

Healthy Living

Back on the trails.

Experts find source of teen's strange knee pain—and more.





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Letter from the president

Dear friends,

As the new president and chief medical officer of MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, I am excited to be writing my first letter for *Healthy Living* magazine. I have been at MedStar St. Mary's for several months now, and I am thrilled to be part of this hospital.

I am learning so much about our community and our hospital's rich history. As such, I think it is only appropriate for this letter to serve as my introduction to you.

I began my medical career in emergency medicine, an area that I am very passionate about. I served as an emergency room physician for 22 years. For 10 years, I was the vice chairman of MedStar Franklin Square's Emergency Department. I loved taking care of patients and making a personal connection with them. The MedStar Franklin emergency team was critical to me as well. We served together as one to provide world-class emergency care for our community.

During those years, I felt privileged to have helped patients and their families during what was undoubtedly some of the most difficult times of their lives.

From 2017 to January 2022, I served as vice president of medical affairs (VPMA) at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center. Much like emergency medicine, in the VPMA role, there was always a new opportunity to enhance our excellent care. My areas of interest included capacity management, quality and safety, community health, informatics, and the implementation of advanced clinical programs.

I am also a member of many professional healthcare organizations including the American College of Emergency Physicians, American Association of Physician Leadership, and American College of Healthcare Executives. I have served on numerous committees working to advance health throughout MedStar Health, the Baltimore area, and the state. The pursuit of excellence in healthcare is my passion and I am excited to be at a facility and with a team that shares that vision.

Even though I have been here a short time, I still have so much to learn. I look forward to meeting members of the community and growing the partnerships already in place to help our hospital provide exceptional care for decades to come.

I am confident we will do great work together.

Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital of St. Mary's County, its Medical Staff and Auxiliary, are non-discriminating in their admission, treatment, employment and membership policies. The hospital employs, offers membership, renders treatment and receives vendor services without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, marital status or status as a qualified disabled individual. Patients receive considerate and respectful care at MedStar St. Mary's regardless of the source of payment. MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Payment Assistance Program provides free or reduced charges for care to patients who receive inpatient and outpatient services. This program is available for individuals who are not eligible to receive medical assistance from the state and meet specific income requirements. If you are interested in finding out if you qualify for payment assistance, please contact our Credit Office at 301-475-6039.

Orthopaedic services

Wrestling with unusual knee pain.

Orthopaedic team gets answers on teen's troubles—including a surprise diagnosis

The pain around his knee came and went—flaring at odd moments, but never consistent enough to raise flags. Besides, for 15-year-old Jack Meyer, the cause seemed easily attributable to both his family and care team: growing pains.

"It was easy to brush off at first," said Jack, of Hollywood, Maryland. "When I was 10, you know, I didn't worry about it. But sometimes I'd wake up and it would hurt so badly, I could barely get up in the morning to take out our dog. Or I'd be sitting for a while and have this pain when I went to move. It was weird, but definitely there."

Jack implored his parents, Holly and Steve Meyer, to get it looked at further. An initial X-ray revealed nothing abnormal. Still, "there's no way it's growing pains," the sophomore insisted. "It doesn't make sense—it's always in the same knee, always in the same place."

Orthopaedic surgeon **William Lennen, MD**, of MedStar Orthopaedic Institute at Leonardtown then tried another approach. With the imaging revealed by an MRI, the source of Jack's pain was finally there in black and white: a cotton ball-sized cyst behind his knee.

"Cysts are very common, and most arise from either a joint or tendon sheath around the knee, wrist, or shoulder," said Dr. Lennen. "Common cysts, like Baker's cysts, form when fluid escapes a joint—analogue to a water balloon that fills when fluid from the joint is pumped into the cyst. They are benign in nature, so there is no cancer risk. They rarely cause issues but, if symptomatic, they can generally be removed relatively easily."

During a Sept. 1 follow-up, Jack and his mother learned surgery would be needed to remove the tissue. With an unexpected opening in the operating schedule, the Meyers were surprised to hear Jack would head in for the procedure in just two days.

"It was a bit stressful," laughed the teen.

"Honestly, I was mostly nervous about the IV—I'd



High school sophomore Jack Meyer with Niko at home in Hollywood. An avid basketball and football player, Jack is back on the court after surgery with Dr. Lennen.

never needed one before. What made it better was the staff. They were pretty cool; it was fun to talk with them. They were patient."

During the hour-long outpatient procedure at MedStar



Dr. William Lennen inspects Jack's incision site following successful knee surgery last fall.

St. Mary's Hospital, the Meyers awaited updates on their son. They learned Dr. Lennen was able to remove the cyst intact for testing.

"Most cysts, including Jack's, are benign," the surgeon explained. "If there is any concern for cancerous potential, the patient will receive further evaluation before surgery in the form of additional imaging. The tissue would then be reviewed by a pathologist."

Jack went home that Friday and, by Sunday, the familiar sound of the teen's basketball hitting blacktop had already returned to the air. He then began six weeks of physical therapy at MedStar Shah Medical Group in California to focus on movement and stretching.

During one session, Jack's physical therapist made a surprising observation: his spine was curved. "Did you know that Jack has scoliosis?" the therapist asked Holly.

"Hm. Well, that *would* explain my back pain," Jack noted drily. Like his knee, the teen had experienced sporadic back pain for years—particularly after long periods of standing. As an active student who is often playing football, hiking, kayaking, and camping, the discomfort could get distracting.

Jack was quickly referred to spine specialist **David A. Weiner, MD**, a fellowship-trained orthopaedic spine surgeon with expertise in pediatric scoliosis and adult spinal deformities, among other conditions. He sees patients at many regional locations, including MedStar Orthopaedic Institute at Brandywine.

"Most children get diagnosed by a school nurse during a scoliosis screening, or by their pediatrician," said Dr. Weiner. "Other patients may not be diagnosed until they come in for treatment of lower back pain and sciatica, only to find out it has been caused by their scoliosis."

Defined as a curvature of the spine greater than 10 degrees, scoliosis can occur in both children and adults. The diagnosis can come as a surprise, as it did for the Meyers.

"Even fairly large curves are not always obvious just by staring at someone," Dr. Weiner said. "It isn't until we get an X-ray that we can see exactly how severe the curve is, and if something needs to be done for it."

The Meyers took Jack for testing—this time an extensive MRI, with the results available to Dr. Weiner quickly through MedConnect, MedStar Health's electronic health record. Thankfully, they revealed no additional concerns beyond the 13% left curvature.

"Dr. Weiner impressed me from the start," Holly shared. "If there was one thing I sensed from the entire MedStar orthopaedic team, it would be how much they cared. The surgeons were accessible, and we got answers quickly. That was a big relief as a parent."

She added it was "pretty wild that we went in thinking we were dealing with one small issue, the knee pain, and we came out with a resolution for that plus a diagnosis for scoliosis—something I didn't even realize was a concern."

Today, a tidy vertical scar is all that remains of Jack's knee discomfort. The scoliosis will continue to be monitored every six months with additional physical therapy to help with back pain. In the meantime, the teen was cleared to compete on the Chopticon High School wrestling team this fall and winter. A 60-mile trek through the Rocky Mountains is planned for this summer, with shorter hikes in between.

The Meyers were impressed with the thoroughness and responsiveness of an orthopaedic team who clearly wanted to find answers for their son. And for his part, Jack bonded with Dr. Lennen over a shared love of football (though the surgeon roots for the Miami Dolphins; Jack is a diehard Cleveland Browns fan).

"It was easy to talk to him," Jack added. "You can't ask questions if you don't feel comfortable."

Our team is here for you. Get expert care at MedStar Orthopaedic Institute



Emmanuel Atiemo, MD
Sports medicine



John A. Kuri II, MD
Sports medicine
Special interest in
shoulder & elbow



William Lennen, MD
Joint replacement



David A. Weiner, MD
Spine specialist

MedStar Orthopaedic Institute at Leonardtown
23503 Hollywood Road, Suite 101, Leonardtown, MD
P 240-434-7483

MedStar Orthopaedic Institute at Brandywine
13950 Brandywine Rd.,
Brandywine, MD
P 301-856-1682

The MedStar Orthopaedic Institute has 110 orthopaedic surgeons and sees patients at 34-plus locations throughout Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Visit [MedStarHealth.org/OrthoTeam](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/OrthoTeam) to learn more.

What is scoliosis?

- ▶ A curvature of the spine greater than 10 degrees
- ▶ Diagnosed in both children and adults
- ▶ Often first noticed by a school nurse or pediatrician
- ▶ Confirmed by a combination of X-rays and physical exams
- ▶ Generally not painful for children; may cause more pain for adults due to arthritis and/or disk issues

Treatment

Mild scoliosis may involve regular check-ups, but no intervention beyond observation.

Patients with **moderate cases** may be advised to wear a special brace, which prevents the need for surgery in most cases.

Only patients with the most **severe curves** require surgical intervention to correct the curve and prevent problems later in life, according to Dr. Weiner. If a procedure is required, it is classically done with a large incision in the middle of the back along with rods and screws to hold the spine straight while the bones heal together.

"More recently, new technologies have enabled motion-preserving, fusionless correction of scoliosis," Dr. Weiner explained. This cutting-edge method, **vertebral body tethering**, is performed by Dr. Weiner at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.



Scan this QR code to learn more about minimally-invasive spine surgery.





2018 East Run Medical Center ribbon cutting



2009 MedStar Health merger signing

Continuing to make an impact. The board room at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital was recently named the Christine R. Wray Board Room to honor Wray's legacy. This tribute was made possible by philanthropic partners supporting a new scholarship endowment fund in Wray's honor. If you would like to recognize Christine Wray's legacy, visit [Giving.MedStarHealth.org/MSMHDonate](https://giving.medstarhealth.org/MSMHDonate) to give online. Under "Designation," select "Other" and add "Honoring Christine Wray."

30 years of leadership



Navy Alliance dinner

Christine Wray retires from role as president.

Christine Wray, FACHE, president of MedStar St. Mary's Hospital and MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and senior vice president of MedStar Health, retired Jan. 28 after 30 years of service.

Wray became president of St. Mary's Hospital in 1992. Under her leadership, the hospital has undergone several major expansions and received many awards and accreditations including the Maryland Performance Excellence Award (MPEA) Platinum Award in 2014, the Maryland state equivalent of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, being named among the Top 100 Hospitals in the country for Quality & Safety by Truven Analytics, and six consecutive "A" Grades from the LeapFrog Hospital Safety Group.

Wray has always been active in the community serving on numerous boards and committees, including the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance and Leonardtown Rotary. She has repeatedly been honored for her leadership and service.

In 2009, Wray helped St. Mary's Hospital's Board of Directors make the decision to join MedStar Health, the mid-Atlantic region's largest healthcare system. In 2012, Southern Maryland Hospital Center in Clinton also joined MedStar Health and Wray was named president in September 2014.

"With a background in public health—for me—it has always been about how we can best serve our community," said Wray. "I have so cherished my years at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, and I am incredibly proud of the work we have done. MedStar St. Mary's will always be my home."



MedStar St. Mary's 10 year anniversary



MedStar St. Mary's Gala



1999 Rotarian of the Year Award



College of Southern Maryland's CEO of the Year



MedStar's introduction to air traffic control tower on base



Gala crew in action



Women leading the charge



Women's Health & Family Birthing Center ribbon cutting



1993 Hospital ground breaking ceremony

Happy Doctors' Day!

Commemorated every March 30, National Doctors' Day is a celebration recognizing the contributions of physicians to their patients and communities. The red carnation has come to symbolize the holiday with its representation of love, charity, sacrifice, and courage—perfect qualities to describe our Medical Staff, particularly during the pandemic. Your tireless work to find answers, offer comfort, and lend your expertise do not go unnoticed. Thank you for all that you do!

If one of our providers has made a difference in your life, we invite you to honor them with a tribute and a philanthropic gift to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. Your donation to our nonprofit organization can be designated to a specific area, such as the Scholarship Endowment Fund for local students, or simply the area of greatest need. If you desire, an acknowledgment can also be sent to your provider on your behalf! Visit [Giving.MedStarHealth.org/MSMHDDonate](https://giving.medstarhealth.org/MSMHDDonate) or call **240-434-7766** to learn more.



Meet our new **medical professionals.**

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is pleased to introduce the newest members of our medical staff. We strive to bring high-quality physicians and specialists to Southern Maryland to meet our community's needs close to home. For a full list of local MedStar Health provider resources, visit [MedStarHealth.org/Doctors](https://medstarhealth.org/Doctors) for individual doctor profiles.



Jorawer Singh, MD, ophthalmology

Dr. Jorawer Singh, fellowship trained corneal and refractive surgery specialist, has joined MedStar Eye Physicians in Charlotte Hall. He is board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and a provider dedicated to bringing cutting-edge treatments to patients with dedication and precision.

Dr. Singh earned his medical degree from the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, preceded by a master's in neuroscience from New York University and his undergraduate degree from the University of Rochester. He completed his surgical internship at Columbia University School of Medicine, and his residency in ophthalmology at the George Washington University.

Dr. Singh completed a cornea and refractive surgery fellowship at New York Eye & Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai before serving as an associate clinical instructor at the NYU Department of Ophthalmology and Albany Medical College, working as a volunteer to teach resident surgeons.

Dr. Singh welcomes new patients. For appointments, call **301-290-5915**.



Sameer Alrefai, MD, FACS, breast and general surgeon

Dr. Sameer Alrefai, breast and general surgeon, has joined MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. A Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Alrefai is now seeing patients in the Outpatient Pavilion at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

A graduate of Jordan University of Science and Technology School of Medicine, Dr. Alrefai completed his residency in general surgery at Jordan King Abdullah University Hospital and the general surgery residency program at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. Trained in minimally invasive and bariatric surgery, Dr. Alrefai completed his fellowship at Virginia Commonwealth University. He previously served as a minimally invasive surgeon at Sentara Halifax Regional Hospital in South Boston, Virginia, where he was also vice chief of surgery in 2021. Additional, Dr. Alrefai was assistant professor of surgery at Liberty University and Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, Virginia.

To make an appointment with Dr. Alrefai, please call **240-434-4088**.

News **briefs**



State launches text-based mental health initiative for youth, young adults

According to a recent Centers for Disease Control study, there was a 31% increase in the proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits for youth aged 12-17 during 2020 as compared to 2019. Maryland's Office of Suicide Prevention has launched MD Young Minds, a text-based mental health initiative geared toward youth and young adults to help fight isolation, encourage mental wellness, and provide helpful tools for peer and self-assessment. If in distress, individuals can call 211, chat through the 211 website (pressone.211md.org), or text 898-211. All actions will link the individual to a call specialist available 24/7.



Hospice Run & Fun Walk returning in April!

Mark your calendars! The annual Hospice Run & Fun Walk will return April 23 for its 25th event. On hold for the past two years, the popular community event includes a 5K run, 10K run, and fun walk through the streets of Leonardtown and is one of Hospice of St. Mary's biggest annual fundraisers. Look for more details and how to sign up on the event website at RunForHospice.org.



Emergency Department waiting area reopens

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Emergency Department waiting area reopened in December 2021 following major renovations. The new space includes new seating, new flooring, updated artwork, renovated bathrooms, and an expanded nurses' station. The project was made possible by donations to the hospital's Power to Heal campaign and generous donations from our community partners.



Surgeon, dietitian work with Ryken students

Nicholas Tapazoglou, MD, bariatric surgeon, and **Kelly Condron, RD**, registered dietitian, were recently invited to St. Mary's Ryken High School as part of a student research project aimed at reducing the impacts of obesity. Meeting with students Ty Jubeck, Kendrick Carlos and Alex Howard, Kelly discussed the complex nature of obesity and the supports needed to assist bariatric patients. Dr. Tapazoglou outlined the weight loss procedures he performs at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital and the "huge impact" bariatric surgery has on improving patients' health, including co-morbidities such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

What to expect?

The best care for you and your baby.

Are you expecting a special delivery this year? We offer a variety of resources to ensure a happy mother, healthy baby, and best start for the next chapter of your life, as well as ongoing support as your little one grows.



A better birthing experience

Every expecting mother wants to be sure that they will be getting the best care available. The Women's Health & Family Birthing Center at MedStar St. Mary's was recently included in *U.S. News & World Reports* list of Best Hospitals for Maternity Care for 2021. U.S. News analyzed survey data provided by 571 hospitals offering maternity care to create its inaugural list. Our hospital was distinguished as High Performing based on quality metrics including cesarean-section rates, newborn complications, and breast milk feeding rates, among other criteria.

MedStar St. Mary's is also a designated Baby Friendly Hospital, which means mothers can be assured they will receive the information, confidence, and skills necessary to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies. Our staff combines experience and expertise with caring, compassionate support throughout your labor and delivery.

After you deliver, you will recover in our recently renovated post-delivery suites with spa-like bathrooms and extra amenities to keep you and your loved ones comfortable. A special meal will be provided to you and your partner after delivery, available 24/7. Additional meals and snacks are just a phone call away.



Know your providers

Your team of doctors and nurses will help you through your labor and delivery. Our nurses have extra training to guide you through this momentous occasion. The doctor or midwife on call when you go into labor will deliver your baby. Midwives have the expertise and skills to help women maintain healthy pregnancies and deliveries. Once you have delivered, our pediatric hospitalist will care for your newborn in conjunction with your private pediatric provider.



Extra help along the way

If a pregnancy issue does arise, extra support is just around the corner in Brandywine. Your OB/GYN may refer you to MedStar Health Fetal Medicine specialists located in the MedStar Brandywine Medical Center.

Victoria Rachel Greenberg, MD, and **Neggin B. Mokhtari, MD**, fetal medicine specialists, provide high risk obstetric services to Southern Maryland women. Their office performs detailed anatomic surveys, antenatal testing, prenatal genetic counseling and testing, and consultations for a variety of medical conditions that may affect or be affected in pregnancy including but not limited to diabetes, hypertension, thyroid disease, history of preterm delivery and/or short cervix, rheumatologic and infectious diseases.

MedStar Health Fetal Medicine, MedStar Brandywine Medical Center, 13950 Brandywine Road in Brandywine, Maryland. For more information, call **301-782-3353**.



Care when you return home

Once you take your bundle of joy home, the care doesn't stop. A nurse from our Women's Health & Family Birthing Center will call you after your discharge to check in. You can also rely on the providers at MMG Women's Health at Leonardtown for your postnatal care and as well as our many pediatricians in the region to care for your newborn.

To find a pediatrician near you, visit **MedStarHealth.org/Doctors** and filter your search results to offices closest to you.



Starting the journey

Whether you are already pregnant or just starting to think about beginning or adding to your family, the team of experts at MedStar Medical Group Women's Health at Leonardtown are available to partner with you. Our friendly and experienced team of gynecologists and midwives will answer all of your questions along the way, check your progress, and provide expert care during your delivery. For an appointment, call 301-997-1788.

Our practice is expecting, too! **Anne Banfield, MD**, board certified in obstetrics and gynecology will be joining the team at MedStar Medical Group Women's Health at Leonardtown this spring. The office is located at 41680 Miss Bessie Dr., Suite 102, Leonardtown. Call **301-997-1788** for information.



Classes to get you started

Need a little help preparing for baby? Health Connections offers a one-day parents-to-be workshop covering everything you need to know to care for your newborn. Topics include childbirth, breastfeeding, infant CPR, and practical baby care skills such as bathing and diapering. Class fee is \$100 per couple and the classes are offered regularly in the hospital's Outpatient Pavilion. And after you deliver, Health Connections offers a weekly lactation support group each week for mothers to connect with each other and receive continued support from our certified lactation consultants.

Turn to the calendar of events on pages **18** and **19** to learn more about our classes and support groups, as well as how to register.



Virtual tour of our facility

You are getting close to delivering and your curiosity is getting the best of you—what does the birthing suite look like and where will you recover? How will you know where to go and can you take photos? All of your questions are answered in our online virtual tour of our Women's Health & Family Birthing Center.

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/StMarysVirtualTour** to get an insider's view of our facility.

Let us know about your care

Some patients may receive a patient survey following your stay with us. Giving us your feedback helps us improve the patient experience. Please let us know what you like and what would have made your stay with us more comfortable.



Helen Wernecke has no regrets about her decision to be a living kidney donor in 2007. She has worn her green Donate Life awareness bracelet every day since. She wants others who are considering becoming living donors to know that they can go on to lead healthy lives following the procedure.

It just felt right.

Helen Wernecke's decision to become a living kidney donor brought her a surprising gift.

Since 2007, Helen Wernecke has worn her Donate Life bracelet every day. When someone asks her about it, she tells them her story. Not because she wants the attention, she hopes only to inspire others to do what she did—be a living kidney donor.

"I felt awkward about it at first, I didn't want to talk about it or share what I had done—that is not who I am," Helen said. "But then I realized by sharing, it allows other people to have a sense of comfort in knowing they could do something like that and still remain a healthy person."

In 2007, Helen read an email from a church friend that set her on an unexpected path—the woman's husband was going to need a kidney transplant in the near future, and she was asking people to consider being a living donor. Helen quickly called her husband and a few minutes later was dialing the 800-number in the email.

"A sense of peace came over me and I felt like it was the right thing to do from the moment I got that email," said Helen.

Helen began the process, answering questions, having tests to determine her health, and even an evaluation with her husband to make sure they were psychologically ready to go through the transplant. The tests showed she could proceed with being a donor for her church friend and it was time to tell him and his wife, so they invited them to lunch.

"We all cried, but we got through it," she said.

The surgery was performed Oct. 3, 2007, at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Helen believes it took around four hours for both surgeries needed to complete the transplant.

"I wasn't even out of bed yet and he came strolling in with his IV pole and said, 'I feel amazing.' That did my heart good," she said.

"I always felt like I was in great hands with the doctors,"

"I never felt like they were willing to compromise my health to help him. Everything about it was making sure I was comfortable with this decision and what we were doing."

she said. "I never felt like they were willing to compromise my health to help him. Everything about it was making sure I was comfortable with this decision and what we were doing."

After the transplant, the two families grew closer, sharing in each other's lives for the past 14 years. The couples still attend church together; Helen's husband was even a groomsman in their son's wedding. Without Helen's kidney, "he would not have seen his daughter graduate from high school or his son graduate from medical school, and we have shared in that joy along the way."

When someone notices Helen's green bracelet and mentions they have thoughts about being a donor, Helen tells them to trust the process and if it feels right to them, do it.

"I feel like I got a lot more than he did," she said. "He got a kidney and I got a whole new family."

MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute: A leader in living donor transplants

For those who need a kidney transplant, a living kidney donation can cut short years of dialysis and waiting. MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute is a trusted leader in living donor kidney transplants, performing more than any other healthcare organization in the region. The Institute has performed:

- More than 6,000 kidney transplants
- 96 living donor transplants in 2021 alone

The Institute is also a national leader in complex transplantation, and one of the country's largest paired kidney exchange programs.

2021 Living donor transplants

96	MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute
38	Johns Hopkins Hospital
32	University of Maryland Medical Center
26	INOVA Fairfax Hospital
14	George Washington Hospital

(OPTN.Org, 2/1/2022)

Living donor protections and benefits

MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute is the area's only National Kidney Registry Donor Shield program participant. The program provides a safety net for living kidney donors through a range of protections. Donors who undergo surgery at MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute will qualify for the following protections through the National Kidney Registry:

- Lost wage reimbursement
- Donation life insurance
- Donation disability insurance
- Legal support
- Financial protection coverage for uncovered donor complication costs
- Travel, lodging, and mileage reimbursement

Visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/Kidney](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/Kidney) to learn more.

April is National Donate Life Month

National Donate Life Month (NDLM) was established by Donate Life America and its partnering organizations in 2003. Observed in April each year, National Donate Life Month helps raise awareness about donation and encourages Americans to register as organ, eye, and tissue donors.

More than 100,000 people are waiting for a lifesaving transplant. One organ, eye, and tissue donor can save and heal more than 75 lives.

Visit [DonateLife.net](https://www.DonateLife.net) to learn more about how to become a donor or to honor donors, recipients, and their families and caregivers.



Big hearts, strong minds: The power of volunteering together.



We're fortunate to have the support of many generous volunteers—individuals who give of their time and talents to improve the lives of others in our community through MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

Board of Directors

As a not-for-profit organization, we rely upon the dedication of a volunteer Board of Directors to advance our hospital in fulfilling our mission, vision, and values. Community members, MedStar Health leaders, and Medical Staff representatives serve for varying terms. Their objectivity and professional knowledge play crucial roles in guiding our hospital to

successfully serve our community. Their work has continued through virtual meetings during the pandemic.

"MedStar St. Mary's Hospital represents everything good to me when it comes to the vital service of health care," shared **Glen Ives**, board member since 2021. "They have taken such good care of my family and myself during some tough health experiences. I couldn't be more grateful or honored to share my time and commitment to help in any way I can."



Glen Ives

Hospital Auxiliary

The MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Auxiliary has provided funding for so many improvement projects since its creation in 1916. Volunteers' ability to offer their time and talents has been greatly limited during the pandemic, but their generosity hasn't stopped. The Auxiliary recently made an incredibly generous \$425,000 donation to establish the hospital's new Scholarship Endowment Fund, providing educational support for future healthcare professionals.

Volunteers

From spiritual care providers to emergency weather drivers, volunteers compassionately give of their time to care for patients and families. "We have all had to find new ways to work and help during COVID-19," said **Mary B. Cheseldine**, volunteer coordinator. "We're thankful that, through everything, our volunteers are still finding ways to make an impact."

Philanthropy Committee of the Board of Directors



Karen Garner

Lea Weaver and **Karen Garner** have volunteered to help improve the hospital since retiring in 2014 and 2017, respectively.

"I was looking for a way to become more involved in the community and apply my human factors knowledge to the medical and construction realms," said Karen. She went on to join the Quality, Safety, and Professional Affairs Committee, Board of Directors, and the Gala and Philanthropy Committees, the latter as its chair.

"Our healthcare workers are our most important asset, as proven during the past two years," said Karen. "The staff here are outstanding. Such dedication does not come from a workforce without strong community ties. Playing a role in supporting them and improving MedStar St. Mary's warms my heart."

"I was particularly drawn to serving here because I know how critical volunteers are to a non-profit organization," said Lea, current chair of the Scholarship Committee. "Like many people I continue volunteering because I see firsthand that I can make a difference. Sounds a bit cliché but, for me, it's also true."

Reflecting upon the 169 scholarships and counting that have been awarded in the last 20 years, Lea expressed gratitude for the community generosity that has been so important to funding the program.

"Our recipients reflect our past, present, and future healthcare workforce," she continued. "Given the outstanding students we've had through the years, I know our community is in very good hands."

Hospice of St. Mary's

COVID-19 couldn't stop Hospice's dedicated volunteers from turning out, helping out, and making a difference in innovative ways! From January to October 2021 alone, volunteers contributed 385 hours of service to patients and their families. "We couldn't do what we do without this amazing support," said **Kara Rawlings, MBA, RN, CHPN, CM/DN**, director of Hospice & Palliative Care at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

Volunteer **Michael Lewis** began assisting in 2018 after seeing an ad seeking volunteers in a local church bulletin. Mike puts together intake folders for new hospice admissions—"a crucial part of our new patient processing," said **Emily Anne Stagner**, volunteer coordinator at Hospice. "During the warmer months, Mr. Mike is also our go-to flower waterer at Hospice House, and he never forgets to put birdseed in the feeders." Though they might seem small, these touches mean so much to patients and families at the Callaway home.

"Mr. Mike continues to go above and beyond in helping operations to continue running smoothly despite the pandemic," Emily Anne said. The Hospice staff is "incredibly thankful to have such a devoted member on our Caring Cardinal volunteer team."

Patient & Family Advisory Council on Quality and Safety (PFACQS)



Benjamin Shevchuk

No one can speak better to the care experience than actual patients and their loved ones—which is why the Patient & Family Advisory Council for Quality and Safety (PFACQS) is an important part of delivering truly patient-centered care. PFACQS volunteers convene at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital throughout the year to allow community members to share first-hand experiences with hospital leadership, and to review materials and initiatives the hospital is considering before they launch for patients. The group has been virtual during COVID-19.

With his unique perspective as a military veteran and former commanding officer of NAS Pax River, five-year PFACQS member **Benjamin Shevchuk** initially joined to be a voice for the military community within the local healthcare system. "The council has been a wonderful way to help our local care providers learn about what matters to us," he said. "I appreciate how much the council wants community input, and how well we collaborate to find solutions. The council is dedicated to learning from all our stories—the good ones and the hard ones."

Looking to use your talents for good? Though opportunities are still constrained by COVID-19, we hope to welcome more volunteers back soon and are grateful for community donations. Call **301-475-6453** or email **mary.cheseldine@medstar.net** for details.

Answering the call to support our non-profit hospital.

With the support of our community and associates, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's 2021 **Gala Experience: Adventure is Calling** raised **more than \$280,000** for our non-profit organization—our most financially successful year ever!



2021 Gala Experience sponsors

PRESENTING (\$25,000)
The Cherry Cove Group
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Thank you to all who supported us through sponsorships, donations, and raffle ticket purchases. Your generosity is fueling the expansion of robotic surgical services at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital—cutting-edge procedures that offer many patient benefits.

Weekly raffles last November featured three experience packages, plus the grand prize vacation to Hawaii! Congratulations to winners **Sunita Waddell, Dr. Kelly Fritz, James L. Norris**, and lucky trip winner **Wayne Davis!**

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MedStar St. Mary's Hospital የፌዴራል ሲቪል መብቶችን መብት የሚያከብር ሲሆን ሰዎችን በዘር፣ በቆይታ ቀለም፣ በዘር፣ በደም፣ በእድሜ፣ በእኩል ጉዳት ወይም በጾታ ማንኛውንም ሰው አያገለግልም። ማሳሰቢያ: የሚናገሩት ቋንቋ አማርኛ ከሆነ የትርጉም አርዳታ ድርጅቶችን በነጻ ሊያግኙት ተከጋጅተዋል። ወደ ሚክተለው ቁጥር ይደውሉ። 1-301-475-8981.

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital اطلاق وفاقی شہری حقوق کے قوانین کی تعمیل کرتا ہے اور یہ کہ نسل، رنگ، قومیت، عمر، معذوری یا جنس کی بنیاد پر امتیاز نہیں کرتا۔ خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال کریں 1-301-475-8981۔

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital लागू होने योग्य संघीय नागरिक अधिकार कानून का पालन करता है और जाति, रंग, राष्ट्रिय मूल, आयु, वक्लिांगता, या लिंग के आधार पर भेदभाव नहीं करता है। ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। 1-301-475-8981 पर कॉल करें।

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital تبعيضی بر اساس نژاد، رنگ پوست، اصلیت ملیتی، سن، ناتوانی یا جنسیت افراد قائل نمی شود.

توجه: اگر بہ زبان فارسی گفتگو می کنید، تسهیلات زبانی بصورت رایگان برای شما فراهم می باشد. یا 1-301-475-8981 تماس بگیرید.

Spring 2022 calendar



Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Calendar](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Calendar) to learn more about community classes and support groups.

Class availability is subject to change, particularly during COVID-19. After enrolling, you will be notified should a session need to be postponed. Because no registration is required for support groups, please reach out using the phone numbers below to verify if meetings are still scheduled.

Support groups

Bariatric Support

Meetings are currently online only March 12, April 9, May 14 10 a.m. Call 301-475-6019.

Breast Cancer

Meetings are held in person on the last Monday of each month March 28, April 25, May 30, 6 to 7 p.m., MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute, Outpatient Pavilion Call 240-695-6904 or visit [Facebook.com/groups/MedStarBreastHealthProgram](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MedStarBreastHealthProgram) for support.

Lactation (Breastfeeding)

Weekly on Wednesdays, two sessions: 10 and 11:15 a.m. Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Registration currently required as space is limited; call 301-475-6019. Search and join the "MedStar St. Mary's Lactation Support Group" on Facebook

Parkinson's

Second Tuesday of each month, March 8, April 12, May 10, 6 p.m. Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Call 301-475-6019.

Stroke Survivors

Third Tuesday of each month, March 15, April 19, May 17, 5:30 p.m. Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Call 301-475-6019.

Senior wellness & events

Senior Gold Card Luncheon

Currently on hold. Call 301-475-6019 for updates.

Cancer care

Cancer support group

Currently meeting first and third Wednesday of each month. In-person options may also be available. Call 240-434-7241 to register and provide your email address to be sent an invite. Search and join "MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Cancer Support Group" on Facebook.

Diabetes education

Take Control of Diabetes with Education

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offers one-on-one appointments with our registered dietitian. A provider's order for diabetes education is required. Services may be covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans. Call 301-475-6019 for more information.

Health & Lifestyle Training (HALT)

Begins May 1 Online-only, pre-diabetes prevention program Participate in a free, year-long course designed to eliminate diabetes risk factors by making changes to your health and lifestyle. Call 301-475-6019.

Simple Changes (Pre-diabetes)

Begins Oct. 5, 5:30 p.m. Participate in our free, year-long class designed to eliminate possible diabetes risk factors by making simple, healthier changes in your life. Program includes free body composition screenings, handouts, giveaways, and support between sessions. This one-year program is a combination of weekly and monthly sessions. Call 301-475-6019.



Exercise, nutrition & weight management

Bariatric information sessions

Learn more about weight loss surgery through a free online seminar. Required for those pursuing surgery. Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/WeightLoss](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/WeightLoss) or call 240-434-4088.

Body composition analysis

By appointment only, Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion Screening includes an in-depth look at body composition. Cost is \$15. Call 301-475-6019.

Childbirth & family education

Classes are held in Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

One-day Parents-to-Be workshop

In-person sessions and online options available. March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Health Connections, \$100/couple

Combines four traditional parenting classes into a one-day overview. Topics include childbirth, breastfeeding, infant CPR, and practical baby care skills such as bathing and diapering. Call 301-475-6019.

Please note: some classes require a minimum number of participants to hold the course. If the need arises to cancel a class, we will make every effort to accommodate you on an alternate date.

Safe Sitter

In-person session, March 26, May 21, 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion, \$65 Adolescents 12-14 learn babysitting tips, basic first aid, and CPR. Call 301-475-6019.

American Heart Association classes

CRT 105 CPR for the community

Held in MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Education and Simulation Center, 41550 Doctors Crossing Way, Leonardtown. *Learn CPR and AED use on adults, children and infants, plus how to relieve choking for any age. See upcoming dates and register online by searching "CRT 105" at [SITELMS.org](https://www.SITELMS.org), or call 202-643-1841 to learn more.*

Overdose Response Program

The St. Mary's County Health Department offers a free Overdose Response Program to train individuals on administering Naloxone and caring for someone until emergency help arrives. Visit [SMCHD.org/Overdose](https://www.SMCHD.org/Overdose) or call 301-475-6806.

Pulmonary

Tobacco Cessation Program

Eight-week, virtual program to help participants quit using tobacco products through

Please note: all Health Connections class fees are subject to change.

behavioral modifications, stress management, and other techniques. Visit [SMCHD.org/Tobacco](https://www.SMCHD.org/Tobacco) for dates and registration.

Give the gift of life.

The American Red Cross recently declared its first-ever national blood crisis.

Donors of all blood types are needed to help prevent further delays in vital medical treatments. Type O, in particular, is being distributed for medical emergencies faster than donations are being processed—and that's where you can help.

Upcoming blood drives

In partnership with the American Red Cross

March 31, April 28, May 31

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Health Connections, Outpatient Pavilion, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) to schedule, or call Health Connections at 301-475-6019.

NEW! Track your impact in the app

Download the Blood Donor app to your smartphone to easily view and register for upcoming drives, track your personal blood journey, and more! Search "Blood Donor American Red Cross" in the app store to get started.



Leading the system

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital was recently acknowledged as the MedStar Health system leader for hosting blood drives—especially impactful at a time when blood is in such short supply.



Theresa McKinney, an associate in our Population & Community Health department, is to thank for tirelessly coordinating these events. You continue to make a difference, Theresa—thank you!



Read us online!

[MedStarStMarys.org/HealthyLiving](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/HealthyLiving)

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Honoring a caring spirit.

Sisters make donations
to cancer center and
hospice in honor of mother.



Mary Agnes Stewart's family made donations to MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar St. Mary's and Hospice of St. Mary's to say thank you for the care she received. Pictured from left to right are Crystal Taylor, Mary Helen Stewart, Diane Stewart, Dr. Khan, and Catherine Stewart.

If you were to ask Diane Stewart about her mother, she would immediately reply with two words: humble and caring. "She was everyone's savior," Diane said. When her mother, Mary Agnes Stewart, passed away from cancer in July 2021, Diane and her sisters, Mary Helen Stewart and Catherine Stewart knew exactly what they had to do to honor their mother's memory: give back.

A life-long resident of Leonardtown, Mary Agnes retired from St. Mary's Nursing Center, and post-retirement continued to care for local families as an in-home geriatric aide. When she became ill with cancer in 2015, she turned to the MedStar Georgetown Cancer

Institute at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital and **Amir Khan, MD.**

"Everything Dr. Khan told mom to do, she did," Diane said. "They gave her 6 months to live, and she lived 6 and a half years!"

Mary Agnes wanted to see her grandson, DeAndre, Diane's son, return home from the military.

"All that she could say was, 'As long as my boy comes home, I will be OK,'" said Diane. "DeAndre came home in May and Mom died in July. It was like she was ready as long as he came home, she was good."

Throughout her struggle with cancer, Mary Agnes remained under the care of Dr. Khan. During

her last month of life, Mary Agnes also received in-home hospice care through Hospice of St. Mary's.

"Hospice was wonderful," said Diane. "They walked us through everything, and her nurse was phenomenal. She was so thankful for us being there with her the entire time."

After Mary Agnes passed, the family wanted to give back to those who had provided her mother with such incredible care. They made a \$1,500 donation to MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute and a \$400 donation to Hospice of St. Mary's. Several family friends also made donations in Mary Agnes' name.

"She loved Dr. Khan," said Diane. "He was the best for her, and he was the best of us. He is very calm, very, very caring. I know if she had anything, she would want it to go to Dr. Khan first and foremost."

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Philanthropy](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Philanthropy) for more stories of giving and information on how to donate.