

Healthy Living



**Grateful
beyond
measure.**



Letter from the president

Dear friends,

Spring is a time of rebirth. Though many of us are solemnly noting this March as one year since the coronavirus pandemic took hold and life as we knew it changed overnight, I'm relieved to have reached this fresh season. I relish the longer days and sunshine—a balm after the challenges of the last year.

In this edition of *Healthy Living*, we're pleased to feature George Kalnasy, Jr., a longtime member of the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department and heart attack survivor. Just days after he worked to save his home during historic flooding near Breton Bay, George relied upon his emergency medicine skills to realize he needed urgent medical treatment himself. Arriving at our Emergency Department, he was quickly triaged and sent for life-saving surgery. The benefits of being part of our health system—particularly for those in need of critical care—are immeasurable. Read his incredible story on page 4.

As the COVID-19 crisis progresses, I am so proud of our associates and physicians. Through the trials of the past year, our team has maintained its focus on delivering outstanding care to our patients and community in rapidly changing circumstances. This recently included our hospital's transition to MedConnect, MedStar Health's electronic health record. Their commitment to patient safety and our High Reliability Organization (HRO) principles netted the hospital its fifth "A" in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade for Fall 2020. The seeds of hard work our team members have planted will continue to bloom for years to come.

In terms of growth: it has always been our goal to bring high-quality providers closer to where you live and work. We're helping to meet that priority with the recent addition of Anand Nath, MD, gastroenterologist with MedStar Medical Group Gastroenterology at St. Mary's. In his short time here, Dr. Nath is already changing lives by diagnosing complex conditions of the stomach and GI tract. A grateful patient shares his story in this issue.

Wherever this spring may take you (even just to your local park!), I hope you and your family are well and safe. Thank you for trusting us with your healthcare needs and those of your loved ones—we are here and ready when you need us.

Kindest regards,

Christine R. Wray

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Going further with your help.

We could never have anticipated the amazing response from our community for our 2020 Unmasked Gala. Our hospital is incredibly grateful that so many chose to offer support.

Our first virtual event generated more than \$218,000 after expenses to be used for projects designed to improve our patient experience. One area of focus will be the replacement of couches in our patient rooms. These couches are more than a place to sit, they offer comfort and function serving as sleeper sofas and workstations. Built in tables, charging stations, and multiple sitting/sleeping configurations make these couches an important feature of a room and provide comfort during what can be stressful times. Without your support of our 2020 Gala this project would not have been funded for many years.

Throughout our more than 100-year history, our community has always been here for us and we want to continue to be here to support our community. It has not been an easy year for anyone, but your donations to our 2020 Gala will help make the future just a little bit brighter for so many.

Thank you!



A special word of thanks to our generous 2020 Gala Sponsors and the many others who chose to support us this year!

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A heart full of gratitude.

Heart attack survivor offers message of thanks to healthcare workers for their exceptional, exemplary care.



Given a second chance at life, George Kalnasy, Jr. works out in the Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at MedStar St. Mary's.

George Kalnasy, Jr. has a long list of people he would like to thank.

"I want to recognize the professional and personal dedication of everyone involved in my care—the doctors, nurses, pharmacists, janitorial staff, air flight team, business office, communications, Intensive Care Center, etc.," said George. "They are the true heroes. It was a team and system effort that made the difference—I survived."

On Aug. 7, 2020, George, 65, suffered a massive heart attack infamously known as the widow maker.

As a long-time member of the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Department, George had basic First Responder and CPR training and knew the signs of a heart attack, but he had never heard of the widow maker and he didn't realize right away that the stress and pressure he was feeling was foretelling that something bigger, much more serious was about to happen.

"I thought I was just tired," said George. "I'd been working all day and it was 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I felt some stress, pressure on my chest, but didn't relate it to that because I didn't know any different."

At the time, George was under a lot of stress. On Aug. 4, 2020, Tropical Storm Isaias had dumped extensive rain on the region and the Kalnasy home area in Leonardtown was flooded with more than 36 inches of water. George and his wife, Dolores, lost three vehicles in the flood and their home suffered water damage.

"You can hear somebody talk about what the signs and symptoms of a heart attack are," said George, "but you really don't know what it feels like."

When George woke that morning, he felt an "elephant on his chest" and his left arm felt cold and clammy to the touch. These were signs he knew



Dolores and George Kalnasy, Jr. are grateful for the dedication and commitment of the healthcare heroes who saved George's life following a heart attack last fall.

about. What he didn't know was that his left anterior descending artery (LAD) was totally blocked, restricting the blood flowing into his heart. He quickly sought out his wife and as they were deciding what to do, "my whole back went cold and wet and I said, 'we have to go.'"

"You can hear somebody talk about what the signs and symptoms of a heart attack are, but you really don't know what it feels like."

Dolores quickly drove him the mile to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. From the moment he stepped into the Emergency Department, George was immediately impressed with the care he received. He remembers nearly everything that happened during that day up until the moment he was to undergo a procedure to save his life.

"I told the person at the door, 'I believe I am having a heart attack,' said George. "They put me in a

wheelchair, they got my name, they put a wristband on me, and they wheeled me back. The next thing you know I have six to eight people asking me questions, they gave me four aspirin, they checked my blood pressure and they didn't like that, then they pushed fluids to me."

George heard the team call for the helicopter—20 minutes out—and as they waited, they continued to monitor George's symptoms, performed a COVID-19 test, gave him nitroglycerin, and prepared him for transport to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

"It was a nice hop, there was no wind, it wasn't a bumpy ride, and there was a beautiful broken blue sky," said George. "A few minutes out from MedStar Southern Maryland and the medic pushed something to me—I think it was morphine—and the chest pain stopped."

Upon his arrival at MedStar Southern Maryland, George was taken directly to the heart catheterization lab.

"When I got up there and I was being rolled into the catheterization lab, I asked the doctor, 'Are you going to cut my chest open?'" said George. "I figured I needed to have a heart bypass surgery like others have had."

Once George was sedated, a catheter with a small balloon attached was inserted in a small cut in his leg and maneuvered into the LAD where the balloon was then inflated to clear the blockage. The procedure—called an angioplasty—is followed by the placement of a stent in the artery to keep it open.

"The next thing you know I am coming out of it and the doctor rolls his chair back and he says, 'You are going to be on a couple of medicines for the next year and aspirin for the rest of your life.' I said, 'OK, whatever you say,' and I was wheeled off to recovery."

It was later that afternoon, as he was texting with his sister, that he learned what a widow maker was and how lucky he had been.

"I was told later that the blood will find ways around the damaged heart in the body to keep things going. I was fortunate enough to have that occur," said George. "The damage was not as bad as it could have been, or I could have checked out."

Continued on Page 6



Three days before his heart attack, the home of Dolores and George Kalnasy, Jr. was flooded by Tropical Storm Isaias.



George Kalnasy, Jr. recorded a video featuring a heartfelt and emotional thank you to the providers who saved his life by providing “exceptional, exemplary care” following a heart attack in August 2020.

Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Gala2020](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Gala2020) to watch George’s video.

Continued from Page 5

As George reflected on his experience, he knew he had to find a way to thank everyone who was involved in what he calls “exceptional, exemplary care.” He asked a nurse to help him accumulate as many names of his healthcare team as possible and he asked his wife, president of the MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital Auxiliary, to help him get a letter to the desk of Christine Wray, president of MedStar St. Mary’s and MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. The letter later led George to participate in the filming of a video to be used as part of MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital’s 2020 virtual Gala.

“Not always as we go through life do we get an opportunity to really tell people, ‘thank you,’” said George in the video. “I didn’t want it to go unnoticed, I wanted those

people to know how much I cared about what they did. And that’s why I wrote the letter.”

George’s recovery has been going well. In the fall he entered the cardiac rehabilitation program

“Not always as we go through life do we get an opportunity to really tell people, ‘thank you.’ I didn’t want it to go unnoticed, I wanted those people to know how much I cared about what they did.”

through MedStar St. Mary’s Grace Anne Dorney Pulmonary & Cardiac Rehabilitation Center and has been regaining his strength and stamina.

And although the engineer in him will always question why he had a heart attack—the root cause—he will

never question the commitment and professionalism of the people who saved his life and have helped him recover.

“I was blessed to be given another chance,” wrote George. “Myself

and my family will be forever indebted and thankful to each and every person who helped me that day and through my stay in the hospital. I only wish I could find a way to truly thank everyone.”



Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Philanthropy](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Philanthropy) to learn more about ways to express gratitude, or visit [MedStarStMarys.org/GADC](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/GADC) to learn more about cardiac rehab programs.

Expressions of gratitude

Whether it is a monetary donation, meals delivered to our staff, or heartfelt notes, the support we receive from our community means everything.



CareFirst coordinates meals for hospital team

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield spread a little extra holiday cheer in December 2020 by arranging delivery of 200 meals to our hospital staff. The boxed lunches were prepared and delivered by Do Dah Deli in Leonardtown. Each meal was accompanied by a note that read:

Thank you for your continued efforts to fight COVID-19. Each day you go to work, you inspire others to do their part. And the best way for all of us to get better is to do it together.

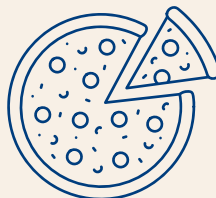
Stay safe, stay strong, and stay well!

#CareFirstCares

The company delivered 1,800 meals to MedStar Health teams across the system to help honor healthcare heroes.

Ledo Pizza provides holiday cheer

Ledo Pizza delivered holiday good will by supplying our dedicated employees 150 individual pizzas during the holiday. The Leonardtown restaurant has generously donated nearly 500 meals to our hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.



SMECO supports healthcare heroes

MedStar St. Mary's was one of three local hospitals to receive a \$18,566 donation from Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, SMECO. The donation will be used to help build an outdoor associate picnic area on the hospital grounds.

Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy repeated efforts

Students from Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy wanted to make an even greater impact by making a second donation to a fund set up to provide music to patients undergoing stereotactic breast biopsy procedures.





CCIS joins MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Cancer Care & Infusion Services department has been accepted into the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute (MGCI), thereby increasing our oncology patients' access to sub-specialists and clinical trials while incorporating best practices from experts throughout MedStar Health into the specialized care offered to our community.

MGCI has earned national accreditation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center is one of only 51 centers in the nation to be designated a comprehensive care center by the National Cancer Institute.

Visit MedStarGeorgetownCancer.org 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 MedStarStMarys.org/Community or MedStarStMarys.org/FindADoc for individual doctor profiles.



Frank S. Chen, MD, PhD

A graduate of Eastern Virginia Medical School, Dr. Chen completed his residency in otolaryngology (ENT) at Wayne State University School of Medicine. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy in biochemistry and his post-baccalaureate graduate pre-health certificate in biochemistry and molecular biology from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Chen also holds a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Call **301-475-1555** for more information or to make an appointment.



Alexis Brown, DDS

Pediatric dentist

Employed by:

Smile Castle Pediatric Dentistry

Medical school:

Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry



Nadine Carole Missiet Fogoum, NP

Psychiatry

Employed by:

AXIS Healthcare Group

Medical school:

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Myo Sabai Aye, MD

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Medical school:

Eastern Virginia Medical School



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Pediatric hospitalist

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Medical school:

Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center



Kelly Weaver, NP

Pediatrics

Employed by:

Robert E. Miller, MD, FAAP, PA

Medical school:

Boston College



Jim Macaulay was able to regain some of his mobility after a stroke nearly 10 years ago. Pictured above in Shenandoah National Park in 2015, Jim continues to follow up regularly with neurologist Yongxing Zhou, MD, PhD, to monitor his health.

Life beyond a stroke.

Partnering with a neurologist can help stroke survivors recover, stay healthy.

Approximately 10 years ago, Jim Macaulay had a hemorrhagic stroke that severely affected the right side of his body. He required extensive physical therapy to regain some of his mobility and it took about a year before his speech returned to normal.

“Over a period of about six months, there was gradual improvement,” said Jim. “I had read that there comes a time about six months after a stroke that the neurons that were stunned come back to life. Some things got markedly better, and I felt like I could get around and do a lot of things.”

Jim was able to return to some of his favorite activities, including hiking, but not to the same level as he had before his stroke. During his recovery, Jim read several books to learn about strokes and what to expect. He also regularly attended the Stroke Support Group held at MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital, which is where he met neurologist **Yongxing Zhou, MD, PhD.**

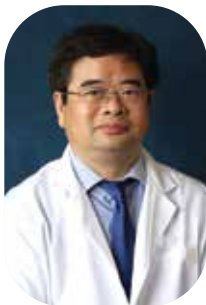
“There was a new neurologist at the hospital and the support group had him come talk to us,” said Jim, now 73. “I was impressed, so I made an appointment.”

“Many survivors can develop issues years after a stroke,” said Dr. Zhou. “A neurologist can help them deal with complications they face and keep them informed about new treatments or medications.”

Dr. Zhou recommends stroke survivors schedule appointments every 6 months with their neurologist to help monitor their recovery progress and discuss any concerns.

“Survivors can go on to lead happy and healthy lives,” said Dr. Zhou. “I encourage my patients to look for ways to keep their brains and bodies healthy to promote healing and to prevent another stroke.”

Meet Dr. Zhou



Yongxing Zhou, MD, PhD, specializes in treating conditions such as dementia, epilepsy, headaches, migraines, memory loss,

seizures, stroke, and Parkinson’s disease. Visit **MedStarStMarys.org/Neuro** for more information.

Signs of a stroke

A stroke is caused by interruption of blood supply to the brain which can prevent the brain from getting oxygen which causes brain cells to die. Time is an important factor in treating a stroke.

B: Balance

Sudden loss of balance or coordination

E: Eyes

Sudden change in vision, loss of vision, blurry vision

F: Face

Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A: Arms

Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S: Speech

Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

T: Time

If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately—time is of the essence.

Get support

MedStar St. Mary’s Hospital Stroke Support Group meets monthly. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are currently being held virtually. Visit **MedStarStMarys.org/Calendar** for more information.

The Year of the Patient

Making the connection.

MedStar St. Mary's joins electronic health record of MedStar Health

The final piece of a decade-long puzzle was put in place Jan. 13 as MedStar St. Mary's Hospital joined MedConnect, the electronic health record (EHR) of MedStar Health.

"Our hospital was an early adopter of electronic medical record technology," said **Stephen Michaels, MD**, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Medical Officer for MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. "Joining MedConnect is the culmination of work begun nearly a dozen years ago when we joined MedStar Health. A robust EHR plays an important role in our continued efforts to constantly improve our quality of care and maintain patient safety."

MedConnect is the technological string tying MedStar Health's network of care together. Designed to offer patients convenient access points close to where they live and work, the MedStar Health network offers physician offices, neighborhood urgent care centers, regional ambulatory care centers, 10 hospitals, and the telehealth platform, eVisit.

MedConnect ensures patient information can be shared quickly, easily, and securely throughout the entire system. For example, MedStar Medical Group providers now have access to a patient's hospital visit information as MedStar St. Mary's Hospital can also access a patient's office visit information.

"The medical records of a patient who comes to our Emergency Department and is transported to MedStar Washington Hospital Center or MedStar Georgetown University Hospital can now be seen easily in real time," said Dr. Michaels. "By joining the rest of the system, we have closed the gap and strengthened the continuum of care, furthering our efforts to improve the patient experience."

One of the biggest changes as a result of the switch is that MedStar St. Mary's Hospital patients will now transition to the myMedStar patient portal. The portal offers patients the ability to view and manage appointments, see test results, communicate with their provider, renew prescriptions, access health records, and more.

"We are excited to finally see this day arrive and we are grateful for the exceptional efforts and dedication of all our staff members who worked so hard to make this day a reality," said Dr. Michaels.



Your meal, your choice, your schedule.

The recent transition to MedConnect allows MedStar St. Mary's Hospital the ability to offer the "At Your Request" Room Service Program. This innovative service allows patients more freedom and flexibility with mealtimes and selections.

Once a physician prescribes a diet for a patient that meets their medical needs, it is entered into our system and patients are then free to order meals. A restaurant-style menu is available from which patients may choose their meal and the time they would like it to be delivered. Meals are prepared and served to the patient within 45 minutes of their order.

The new room service program is available between 6:45 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. daily.

ent Experience.



High 5's all around

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital has earned **five consecutive "A" grades** for patient safety from the LeapFrog Group, a national nonprofit organization focused on promoting quality and safety in American health care. The Hospital Safety Grade represents how well the hospital protects patients from errors, injuries, and infections. We are proud of the work our staff does every day to help deliver quality, safe care!



Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Newsroom](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Newsroom) for more details.

It's how we **treat people.**

Under the microscope: Changing roles during COVID-19

After being swabbed for COVID-19, many of us have experienced the standstill that comes from waiting on the all-important test result. What's less familiar is the behind-the-scenes work involved in delivering that positive or negative outcome.

Associates throughout MedStar St. Mary's Hospital have seen their roles change dramatically in response to COVID-19. The Population & Community Health team pivoted from exclusively handling outpatient case management and community classes, among many other duties, to coordinating drive-thru COVID-19 testing at the Outpatient Pavilion—one of the first testing sites established statewide. Through the groundwork laid by conducting past clinics to deliver flu shots, the COVID-19 drive-thru quickly became a well-tuned system that continues to test hundreds of patients weekly. (Amazingly, by December 2020, the first vaccines would arrive for healthcare workers at MedStar St. Mary's—and that same team would be among those inoculating colleagues.)

Like a relay, samples collected in the drive-thru must quickly be prepped for the next leg of their journey: testing. Swabs are collected

by technologists from the hospital's Laboratory and marked either for in-house processing or prepped for transport to MedStar Washington Hospital Center or a reference laboratory.

As a nervous public began donning masks and stay-at-home orders were announced, the Lab team was suddenly handling potential specimens of a little-understood respiratory virus. The Laboratory received the first of four eventual platforms to begin internally processing some samples in late March 2020, completing 414 in-house tests the next month. By December, that monthly number had tripled, and antigen testing was added as well.

From the start of the pandemic to mid-January, the Lab team at MedStar St. Mary's had touched—either by processing or prepping—nearly 17,000 COVID-19 tests.

"Our Lab team has been phenomenal," said **Christine Wood, MSM, MSACM, MT(ASCP)**, director of Laboratory Services. "The team has dealt with so many process changes, especially phlebotomy and microbiology—sometimes within minutes of each other. We are normally more behind-the-scenes, but we are proud to be helping at the forefront.

"We are a team here—at our hospital and within our system," she continued. "MedStar Washington Hospital Center has been a huge partner. Thanks to our collaboration and shared resources throughout MedStar Health, we have never had to go without—either supplies or support."





Taking their shot to defeat COVID-19

Almost nine months to the day since MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Emergency Department treated its first COVID-19-positive patient, the hospital received the first shipment of the vaccine that will help end the pandemic. More than 900 frontline healthcare workers, providers, and staff were inoculated beginning Dec. 18—a group that steadily increased with the ongoing supply of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

Mark Manguerra, MD, hospitalist and infectious disease specialist with MedStar Shah Medical Group (pictured top left), was among those who quickly scheduled his

shot. "I think it makes a lot of sense [to get vaccinated]. I trust the science," said Dr. Manguerra, who has been seeing COVID-19-positive patients throughout the crisis. "It's new technology, but it has been carefully developed. I'm grateful for this opportunity."

Respiratory therapist **Suzy Abell, RRT, RRT-NPS, RRT-ACCS**, clinical lead of Pulmonary Services at MedStar St. Mary's (pictured bottom left), sat for her vaccine without hesitation. Critically involved in caring for COVID-positive patients since March, Suzy smiled through her N95 at the colleagues cheering her on.

"Whatever it takes," Suzy said, "to get everyone else to take it."

Steven R.T. Evans, MD, executive vice president, medical affairs and chief medical officer for MedStar Health (pictured right), visited MedStar St. Mary's to receive his first dose in January. "I really do believe this is the most miraculous scientific achievement in my lifetime—and it was able to be accomplished with no corners cut," Dr. Evans shared. "... Our role as citizens is in ultimately getting to a place of herd immunity. We each have a role and responsibility to each other to keep our community safe."

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/COVID-19](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/COVID-19) to learn more about MedStar Health's COVID-19 response. For local information, visit [SMCHD.org/COVID-19-vaccine](https://www.SMCHD.org/COVID-19-vaccine) for the St. Mary's County Health Department's latest updates.

News briefs.



As part of our ongoing commitment to expanding convenient access to quality care, MedStar Health recently acquired Righttime Medical Care and its 19 Maryland-based urgent care centers. Righttime brings 30 years of urgent care experience to MedStar Health, which now operates 33 sites, including locations in California, La Plata, and Waldorf. Visit [MedStarHealth.org/UrgentCare](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/UrgentCare) to learn more.



Dermis Deputy earns accolades

The Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE) Committee at MedStar St. Mary's recently earned the **2020 NICHE and ABIM Foundation Choosing Wisely Trailblazer Award**, recognizing our commitment to improving quality care for older adults. The team was honored for its abstract "Dermis Deputy: A Team Approach to Skin Breakdown Prevention and the GRN Model," developed by geriatric resource nurses within the hospital's Medical/Surgical/Pediatrics unit. The Dermis Deputy program focuses on patient safety by reducing the risk of pressure injuries through frequent skin assessments, among other methods.

Grant program helping tackle diabetes in Southern Maryland

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is one of five regional hospitals that will be participating in a grant-funded coalition which will target diabetes prevention and self-management in Southern Maryland.

Through Totally Linking Care in Maryland (TLC MD), which is funded through Maryland's Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) Regional Partnership Catalyst Grants program, MedStar St. Mary's will provide increased access to its National Diabetes Prevention program (Simple Changes) and its diabetes self-monitoring program. Eligible participants will also have access to community health workers. Diabetes is one of the most common chronic conditions in Southern Maryland, particularly for the region's underserved populations.

The \$7 million diabetes grant was part of a \$30 million grant package awarded by the HSCRC that will also address behavioral health access in Prince George's County.

Visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Newsroom](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Newsroom) for more information.

Five stars for home health agency

Chesapeake-Potomac Home Health Agency (CPHHA) recently earned a 5-star Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) rating based on patient feedback, including whether they would recommend the agency to others. CPHHA also earned a 4-star quality rating from the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services.

CPHHA is a nonprofit agency owned by the alliance of CalvertHealth Medical Center, University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital and the St. Mary's County Health Department. Skilled nursing and physical, occupational, and speech therapies are among the services offered to tri-county residents. Visit [CPHHA.org](https://www.CPHHA.org) for more information.



Happy Doctors' Day!



Doctors' Day looks different in 2021, but our gratitude for the dedication of our providers is stronger than ever. Commemorated every March 30, the red carnation has come to symbolize National Doctors' Day—representing love, charity, sacrifice, and courage . . . all qualities felt in abundance with our physicians, particularly during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From innovating with expanded telehealth services to tirelessly seeking answers for patients and families in dark hours, your commitment and bravery do not go unnoticed. Thank you for all you do to care for our community!



MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's 2021-22 Medical Staff Leadership, clockwise from top: Tushar Samdani, MD, Secretary/Treasurer; Yahia Tagouri, MD, Vice Chief of Staff; John Harvey, MD, Chief of Staff.

If one of our doctors has made a difference in your life, consider honoring them with a tribute and financial gift to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. Your donation to our nonprofit facility can be designated to a specific area, such as COVID-19 relief efforts, or simply the area of greatest need. An acknowledgment card will be delivered to your physician. To learn more, visit [MedStarStMarys.org/Philanthropy](https://www.MedStarStMarys.org/Philanthropy) or call **240-434-7766**.





Positive colon screening connects patient with GI care close to home

Kevin James of Lusby had been putting off a colonoscopy for a while. Despite the prodding of his wife, the 57-year-old couldn't commit to the preparation and scheduling required for a screening colonoscopy—not with 12-hour work days and a 150-mile daily commute.

Thankfully, his primary care provider offered another option. While the colonoscopy is still considered the “gold standard” screening tool for colorectal cancer, at-home stool kits can also provide timely, important data for those at an average risk of the disease.

“For many patients, at-home kits are an acceptable screening tool—they are reasonably accurate and convenient for the patient,” said **Anand Nath, MD**, gastroenterologist at MedStar Medical Group Gastroenterology at St. Mary's, located in the Outpatient Pavilion at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. “Because all colon cancers arise from colon polyps which do not necessarily have symptoms, conducting regular screenings is the best way to catch them early.”

Knowing Kevin's hesitation to undergo the colonoscopy, **Lauren Perz, DO**, MedStar Medical Group at St. Clement's, urged him to complete an at-home screening test, which works by detecting abnormal DNA in the stool. As the colon constantly sheds its lining, normal and abnormal cells

are released into the stool passing through the digestive tract. Sensitive testing picks these up and flags potential issues.

Soon after submitting his kit, Kevin learned his screening was positive. He was referred to Dr. Nath for a follow-up colonoscopy. During this procedure, gastroenterologists check the inner lining of the large intestine (colon and rectum) for ulcers, cancer, polyps, and areas of bleeding or inflammation. Any abnormal growths can be removed and tissues sent for biopsy, which will determine if they are cancerous or have the potential to turn into cancer.

During Kevin's procedure last September, Dr. Nath removed three large polyps. Fortunately, testing confirmed these growths were benign—but left undisturbed, some might have turned cancerous.

“I wouldn't have known anything was there,” said Kevin. “Dr. Nath was very comforting. The colonoscopy itself was fine and I had no down time.”

Dr. Nath will follow up with Kevin again in three years, unless other symptoms arise. Care plans are tailored to the patient's needs and risk factors.

For his part, Kevin is grateful the polyps were caught early. “It was painless,” he said, adding, “I am glad I don't have to go through it but every three years! Still, it's important.”



Teresa, Kevin's wife, expressed her gratitude as well. “I've seen too many bad outcomes and he was late in the game getting his first colonoscopy,” she shared.

“Drs. Perz and Nath were able to communicate that these preventative measures and procedures are important in a way that a wife can't always accomplish! We have wonderful doctors who work as a team at MedStar and we are so very thankful.”

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Time to schedule your screening? Call **240-434-7474** for an appointment with Dr. Nath, or visit **MedStarStMarys.org/GI** to learn more.

45

Start screening at age 45

In 2018, the American Cancer Society updated its guidelines to note that **routine colorectal screenings for men and women should begin at age 45, not 50**, unless other risk factors are present. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force issued a draft recommendation (October 2020) to start colon cancer screening at age 45 and is expected to reflect the same in its final recommendation—an important step to ensure costs will be covered by most health insurance plans beginning at age 45. Visit **Cancer.org/Colon** to learn more.

Colonoscopy or at-home stool test?

In the U.S., colon cancer is the second most common cause of cancer deaths when men and women are combined. In the fight to discover and treat the disease early, the colonoscopy is still considered the standard screening tool. However, at-home stool sample kits can provide important information for those at average risk.

“The colonoscopy procedure itself is not uncomfortable for most patients, and the complication rates are very low,” said Dr. Nath. “The biggest advantage is the highest accuracy and capability of providing screening and treatment at the same time. The colon must be emptied to provide the clear view we need during a colonoscopy, so the patient will take laxatives and other medications the day before their procedure, then fast. So, it does require a bit of hard work on the patient’s part.”

At-home kits do not have dietary restrictions or require laxatives. However, “their detection rates are lower and results can be falsely positive, leading to significant anxiety between positive test and follow-up colonoscopy,” said Dr. Nath. These kits are also not recommended for certain patients at higher risk, including those with a previous colon cancer diagnosis, prior history of polyps, or a close family relative diagnosed with colon cancer before age 60, among other factors.

Depending on the recommendations of your provider, at-home screenings—if negative—should be repeated every one to three years. Colonoscopies, if negative, are typically recommended every 10 years. Both are usually covered by health insurance for those over age 45 (check your plan first).

Regardless of the method, “The most important thing is that adults do get screened,” said Dr. Nath. Speak with your healthcare provider to learn more about your options.

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

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توجه: اگر یہ زبان فارسی گفتگو می کنید، تسهیلات زبانی بصورت رایگان برای شما فراهم می باشد. با ١-٣٠١-١٨٩٨-٥٧٤ تماس بگیرید.

Spring 2021 calendar

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
Second Saturday of each month
March 13, April 10, May 8,
10 a.m. to noon,
Call 301-475-6019.

Breastfeeding

Meetings are currently online only
Weekly on Wednesdays,
10 a.m. to noon,
**Search and join "MedStar
Breastfeeding Support Group"
on Facebook.**

Breast Cancer

Meetings are held in person
on the last Monday of each month
March 29, April 26, May 31,
6 to 7 p.m., Outpatient Pavilion,
Cancer Care & Infusion Services
Call 301-997-1315 or visit
**Facebook.com/groups/
MedStarBreastHealthProgram**
for support.

Epilepsy

Currently on hold due to
COVID-19. Call 240-434-7929
for updates.

Multiple Sclerosis

In-person meetings on hold. Join
the Facebook group by searching
"Southern MD MS Support Group,"
or call 301-475-6019 for updates.

Ostomy Care

Currently on hold due to
COVID-19. Call 301-609-5435
for updates.

Parkinson's

In-person meetings with
virtual options

Second Tuesday of each month,
March 9, April 13, May 11,
6 p.m., Health Connections
Call 301-475-6019.

Stroke Survivors

In-person meetings with
virtual options
Third Tuesday of each month,
March 16, April 20, May 18,
5:30 p.m., Health Connections
Call 301-475-6019.

Senior wellness & events

Senior Gold Card luncheon

Currently on hold due to COVID-19.
Call 301-475-6019 for updates.

Cancer care

Cancer Support group

Currently meeting virtually on the
first and third Wednesday of each
month. Call 240-434-7241
to register.

Diabetes education

Take Control of Diabetes with Education

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offers
American Diabetes Association
(ADA)-recognized programs to
individuals and groups. Services
are covered by Medicare, Medicaid,
and most private insurance plans.

Bring a partner to PreventT2

In-person meetings with
virtual options
March 15,
5:30 p.m., Health Connections
If you or a partner are at risk of
type 2 diabetes, you can sign up
together for PreventT2. This free,

year-long program is designed
to prevent or delay type 2 (T2)
diabetes. Together you will learn
to eat healthier, be more physically
active, and manage stress with
help from trained lifestyle coaches.
Gain additional support from
others like you and your partner.
Sign up with a family member or
close friend. Call 301-475-6019.

Simple Changes (Pre-diabetes)

In-person meetings with
virtual options
April 14,
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.,
Health Connections
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.

Living Well with Diabetes

In-person meetings with
virtual options
March 30, 6 p.m.,
Health Connections
This six-week workshop can help
individuals with diabetes manage
this condition, carry out normal
activities, add healthy activities to
their lives, and manage emotional
changes. Call 301-475-6019.

Health & Lifestyle Training (HALT)

Online-only, pre-diabetes
prevention program
Next cohort begins April 12



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

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.

Exercise, nutrition & weight management

Bariatric information sessions

Learn more about weight loss surgeries offered with surgeon Nicholas Tapazoglou, MD, with 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
Screening includes an in-depth look at body composition.
Cost is \$15.
Call 301-475-6019.

MedFit program

Currently unavailable due to COVID-19. Call 240-434-7143 for updates.

Yoga

Currently on hold due to COVID-19. Call 301-475-6019 for updates.

Childbirth & family education

Classes are held in the Outpatient Pavilion at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

One-day Parents-to-Be workshop

In-person sessions, March 6, April 17, May 1, 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 27, May 22, 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., Health Connections, \$65
Adolescents 12-14 learn babysitting tips, basic first aid, and CPR. Call 301-475-6019.

American Heart Association classes

Held in MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Education and Simulation Center, 41550 Doctors Crossing Way, Leonardtown. Register at [sitelms.org](https://www.sitelms.org) with registration codes (below). Two-year certification cards are emailed upon course completion. Call 202-643-1841 to learn more.
Please note: class prices are subject to change.

CRT 105 CPR for the community

(Formerly known as Heartsaver CPR/AED)
March 22, April 26, May 24, 5 to 9 p.m., \$85
Learn CPR and AED use on adults, children and infants; and how to relieve choking for any age.

CRT 109 CPR for the community and First Aid

(Formerly known as Heartsaver CPR/AED & First Aid)
April 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$120
Video-based, instructor-led course that teaches critical skills

to respond to and manage an emergency in the first minutes until Emergency Medical Services arrives.

Pulmonary

Better Breathers Club

Currently on hold due to COVID-19. Call 240-434-7143 for updates.

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.

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

25500 Point Lookout Rd.
Leonardtown, MD 20650

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital



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keep track of your
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- Communications with your providers
- Medical records
- Test results
- Appointments

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health information**

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one's health information.



Scan for web link.



Enroll now! Visit myMedStar.org for frequently asked questions about
the patient portal or to enroll.

