

# AtlanticView

at Morristown | Spring 2021



MOMENTS  
THAT MATTER

## A BETTER HEART – *AND LIFE*

READ KEVIN'S STORY ON PAGE 4

COMFORT AND  
SUPPORT FOR  
OLDER ADULTS

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Atlantic Health System  
Morristown Medical Center



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are grateful to see some light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, as we are encouraged by the speed in developing vaccines and are reassured that the testing and manufacturing adhere to high safety standards. We are proud to play an important role here at Atlantic Health System, to help administer the vaccine to eligible individuals according to state and federal guidelines. We want to see as many people as possible receive a vaccine as quickly as supply allows.

We are also proud that Healthgrades named Morristown Medical Center one of 'America's 50 Best Hospitals' (six consecutive years), '50 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Surgery', and '100 Best Hospitals' for cardiac care, orthopedic surgery, joint replacement and critical care; and among the top 5% in the nation for cardiac services, cardiac surgery, orthopedic services, joint replacement, critical care, and bariatric surgery and the recipient of 5-star ratings in 15 categories.

In this issue of *AtlanticView*, you'll learn about our Geriatric Assessment Center that coordinates care for older adults and how our new Carol G. Simon Infusion Center adds comfort for those receiving chemotherapy. We are pleased to share two powerful patient care stories: one celebrates a skydiver's amazing life-saving recovery from what could have been a fatal accident, to a team effort to repair a gentleman's complicated heart valve and rhythm condition.

As always, Morristown Medical Center proudly continues to be here to protect the communities we serve.

For more information, see our COVID-19 vaccine web page at [www.atlantichealth.org/covidvaccine](http://www.atlantichealth.org/covidvaccine).



**TRISH O'KEEFE, PhD, RN**  
President, Morristown Medical Center

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Managing Editor, *AtlanticView* at Morristown: **Vicki Banner**  
Assistant Editor: **Beth Sisk**  
Contact information: **Atlantic Health System**,  
475 South St., Morristown, NJ 07960  
Email: [atlanticview@atlantichealth.org](mailto:atlanticview@atlantichealth.org)  
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**Atlantic Health System**, an integrated health care delivery network in New Jersey, is comprised of Morristown Medical Center, Overlook Medical Center, Newton Medical Center, Chilton Medical Center, Hackettstown Medical Center, Goryeb Children's Hospital and Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute. The six medical centers have a combined total of 1,841 licensed beds and more than 4,000 affiliated physicians providing a wide array of health care services to the residents of northern and central New Jersey. The medical centers, and Goryeb Children's Hospital as part of Morristown Medical Center, are accredited by The Joint Commission. Specialty service areas include advanced cardiovascular care, pediatric medical and surgical specialties, neurology, orthopedics and sports medicine. Each of these programs has earned top ratings and recognitions in its respective field.

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**OFFICIAL  
HEALTH CARE  
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## WE HAVE A DEDICATED RECOVERY PROGRAM FOR PATIENTS WITH LINGERING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

 **908-522-3361**

 [atlantichealth.org/covidrecovery](http://atlantichealth.org/covidrecovery)



# CEO's corner

## New Vaccines and the Promise of Togetherness

This month, our state reaches a significant milestone, the one-year anniversary of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in New Jersey. Twelve months later, we have lost too many loved ones and luminaries to this terrible virus. Yet even in our mourning, we find new reasons for hope. Groundbreaking vaccines to speed and strengthen our fight, promising the return of togetherness and brighter days.

Just like our community, the Atlantic Health System family has worked tirelessly to do our part, healing friends and neighbors, comforting and connecting families across social distances, and protecting one another throughout the pandemic. Never has health care been more of a team sport, reaching far beyond the wall of our hospitals. We will always be grateful for your kind words, gestures of appreciation and unwavering support for our caregivers on the front line.

We are opening new doors throughout our region for vaccinations and the ongoing care you and your family need. We are administering vaccines daily at clinics in Morristown, Basking Ridge, Summit and Rockaway and planning new clinic launches in the coming weeks as our vaccine supply increases. Please visit [atlanticealth.org/covidvaccine](http://atlanticealth.org/covidvaccine) to sign up for appointment alerts.

As we all continue to coexist with COVID, we will be here to support you with the highest quality, compassionate care. We look forward to reaching the light at the end of the tunnel together. Be well, stay safe and as always, thank you for entrusting Atlantic Health System with your care.



*Brian A. Gragnolati*

**Brian A. Gragnolati**  
President & CEO,  
Atlantic Health System

Morristown Medical Center has earned an "A" hospital safety grade, the highest, for the 11th consecutive time from Leapfrog, a national patient safety group.



## A One-Stop Shop for Teen Health

Check out the refreshed **TeenHealthFX.com** – your online resource for teenage health and wellness. Ask a question, find answers to commonly asked questions, and read about hot topics. In addition, learn about careers in health care, take a health quiz and more.



## Designated Experts in Maternity Care and Bariatrics

Morristown Medical Center, along with Overlook, Chilton and Newton – all participating in Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey's networks – have been recognized with 2021 Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care designation as part of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Morristown Medical Center is also recognized with Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery designation.

Blue Distinction Centers are recognized for their commitment to patient safety and better health outcomes as well as for addressing gaps in maternity care, preventable or treatable pregnancy-related conditions, utilization of c-sections, and racial and ethnic disparities.

With bariatric surgeries being among the most common elective surgeries in the nation, this recognition means Morristown meets patient safety measures as well as bariatric-specific quality measures including complication and readmission rates for laparo-scopic sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass, and adjustable gastric band.



Designated  
**BlueDistinction®**  
Center+  
Maternity Care



Designated  
**BlueDistinction®**  
Center+  
Bariatric Surgery

**To learn more about Blue Distinction, please visit [www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com) or contact  
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.**

# A BETTER HEART – *AND LIFE*

Ringwood resident Kevin Carroll, 62, thought that continually being out of breath was “just the way my life was going to be” since he lost a lung to lung cancer in 2002. It took a team of specialists at Morristown Medical Center late last year to find that it was actually his heart – and two different heart conditions – causing his symptoms.

“He was short of breath and had no energy, and naturally thought this was all caused by having only one lung,” says Philippe Généreux, MD, co-director of the Structural Heart Program at Morristown Medical Center. “In doing tests in preparation to treat one heart condition, arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat), we found another, severe mitral valve disease.”

The mitral valve controls how blood travels through the heart to the rest of the body. Because of damage to Kevin’s valve, his brain and muscles got only half the blood – and oxygen – they needed.

“That’s what caused his fatigue,” Dr. Généreux says. “Also, half the blood traveled backward, causing pressure in his chest and shortness of breath.”

The procedure to repair his heart would be especially complicated, he says.

“Over the years, Kevin’s heart had actually moved toward the area of the missing lung, which makes treatment even more difficult,” Dr. Généreux says. “Without our combination of physicians, the chance of success for this procedure would be very low. But our team has the experience, and we knew we could do it.”

Dr. Généreux repaired his valve with a small catheter, through his groin, avoiding open heart surgery. Other specialists at Morristown Medical Center then corrected his heart rhythm.

Today, Kevin is able to do more than ever before – including regular golf games and three-mile bike rides – plus visiting with his large family, including six children and nine grandchildren.

“I’m almost euphoric with how good it is to have a fully functioning heart for the first time in almost 20 years,” he says. “I feel like I have part of a lung back, and I thank everyone at Morristown for that.”

#### ATLANTIC MEDICAL GROUP

Dr. Généreux is part of Atlantic Medical Group, a multidisciplinary network of health care providers. He can be reached at 973-971-7001.



## Turning Heart Failure Into ‘Heart Success’

For people with advanced heart failure and pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure in the lungs), a team of specialists with many different areas of expertise have designed Atlantic Health System’s “Heart Success Program.” It brings a high level of care to people across the region, at Atlantic Health System’s Morristown, Overlook, Chilton, Newton and Hackettstown medical centers.

“We work closely with individual patients to provide the support and monitoring they need to keep them at their healthiest,” says heart failure specialist Abhishek Singh, MD, PhD.

Dr. Singh has recently returned “home” to NJ as the medical director of the Heart Success program for Atlantic Health System.

“This team approach includes the patient, their loved ones and their cardiologist, along with the center’s experts,” Dr. Singh says. “Together, we offer each patient a treatment plan using the latest technology and research.”

*To learn more, talk to your doctor or visit [atlantichhealth.org](http://atlantichhealth.org), and search for “Heart Success.”*

# Comfort and Support for Older Adults

“I remember his words to date,” says Keerti Sharma, MD, chief of geriatrics for Morristown Medical Center, speaking of one of her former patients. “He told me, ‘I want someone to be the captain of my ship.’”

Iris Mednick, 72, of Somerset recalls that conversation, when her husband, Ron, first met Dr. Sharma and her team at the Geriatric Assessment Center at Morristown Medical Center, part of the David and Joan Powell Center for Healthy Aging.

The couple had realized in 2017 that Ron, with serious health issues, just had too many medical specialists to keep up with. They searched for a single, central provider, who could talk to each physician he saw, review each treatment and medicine he had, and let them know what services would help him with his health issues – and help Iris to continue to age well.

They found that kind of care at the Geriatric Assessment Center. The center brings together specialists in older adults (geriatrics), like Dr. Sharma, to help coordinate care among each patient’s many different providers. Social workers, nurse practitioners and others also help them and their families identify care or support they might need –



Ron, Iris and Allison Mednick (daughter)

from transportation to care at home and assistance with issues related to memory loss.

Dr. Sharma became a trusted ally and friend throughout Ron’s life, and she continues to be important to Iris.

“Dr. Sharma even offered us encouragement by telephone just before Ron died peacefully at home in 2019,” Iris says. “She and the whole staff have been so loving, warm and kind to me and my family. It’s amazing care.” ▲

**To learn more, call 973-971-7022, or visit [atlantichhealth.org](http://atlantichhealth.org) and search for “geriatrics.”**

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## ATLANTIC MEDICAL GROUP

**Dr. Sharma and the Geriatric Assessment Center are part of Atlantic Medical Group, a multidisciplinary network of health care providers. She can be reached at 973-971-7022.**

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## Caregiver Training 101

Are you helping to care for an older adult? Let us teach you the basics during an interactive new program just launched this year. It’s the Caregiver Training Lab, with instruction from the experts at Morristown Medical Center’s Geriatric Assessment Center. For more information, call 973-971-7022.

# Surviving the Unsurvivable

Skydiver discharged from Morristown Medical Center nearly a year after a skydiving accident

Ian Azeredo had strapped on a parachute and climbed into an airplane at Sussex County Airport hundreds of times. Skydiving was his passion and he and his wife Linda Farkas were regulars at the airstrip on weekends and holidays.

But on July 4, 2019, the 33-year-old Ringwood resident was on his own. After completing two jumps earlier in the day, Ian and a group of friends got ready for the final skydive of the day.

When coming in to land after an otherwise good jump, something went horribly wrong, causing Ian to crash to the ground at 60-70 mph. The impact immediately fractured his right femur, shattered his pelvic ring and caused significant internal bleeding and shock.

Aviation accidents are normally minor or fatal – rarely in between – but Ian defied the odds and survived. He spent close to a year at Morristown Medical Center and credits the team members for their outstanding care.

"I don't remember the impact or just before, but I remember being on the ground, being held still," Ian says. "I remember being loaded into the Medevac helicopter, departing for Morristown, and I remember the bright lights and voices around me as I was initially being worked on. Then, the next thing I knew, it was late August."

Many moments were erased from his memory. In addition, Ian experienced a classic case of post-intensive care syndrome where he imagined he was in Air Force flight training using supplemental oxygen. After each "flight," he would remove his oxygen mask but, in reality, he was in the ICU tearing off his nasal tubes.

Kristin Ospina, RN, nursing director, Critical Care, explained that Ian was in a medically induced coma for a long time and needed countless procedures. "You don't often hear about skydiving accidents having a positive outcome," she



says. "The teams put their heart and soul into his care. His outcome is so rewarding."

Although Ian's care team over the course of 300+ days in the hospital is too large to mention every name, his special thanks go to the teams in the Emergency Department, the ICU, the post ICU care team program, the entire team of trauma surgeons led by Louis DiFazio, MD, and the care team on Davino 1 and Deskovick 4. Volunteer Pete Martins, along with Louise Fordham Hale, lead patient care technician in the Emergency Department, whom Ian is now proud to call a "dear friend," helped inspire Ian to get through, as well as his wife, and parents who traveled from Massachusetts.

"I was given extremely good care – the caretakers and trauma team were all exemplary and fantastic people who deserve every ounce of credit they are due," Ian says. "An organization is only as good as its people, and Morristown Medical Center is a great example of that."

Ian is now back to work as chief engineer at Breeze-Eastern Corporation, an aerospace company in Whippany. He still has a few mobility issues but is slowly working through them in rehab and outpatient surgeries and says he plans to resist the temptation to skydive again. ▲



## New Infusion Center – Cancer Care Reimagined

Arriving for his appointment at the new Infusion Center at Carol G. Simon Cancer Center in March 2020, donor, patient and former Atlantic Health System Trustee Bob Mulcahy could not believe his eyes. A spacious room, full of natural light, immediately put Mulcahy, a member of Carol G. Simon Cancer Center’s Philanthropy Council at ease; and, to his delight, he was led to a private space to sit during infusions while still being able to see his care team.

“There was an air of calmness about the whole experience,” Mulcahy says. A year ago, when he began receiving treatment, the Infusion Center was often more crowded and wait times for appointments were sometimes longer. The renovation and expansion changed all that.

From January through March of 2020, more than 4,500 patients visited the Infusion Center, up 15% from 2019. Twelve new infusion chairs are available for a total of 36, with both open and private setups, as some patients enjoy interaction while others prefer privacy. Lydia Nadeau, RN,

MBA, executive director; and Eric Whitman, MD, medical director of Atlantic Health System Cancer Care, met with health care team members and patient advisory groups for advice in the design process. Recliners for patients, a comfortable chair for family members, iPads, blanket warmers and music, pet and art therapy were all non-negotiables and are reflected in the new design, promoting a healing experience and patient-centric care.

“We are creating a resource that will be treasured by the community for years to come,” Dr. Whitman says. ▲



**To watch a virtual tour of the Infusion Center led by Dr. Eric Whitman and to support the three-phased renovation of Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, visit [f4mmc.org/simon-center](http://f4mmc.org/simon-center).**

## community calendar Spring 2021

**Welcome to your Morristown Medical Center Community Calendar.** Due to COVID-19, many of our classes will be held virtually or rescheduled. Call the telephone number listed or email the contact person for more information. **Please visit [atlantichealth.org/calendar](http://atlantichealth.org/calendar) for up-to-date information.**

DIABETES AND WELLNESS	
Various dates and times	THERAPY APPOINTMENTS
PARENTING AND CHILDBIRTH	
Third Saturday of every month, Noon	VIRTUAL MINDFUL PREGNANCY
SUPPORT GROUPS	
Monthly	HEART FAILURE GROUP AND MILRINONE SUPPORT GROUP
First Thursday of the month, 2:00-3:00pm (all members); Third Thursday of the month, 1:00-2:00pm (caregivers); Third Thursday of the month, 2:00-3:00pm (survivors)	STROKE SUPPORT (VIA ZOOM)
ONCOLOGY	
<b>For more classes and additional information, visit <a href="http://atlantichealth.org/cancerclass">atlantichealth.org/cancerclass</a> or call 973-971-6182.</b>	
Fridays, 11:00am-Noon	ART THERAPY GROUP
Various dates and times	CAREGIVERS GROUP
First Monday of the month, 3:00-4:00pm	CAROL G. SIMON CANCER CENTER NUTRITION AND WELLNESS
Mondays, 1:00-2:00pm	CHAIR YOGA
First and Third Wednesdays of the month, Noon-12:30pm	GUIDED MEDITATION
Third Wednesday of the month, 1:30-3:00pm	HEAD AND NECK SUPPORT GROUP
6-week program via ZOOM, various dates and times	QUIT SMOKING PROGRAM

**Atlantic Health System**  
 475 South St.  
 Morristown, NJ 07960-6459

For a referral to  
 an Atlantic Health System  
 doctor, call 1-800-247-9580  
 or visit [atlantichhealth.org/doctors](http://atlantichhealth.org/doctors).



## COMMUNITY HEALTH CALENDAR

Due to COVID-19, all classes are being held virtually.

VIRTUAL EXERCISE	VIRTUAL INTEGRATIVE WELLNESS	VIRTUAL PROGRAMS
\$50 FEE FOR EACH 10 WEEK SESSION		Conservative Treatment of Knee Osteoarthritis Monday, May 10, 2:00pm
Barre Method Tuesdays, April 13 to June 15, 5:30 to 6:15pm	Arthritis Exercise Program Mondays, April 12 to June 21 (no class May 31), 1:30 to 2:15pm	Eating for a Healthy Mind Thursday, June 10, 10:00am
Better Bones Beginner Thursdays, April 15 to June 17, 11:30am to 12:30pm	Gentle Yoga Wednesdays, April 14 to June 16, 10:30 to 11:30am	Grandparents: Are You Keeping Your Grandchildren Safe Thursday, April 1, 1:00pm
Better Bones Intermediate Tuesdays, April 13 to June 15 AND/OR Thursdays, April 15 to June 17, 10:15 to 11:15am	Meditation for Mindful Well-Being Mondays, April 12 to June 21 (no class May 31), 6:30 to 7:30pm	Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research Wednesday, April 7, 7:00pm
Lite & Fit Tuesdays, April 13 to June 15 AND/OR Thursdays, April 15 to June 17, 2:00 to 3:00pm	Qigong Tuesdays, April 13 to June 15, 11am to noon	New Take on Old Foods Wednesday, July 7, 11:00am
Muscles in Motion Mondays, April 12 to June 21 (no class May 31), 4:30 to 5:30pm	T'ai Chi Wednesdays, April 14 to June 16, 11:00am to noon	No Bones About It Tuesday, May 25, 2:00pm
The Power Hour Wednesdays, April 14 to June 16, 5:00 to 6:00pm	T'ai Chi Chih – Intermediate Thursdays, April 15 to June 17, 11:00am to Noon	Relaxing Foods Wednesday, April 21, 7:00pm
Zumba® Fitness Thursdays, April 15 to June 17, 5:45 to 6:45pm	Yoga – Intermediate Tuesdays, April 13 to June 15, 10:00 to 11:00am	Senior Nutrition Friday, May 14, 9:00am
		The Senior Living Spectrum: Navigating Housing Options for Seniors Monday, May 17, 10:00am
		Six Pillars of Brain Health Thursday, June 3, 7:00pm
		Top Pantry Staples Wednesday, June 2, 7:00pm
		Understanding Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Wednesday, June 16, 7:00pm

For a complete list of offerings,  
 please visit [atlantichhealth.org/calendar](http://atlantichhealth.org/calendar).  
 For more information, please call **1-844-472-8499**.