorities throughout the world.

The hospital joins a growing list of more than 20,000 Baby-Friendly hospitals and birth centers throughout the world, 604 of which are in the United States. These facilities provide an environment that supports breastfeeding while respecting every woman's right to make the best decision for herself and her family.

"We are extremely proud to be recognized for the hard work of our team members throughout the Baby-Friendly process," said Stephen Michaels, MD, FACHE, hospital president. "MedStar Southern Maryland is committed



to providing the support, education and resources moms need to successfully initiate breastfeeding and continue breastfeeding when they leave our care."

How this Designation Impacts New Mothers and Babies

As a Baby-Friendly designated hospital, MedStar Southern Maryland is prepared to help new mothers and their babies have breastfeeding success. Staff are trained in the care of breastfeeding mothers and babies, babies stay close to their mothers after birth so breastfeeding can start right away, and healthy babies and their mothers stay together day and night for the greatest bonding opportunities. Hospital staff can assist with initial breastfeeding efforts and assess a baby's feeding to identify any issues early on.

MedStar Southern Maryland is



proud to offer an environment that supports breastfeeding best practices and that gives mothers who choose to breastfeed the best chance for success.



To learn more about our Women and Newborns Center, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/WomensHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/WomensHealth).

Tidbit



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is Nationally Recognized for Its Commitment to Providing High-Quality Stroke Care

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® - Stroke GoldPlus quality achievement award for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability.

Each year, program participants qualify for the award by demonstrating how their organization has committed to providing quality care for stroke patients. In addition to following treatment guidelines, Get With

The Guidelines participants also educate patients to help them manage their health and recovery at home.

Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the U.S. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, so brain cells die. Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and accelerating recovery times.

MedStar Southern Maryland also received the American Heart Association's Target: Type

2 Honor Roll award. Target: Type 2 Diabetes aims to ensure patients with Type 2 diabetes, who might be at higher risk for complications, receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized due to stroke.



Tidbit



Karen Wyche Latham, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CENP, Named Vice President of Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer

of CNO having previously served at that hospital for 25 years.

Karen has over 28 years of nursing experience with MedStar Health and comes from MedStar Washington Hospital Center, where she was the senior nursing director for resource management. In this role, she was responsible for capacity management, respiratory therapy, and all nursing office operations, agency supplemental staffing and oversaw the RN, unit clerk, and patient care technician float pools. Additionally, in 2015, Karen helped design the Biocontainment Unit, in response to worldwide concern about Ebola patients.

Karen, who is originally from Cleveland, Ohio, spent a portion of her career at the renowned Cleveland Clinic before relocating to the Washington, D.C. area and beginning her career at MedStar Washington as a medical surgical nurse in 1995. Her experience includes medical-surgical services, perioperative services, nursing supervisor, and nursing director of capacity management.

Karen's appointment to the role of CNO will ensure a seamless transition for the nursing team at the hospital, as well as the continued progress of ongoing projects.

Virtual ask the physical therapist.

Join us for this free virtual seminar on **September 21, 2023, from 6 to 7 p.m. with Kimberly Benson, PT, DPT, NCS.**



Kimberly Benson, PT, DPT, NCS will present on fall reduction, balance, and strength training exercises that can be done at home to reduce risk. There will be time at the end of the presentation for a Q&A session.

**Thursday, September 21, 2023
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Via Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://tinyurl.com/9tfeczka>

Meeting ID: 872 7297 5006
Passcode: 328513

In partnership with the Arch of Knowledge, Inc.



Heart & Soul

Helping you get to the heart of the matter.



Understanding Heart Failure—Symptoms, Causes, & Treatments

Q&A with Rania Kaoukis, MD, Advanced Heart Failure Specialist



Q: What is heart failure?

A: Heart failure, also known as congestive heart failure, is a condition in which the heart muscle cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. The heart muscle becomes weak or stiff over time causing symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue even with mild activity, an irregular heartbeat, and accumulated fluid causing swelling in the legs or belly.

Q: What causes congestive heart failure?

A: Most often heart failure is caused by a condition that damages your heart including:

- Coronary artery disease, such as blockages in the heart arteries
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure (hypertension)
- Valve abnormalities or problems
- Disorders of the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy or inherited heart disease)
- Viral infections and damage from the immune system (myocarditis)

In some cases, the cause of heart failure is unknown or uncertain.

Q: Can heart failure be prevented?

A: Yes. Controlling high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes are important ways of reducing the risk of coronary artery disease which can cause heart failure. Seeking medical care when you develop symptoms is extremely important because if caught early, heart failure can be successfully managed with medication.

Q: How is heart failure treated?

A: Oral medication is a first-line therapy to improve heart function and manage symptoms. Implantable devices such as specialized pacemakers can improve the pumping function of the heart. Abnormal heart valves can be treated with surgery or sometimes with minimally invasive catheter-based techniques. We also serve as an extension of the advanced heart failure team at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, so for patients who continue to have weakness of the heart despite treatment, we can evaluate them

for heart transplantation or left ventricular assist device (LVAD) therapies, which are performed at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Q: How does having an advanced heart failure specialist at the hospital benefit the community?

A: Having a heart failure specialist in the community is an important bridge to rapid, broader access to care. As a heart failure specialist who has been trained within the MedStar Health system, I not only diagnose and treat patients with congestive heart failure close to home but also serve as a gateway to advanced therapies including heart transplantation.

Q: Can a person live a healthy, active life with heart failure?

A: Yes. Heart failure patients who identify symptoms early, follow up with their cardiologist regularly, and take their medication as directed can continue to live a healthy, active life.

To schedule an appointment with a heart failure specialist, please call **301-877-5677**.

Stay Safe: Medications To Be Careful of With Heart Disease

People with heart conditions, such as congestive heart failure and hypertension, may need to be extra careful with the over-the-counter (OTC) medications and supplements they take.

According to Nardos Temesgen, MD, an interventional cardiologist at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, "While typically safe and effective when taken as indicated, certain over-the-counter drugs or supplements can cause adverse reactions with prescription cardiac medications. It's so important for patients to be open with their doctors about all medications they are taking—over-the-counter and prescribed—to avoid problems."

Common Medications to Be Careful of for People with Heart Disease

Decongestants

Many people turn to nasal sprays during allergy season to help relieve symptoms. Certain classes of medication should be avoided as they affect the cardiovascular system. Afrin, for example, can increase blood pressure and cause spasms of the arteries, leading to chest pain.



Diet and Weight Loss Medications

While losing weight reduces the workload on your heart, weight loss supplements may increase blood pressure or contribute to a higher frequency of cardiac arrhythmias and coronary spasms that can injure the heart muscle. Some weight loss drugs have been associated with an increase in valvular heart disease and pulmonary hypertension.

"Instead of getting the weight loss medication online or over-the-counter discuss the options with your doctor, especially if you have heart disease, so they can find the right type of drug that will not cause harm," said Dr. Temesgen.

Supplements and Homeopathic Remedies

Understanding how certain "natural" products and herbal supplements affect heart disease and prescription medication is critical. Dr. Temesgen explained, "St. John's Wort is one that we always want to know about as it affects the efficacy of certain heart medications, including blood thinners."

ED Medications

Erectile dysfunction (ED) drugs work by increasing blood flow in the arteries. Men

taking medications for high blood pressure or long-acting nitroglycerin should discuss ED medications with their cardiologist to avoid negative interactions or cardiovascular-related side effects.

Aspirin

Aspirin can thin the blood so if you take anticoagulants to lower the risk of blood clots and stroke, routine use of aspirin may increase bleeding risk. Patients should discuss this with their physician. Recently, multiple studies have shown that routine use of aspirin for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease is not recommended.

Always Check With Your Doctor

"For patients with heart conditions and those taking prescribed medications for heart disease, consult with your cardiologist before taking an over-the-counter medication or natural supplement to avoid any complications," urged Dr. Temesgen.



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Temesgen, please call **301-877-5677**.

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medical services in one building. These services include a walk-in primary care clinic, cancer center, pharmacy, diagnostic radiology services (CT scans and MRIs), surgical specialties, and medical specialists such as cardiologists, neurologists, pulmonologists, cancer specialists, and more.



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