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A message from the president and CEO

Grounded in our mission

As we near the end of the year, it’s important to reflect on some of the many successes that underscore our commitment to fulfilling our mission, strengthening quality and patient safety, and adapting to health care’s turbulent environment.

We have much to be proud of. Northwell Health is not only surviving, but thriving — even as we find new and better ways of improving the health of our communities. This is true largely because we anticipated much of health care’s evolution and were prepared for the changes that confronted us.

Among the many ways we are leading change is seizing opportunities to generate revenue beyond the traditional delivery of patient care. While we have been pursuing some of these initiatives for several years, we assembled all of them earlier this year within a new entity called True North Enterprises.

True North Enterprises is commercializing Northwell’s vast capabilities and entrepreneurial culture, raising badly needed funds that help offset significant reductions in insurance reimbursements. Aside from creating new business opportunities, we have been hugely successful in leveraging our size to negotiate better pricing for pharmaceutical drugs, medical supplies and other services, while also improving the efficiency of day-to-day operations (see page 6).

True North began more than a decade ago as North Shore Enterprises, with the creation of Vivo Health. As many of you are aware, this retail specialty pharmacy recently expanded to manage pharmacy benefits and deliver mail order prescriptions to Northwell staff (see page 10).

Another major True North asset that elevates quality and operational efficiency to a new level is our sterile processing facility, operated in a joint venture with Steris. This 110,000-square-foot facility in Bethpage, scheduled to open by early November, is the world’s largest medical instrument sterilization center (see page 8).

The True North business arm oversees about $200 million in annual revenue, helping to fund — and preserve — our core mission of expanding access to care and promoting good health among the communities we serve throughout the metropolitan area. All of these business ventures help fortify the health system as an invaluable community resource for clinical excellence, advocacy, partnerships, programs and education.

Northwell’s progressive approach to health care has also gained national recognition, as evidenced this summer when the American Hospital Association presented us with its Quest for Quality Prize (page 32). The honor recognizes our achievements in improving and preserving access to care, encouraging innovation and addressing the social determinants of health. Similar to sports championships earned on the field, the court or the ice, this prestigious award was truly a team effort, made possible by each and every one of you.

Working together, we will continue to achieve great things in 2019.
When substance misuse hits home

Northwell staff members have easy, risk-free access to help.

By Lisa Davis

You probably know some of the ways that Northwell Health works to thwart the opioid crisis in our communities. But you may not realize that the health system also offers help closer to home for people struggling with opioids, alcohol and other substances.

The health system’s Employee and Family Assistance Program (EAP) provides fast, easy, affordable access to treatment for substance use issues. Help is available to anyone who works for the health system and their family members.

“All you have to do is call,” said Maria Madrid, LCSW, at EAP. That’s enough to access a variety of services, such as assistance in finding a treatment program, help with arranging a leave of absence if treatment requires it, and coaching through difficult conversations with family members.

National data suggests that between five and 18 percent of any health system’s employees have a substance use problem that interferes with functioning or quality of life, according to Curtis Reisinger, PhD, corporate director of EAP. Many contributing factors are the same as for people in other walks of life — with the addition of extraordinary stress common in the health care field.

“Clinicians routinely deal with suffering adults, children and parents, asking: ‘Am I going to be OK?’” Dr. Reisinger said. “And sometimes you, as a clinician, know it’s not going to be OK. Situations like that can be very emotionally taxing.”

Those with a substance use issue who work in health care often worry about their employer learning about it. As a result, they sometimes don’t consider using EAP but instead may pay tens of thousands of dollars out-of-pocket for treatment, Dr. Reisinger said.

“That’s unfortunate, because we offer a very generous benefit,” he said. “EAP is highly confidential, and there are numerous

Don’t hesitate

Calls are free and anonymous.

Northwell Health’s EAP office:
(877) 327-4968

EAP’s dedicated substance misuse help line:
(855) 227-3472

The health system’s drug-diversion hotline:
(800) 894-3226
buffers in place to safeguard Northwell employees’ privacy.” In fact, Northwell’s new substance misuse help line offers complete anonymity. You can find information or services by calling (855) 227-3472, and there’s no need to provide a name or other identifying information.

No matter how you access EAP, help is strictly confidential. Even if you need a leave of absence for residential treatment, your manager or supervisor will not be told why — only that your request has merit.

**Life and license**

Substance misuse puts clinical licensing at risk. But turning to EAP can connect you to the help you need and stop the downward spiral, Dr. Reisinger said. Treatment prevents behaviors that might bring attention from state regulatory agencies, so it’s the best protection for professional authorizations.

James Romagnoli, vice president of corporate security for Northwell, has his own perspective on EAP’s help for health system staff members. He monitors the systems that provide an alert for potential drug diversion, plus the employee drug diversion hotline for reporting concerns about a coworker (800-894-3226). Mr. Romagnoli spent 21 years in law enforcement before building Northwell’s corporate security department, and feels good about the options open to health system employees who struggle with substance use issues.

“We’re not looking to fire people,” he said. “What we’re really trying to do is get the person the help they need. We want to get them into EAP, because Dr. Reisinger and his team are very, very good at what they do.”

He has seen many EAP successes. “Many of our staff who have gone through this have returned to work,” he continued. “They’re functioning really well and it’s like we’ve got the person we hired back again.

“We all lose if someone doesn’t function, and we know that,” Mr. Romagnoli said. “We want to help them have a successful recovery, and keep them employed as valuable contributors to our mission.”

Infections and Emergency Department visits are common after treatment for Stage II bladder cancer. Michael Diefenbach, PhD, a professor at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, wants to change that, and support from a $3.5 million, five-year grant from National Institutes of Health (NIH) is helping him do it.

Stage II bladder cancer, also called invasive bladder cancer, often requires replacement of the organ with an artificial bladder. Recovery can be lengthy and requires adopting a new care regimen.

“Care after the removal of the bladder can be challenging,” said Dr. Diefenbach. He added that dealing with bodily waste results in a high risk for infection or complications.

Dr. Diefenbach’s first-of-its-kind study will create an in-person, pretreatment education program for patients and caregivers to learn proper care techniques for the artificial bladder from a health care professional. As part of the second phase of the study, Dr. Diefenbach will develop a website so bladder cancer survivors can access recovery information, videos about post-surgical care and testimonials from patients and physicians.

“This is an example of how the research we’re conducting here at the Feinstein Institute can have an immediate impact on patient care,” said Thomas McGinn, MD, head of the Feinstein Institute’s Center for Health Innovation and Outcomes Research.
Value-based care has not only changed the way health care is paid for, it has also significantly altered what medical organizations do, extending services beyond patient care. Forecasting this trend years ago, Northwell Health executives implemented business initiatives to generate new revenue by pursuing new commercialization opportunities, reducing purchasing and operational costs and expanding service capabilities.

While some of these entities have been operating independently for several years, the health system this year joined them together under a new entity called True North Enterprises. The new business arm oversees about $200 million in annual revenue, and develops and invests in products, technologies and services that will help fund Northwell’s mission to improve the health of our communities.

“True North is Northwell’s answer to health care’s evolving landscape,” said Michael Dowling, the health system’s president and CEO. “We are at a critical stage to lead reform by identifying business opportunities beyond patient care delivery. By selling the new services and capabilities we have developed and collaborating with start-ups, high-tech firms and other businesses, we can generate revenue from areas we never thought of before.”

True North Enterprises assembles all health system entities that focus on business and retail services, consulting, new joint ventures, and investments in start-ups and innovative ideas that originate with Northwell clinicians, researchers and staff members. True North Enterprises commercializes and sells these products and services to other health care providers, pharmaceutical companies and through other business-to-business relationships.

“True North is the home of revenue diversification and innovation for the health system,” said Donna Drummond, Northwell’s senior vice president and managing director of True North. She added that the health system needs to identify new revenue sources in order to:

– continue reducing the cost of pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies and services; and
– pursue other efficiencies.

“Joining all of these entities together shines a light on them,” Ms. Drummond said. “We’re not an organization that just provides clinical care anymore. We’ve gained expertise in providing products and services, and we are monetizing them.”

True North began in 2006 as North Shore Enterprises with the creation of Vivo Health, the retail specialty pharmacy, pharmacy benefits manager and new mail order prescription medication program (see page 10). There are now Vivo Health pharmacies at 410 Lakeville Road in New Hyde Park, the Center for Advanced Medicine, Lenox Hill Hospital, Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center, and North Shore University, Phelps, Southside, Staten Island University and Zucker Hillside hospitals. This year, projected revenue for the venture is $150 million.

“This is an exciting time for the organization,” said Onisis Stefas, PharmD, vice president and chief pharmacy officer for True North Enterprises. He added that Vivo Health remains responsive to changes in the health care landscape. “Identifying new opportunities and business solutions through innovation and collaboration is one of the things we do best.”

True North’s growing portfolio incorporates business services, retail, ventures/investments and clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies.

**Business services**

Thriving entities such as Vivo Health and Northwell Health Alliance, the health system’s group purchasing organization (GPO), are among the health system’s business services. The GPO serves as the intermediary between manufacturers, suppliers and health care providers, leveraging collective buying power to negotiate discounts and generate independent fee income on behalf of its members. Northwell Health Alliance members include all of the health system’s entities, plus affiliate hospitals such as Crouse Health in Syracuse and Nassau University Medical Center. The GPO earned $13.1 million in fees last year.
Beyond discounts, the GPO provides data analytics, benchmarking, market research, consulting and additional services. It has 380 unique members, 460 contracts and about $900 million in goods and services that are purchased through Alliance GPO contracts annually.

“We want to keep growing and help other providers develop value-based models to improve the quality and availability of products and services they acquire,” said Phyllis McCready, vice president and Northwell Health’s chief procurement officer. “With the ever-increasing consolidation of our vendors, we take a holistic approach with our business and relationship development. This strategy gives us the advantage to procure new products and technologies more efficiently.”

True North also oversees the health system’s new central sterile facility in Bethpage (see page 8). Other opportunities to monetize include internal businesses such as the Bioskills Education Center, workforce safety, telehealth, employee wellness, population health management capabilities and numerous other areas, Ms. Drummond said.

Retail

Northwell has already dabbled in retail by selling vitamins and medical supplies through its Vivo Health Pharmacies, and Ms. Drummond expects expansion in this arena. “There is a lot of money spent on health and wellness aside from medical care,” she said. “We are talking to potential partners about a medical spa, healthy meal delivery and other retail opportunities.”

Ventures/investments

Northwell Ventures, the health system’s entrepreneurial arm, invests in early-stage companies and employee-driven innovations. Currently investments include 14 emerging health care companies that help advance Northwell’s strategy. Mostly start-ups, these joint ventures have provided unique solutions for products and services such as telehealth, imaging, physical therapy and more.

“Our endorsement sends a strong message to the market,” said Richard Mulry, executive director and chief operating officer at True North. “As a strategic investor, we rely on our internal team of experts to conduct product-use cases across the organization — validating efficacy and often enhancing the product offering.

“A successful implementation at Northwell decreases risk and makes the investment opportunity more attractive for future investors. Through this process, Northwell can increase its equity stake in the company.”

Investments focus on patient experience, clinical informatics and health transformation. “Ultimately, we are looking for a market event anywhere from two to seven years, depending on the investment, to realize a return,” Mr. Mulry said. “Due to the early stage of these companies, we expect that not every venture will be successful. We calculate the risk and deploy resources to help the initial launch, seeking the best possible outcome for the company and return for Northwell.”

Ventures also covers ideas that originate within the health system. For example, Lorenz “Buddy” Mayer, assistant director of support services at North Shore University Hospital, created Hand Shield, a privacy curtain that reduces the spread of germs and risk of infection. Ventures also collaborates with winning teams from Northwell’s Innovation Challenge, which gives employees an opportunity to present their entrepreneurial ideas for support from the health system.

Pharma Ventures

Established in 2015, Pharma Ventures focuses on gaining the health system’s involvement in valuable clinical trials, focusing on education initiatives, population health, innovative contracting and specialty pharmacy services.

“We have developed strategic relationships with most pharmaceutical/biotech companies that help accelerate the growth of key initiatives that are advantageous to both Northwell and the companies,” said Elaine Brennan, executive director and chief commercialization officer at True North. “Connecting with these organizations positions Northwell as a premier destination for collaboration — not just to execute clinical trials, but also for other innovative projects. It’s a win-win for all.”
Northwell Health has opened the world’s largest facility dedicated to disinfecting and sterilizing surgical instruments. About 200 sterilization processing technicians and their managers from nine Northwell hospitals have moved to the new space at 1001 South Oyster Bay Road in Bethpage.

The 110,000-square-foot center can clean 20 million surgical instruments annually — more than any other non-hospital-based sterilization center in the world, according to Adam Boll, vice president of Northwell Ventures Operations. Mr. Boll has been working on the project for seven years.

The $80 million site is part of a joint venture between Northwell Ventures and Steris, an Ohio-based, global provider of infection prevention and other procedural products and services. The 24/7 facility services more than 100 physician practices plus Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center, LIJ Valley Stream, LIJ Forest Hills, North Shore University, Glen Cove, Plainview, Syosset, Huntington and Southside hospitals, and Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. Hospital-based instrument processing is continuing only for endoscopes and colonoscopes.

Northwell-dedicated trucks transport surgical instruments to and from the facility, former home of the Lily Popcorn Company. Similar to how clinicians and perioperative staff work in operating rooms, certified sterilization processing technicians scrub in and scrub out before and after their shifts at the new facility. They use 14 sink bays to clean and disinfect the medical equipment, which are plastic-wrapped and prepared for return in an air-sealed, sterile environment. Bar-coding ensures proper tracking and delivery.

High-tech systems address concerns about potential groundwater contamination in the Bethpage area. Northwell Health has installed state-of-the-art filtration and ventilation systems to keep the indoor environment safe and clean, and air monitors operate continuously. The building can withstand winds of up to 120 mph, and has emergency generators that can operate for 96 hours from an on-site fuel supply in the event of a power outage.
Vivo Health mail order pharmacy launches

Prescription medication management for Northwell employees.

By Jason Moline

Vivo Health Pharmacy has launched a prescription medication mail order program for Northwell Health staff members.

The health system’s specialty pharmacy, Vivo Health provides services at 10 health system locations and has a 24-hour clinical call center. It began covering prescriptions for Northwell employees in eligible medical insurance plans on August 1, replacing the health system’s earlier pharmacy provider, Express Scripts.

The Vivo Health mail order facility streamlines delivery to Northwell staff members, according to Onisis Stefas, PharmD, the health system’s chief pharmacy officer. “Our employees should see a higher quality of care as a result of bringing their prescription medication management under the Northwell umbrella,” he said.

Dr. Stefas added that the mail order facility’s automation enables accuracy and faster delivery, so those with a chronic condition never have to worry about running out of medication. Employees can continue to fill acute-care prescriptions at more than 60,000 participating retail pharmacies nationwide.

“Vivo Health has been providing Northwell patients with on-site and mail order pharmacy services for nearly a decade,” said Mark Solazzo, the health system’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. “With our robotic pharmacy and automated shipping technology, we now offer the same high level of mail-order prescription services to our own employees, at a savings of $12 million a year because we’re doing it ourselves.”

Located at 225 Community Drive in Great Neck, the 15,000-square-foot operation was designed for efficiency — it already fulfills about 500 prescriptions per day. Custom software, productivity workflows, smart shipping solutions and two pharmacy robots can automatically prepare more than 340 types of medication.
In a hospital room, many sounds can disturb the peace and quiet that are conducive to a patient’s healing. Sometimes, a beeping monitor or a roommate’s TV conspire to prevent sleep. Often, the 24/7 activity typical in hospitals — maintenance, deliveries or even hallway conversations — can interrupt rest.

That noise can irritate patients or make them plain miserable, said Sven Gierlinger, vice president and chief experience officer at Northwell Health. He remembers how uncomfortable he was when he couldn’t sleep during a hospital stay of his own at another health system.

“Noise in the hospital environment is one area where quality and patient experience come together,” he said. “At almost every site, noise was the worst-scoring patient experience factor. And we said, ‘That’s just not OK.’”

At the same time, Northwell’s nursing leaders had also identified noise as a key target for improvement, said Amy Loeb, RN, DNP, vice president and chief nursing officer at Peconic Bay Medical Center, who is leading the initiative on behalf of nursing.

A balance of healing priorities

“There’s a lot we need to do for our patients when they’re in the hospital, so some disruption is unavoidable,” Dr. Loeb said. “But we know that sleep and rest are as important as eating and drinking when you’re trying to get well. So we had to find the right balance.”

Over the past few months, Healing Environment piloted a number of changes at units in 11 Northwell hospitals. One of the most successful: “quiet hours,” which typically run between about 9:30pm to 6am. An announcement on the public address system reminds visitors that patients may be trying to sleep. Staff members also dim the lights, lower their voices and bundle care when possible.

The initiative also emphasizes maintaining individual bedtime rituals. When a patient enters a unit, a nurse will ask about habits that make sleep easier. Lights on or off? TV dark or providing soothing background noise? Nurses provide amenities such as earphones and eye masks for patient comfort and as a courtesy between roommates, Dr. Loeb said. And nursing staff ask in advance for the preferred way to wake up — a tap on the shoulder or a persistent shake — if a patient must receive, for example, a dose of medication.

“These protocols require a new way of thinking, but they allow patients to sleep better,” Dr. Loeb said. “When patients get the rest they need, they heal faster. And we are all here for the patients.”

New councils, including frontline workers who know the night shift first-hand, have identified sound issues from “wheels and heels.” As a result, units are de-squeaking equipment and rescheduling deliveries that used to happen in the middle of the night. In addition, facility renovations and construction will incorporate noise reduction where possible. Elements can include decentralized nursing stations to keep gatherings small and conversations quieter, sound-absorbing flooring materials and acoustic ceiling tiles. Numerous Northwell inpatient units have already installed special noise-abating carpeting.

Press Ganey patient satisfaction data is already showing a substantial impact from the initiative.

“We’re making strides,” Mr. Gierlinger said. “It’s good to see such a strong response.” The initiative is rolling out throughout the rest of the health system by the end of this year.

“This is a culture shift,” Dr. Loeb said. “When you walk into a library or a house of worship, you automatically get quiet. I don’t know that our hospitals will ever feel like a library or church, but in the future they will feel more restful. That will make for a better place to work, and a better place to heal.”
Learning about patient safety in virtual reality

Center for Learning and Innovation integrates VR experiences for immersive education.

By Chris Gasiewski

Of all the recent technological advances, virtual reality (VR) promises to have as much impact as the desktop computer and smartphone. The technology is already benefiting medical and nursing students at Northwell Health’s Center for Learning and Innovation (CLI), which began integrating VR into its medical education curriculum earlier this year.

The immersive learning program, called A Roomful of Danger: Developing a Virtual Reality Game to Improve Safety in the Environment of Care, challenges users to identify safety issues within patient rooms and other hospital settings.

The simulation program was developed for the health system by Visual Lab 360, which has developed more than 40 VR scenarios demonstrating existing and potential safety threats. Since the program’s inception, several hundred medical and nursing students have taken the Roomful of Danger exam.

“We’ve had a fairly good distribution of testing. They like it,” said Robert Kerner, RN, EMT-P, EdD, assistant vice president at CLI’s Patient Safety Institute and an assistant professor of nursing and science education. “We’ve developed a systematic approach to scan the room and find threats. For most clinicians, we teach them either to start in the bed and work outward to the rest of the room or work from outward in. Have a method. You have to deliberately look at something. This is exactly what we were looking for when developing this.”

An immersive experience

This immersive, experiential learning approach cultivates situational awareness, a concept that originated in military aviation training. Attention to detail and the ability to process live information are integral to correctly answering the program’s 14 questions. The five-minute test is randomized to provide unique experiences for each person.

“Everything is real,” Dr. Kerner said. “Although this is a game and is meant to be entertaining, it’s based on real quality and risk management issues that clinicians face today. It’s like a Rubik’s cube of possible situations. If you have a room full of people, no two people will have the same combination at the same time.”

The program starts with selecting a patient and reviewing the electronic health record before meeting the patient. Students can select items in the room with their eyes. The program then prompts them to answer a question about the selected item.

“You can find things that are not exactly right and a potential safety threat,” Dr. Kerner said. “Some of them are outright. A name bracelet could be the incorrect
Northwell Health has bolstered security for staff members, patients, visitors and vendors by arming select security officers at several hospital campuses. The health system has launched the program at North Shore University Hospital (NSUH), Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center, Cohen Children’s Medical Center, and Southside and South Oaks hospitals. Plainview, Syosset and Huntington hospitals will be live by late autumn.

Only current and former law enforcement officers who work for Northwell and have a New York State license to carry a firearm are eligible receive the 9 millimeter handguns, which include tamper-proof holsters. Each armed security officer undergoes a rigorous internal review.

“Highly trained law enforcement veterans already work at Northwell facilities, so arming them is a logical and prudent action given the current climate,” said Scott Strauss, assistant vice president of corporate security at Northwell. He added that the additional layer of security helps deter workplace violence and ensure a safe experience for patients, staff members and others in health system hospitals.

Further measures include bullet-resistant vests issued to all Northwell security officers plus turnstile barriers at NSUH, Huntington Hospital and LIJ Forest Hills. Visitor check-in stations are already in place at several facilities.

The security boosts come in response to growing, nationwide incidents of mass shootings, plus employee input requesting greater protection against workforce violence. The health system has conducted active shooter drills at all of its hospitals and numerous outpatient facilities.
Reimagining ‘hospital food’

New cooking techniques and fresh ingredients advance toward restaurant-quality dishes that patients can enjoy.

By Chris Gasiewski

The concept of “food as medicine” is widely accepted for good reason: A nutritious diet has enormous benefits for well-being. That’s why Northwell Health has envisioned a new standard for the hospital food it serves.

The health system has developed several initiatives to improve its food and nutrition offerings — the centerpiece being the December 2017 recruitment of Bruno Tison, vice president and corporate chef at Northwell. He joined the health system after decades in the hotel and restaurant industry, and is the first and only Michelin Star chef hired by a U.S. healthcare organization.

Mr. Tison’s three-year plan to provide restaurant-quality food at all Northwell hospitals is already underway. “It’s going to be a slow process,” he said. “You have to change the culture.”

He and his team have recruited talented chefs, trained staff and standardized menus. Mr. Tison said about 80 percent of the health system has transitioned to buying fresh food, and he recently signed on with three artisanal bakeries to offer fresh bread at all Northwell hospitals.

“Food can heal people. We are working to get fresh chicken, fresh burger and fresh coffee,” he said. “We removed the deep fryer from the kitchen. The chefs can only buy fresh fish. Salmon has to be organic. We’ve got a lot of things in place.”

Northwell has also eliminated sugary drinks, candy and ice cream at its facilities.

New viewpoints to change hospital food

There’s one thing Mr. Tison doesn’t mind burning: shoe leather. Since food hasn’t historically been top priority at hospitals, he hit the road to change some minds.

For two months, he visited all Northwell hospitals to evaluate kitchens, meet with staff, build relationships and demonstrate fresh-food cooking techniques. He also established a monthly Chef’s Council. The initiatives have improved morale and expedited culture change, he said.

Recruiting talent is also a priority. The nationwide chef shortage in the restaurant and food industry is an opportunity to promote health care as a viable career option, Mr. Tison said. He’s already working with the Culinary Institute of America to provide externships at Northwell facilities and potential full-time positions upon graduation.

“We are changing the way people are thinking about food in the health care field,” Mr. Tison said, adding that Northwell chefs are already showing a lot of improvement.

Data influences just about every professional discipline, including food service and delivery. Each week, Mr. Tison monitors patient experience scores in system-wide scorecards on the Employee Intranet. The data allow him to drill down to food service at each hospital, on each floor and in each unit. He has already seen progress.

The dashboards are “better than Press Ganey,” Mr. Tison said. “I check them regularly and then check with the chefs to see what they are buying. Are they buying canned beans and frozen vegetables? You can look at food scores in every area of your hospital — different wings or floors. Sometimes you can see big differences.”

Whether you’re in a restaurant or a hospital, service is critical to your experience. “In the restaurant industry we say, ‘Great food will not necessarily create a great restaurant.’ You cannot have a great restaurant without great service,” he said. “If we want to be different than any other health system, the person delivering the food needs to give special attention and have a personal touch.”

The health system is piloting in-room dining (room service) for 230 beds at North Shore University Hospital, with the goal to offer it for all 820 beds by January 1. Mr. Tison is reworking menu and kitchen designs, and plans new uniforms and new china. Nutrition profiles will continue to improve by switching to unsalted butter and offering healthier deserts and never-fried French fries.

“It’s very rewarding to see the improvements that are just starting,” he said.
Women with postpartum depression (PPD) may be able to find relief with a new medication called brexanolone injection. The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research participated in a multisite clinical trial to study the potential treatment. Kristina Deligiannidis, MD, a researcher at the Feinstein Institute, recently published the results in The Lancet.

PPD symptoms include not only depression, but also anxiety, poor concentration and sleep, isolation, difficulty with newborn bonding, guilt and even thoughts of suicide. The disorder is common, touching as many as 20 percent of new mothers globally, with moderate to severe symptoms striking between 40 and 80 percent of those women. Furthermore, babies whose mothers have PPD bear effects in their own temperament and cognitive and social development.

Dr. Deligiannidis recognized the need for specialized treatment of the disorder. She serves as director of women’s behavioral health at Zucker Hillside Hospital in addition to her role at the Feinstein Institute.

Dr. Deligiannidis said it can take weeks for women to feel better with the current treatment, traditional antidepressants — and the relief is often inadequate. But trial participants experienced a more rapid reduction in depression symptoms from the brexanolone injection, which may prove to be the first treatment tailored for PPD.

The injections’ fine points

A randomized, double-blinded group of 209 women with moderate or severe PPD received a 60-hour infusion of either brexanolone injection (formerly SAGE-547 injection) or a placebo. One hundred and two women received a brexanolone injection and the other 107 got a placebo. All of them received evaluations throughout the infusion, after it stopped and then periodically for up to 30 days.

Participants exhibited the first statistically significant reduction in severity of depression as soon as 24 hours after their brexanolone injection. At the end of the 60-hour infusion, patients who received the brexanolone injection decreased their depression severity score by an average of 17.0 points versus 12.8 for women in the placebo group. Those who received brexanolone maintained the reduction of symptoms throughout the last study visit.

“The findings of our new analysis are promising,” Dr. Deligiannidis said. “We hope our work will lead to a new treatment option for moderate to severe PPD.”

Sage Therapeutics sponsored the research and has applied for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of brexanolone injection.
‘Playback’ your doctor’s visit

Playback Health helps make the most of your doctor appointments.

Your doctor shares a lot of information and direction during an appointment or hospital stay, and sometimes it’s hard to absorb it all. Playback Health can help patients and family members retain information from their consultation long after they’ve gone home.

A secure, cloud-based platform, Playback provides mobile and desktop access to “notes” from a doctor’s consult or hospital stay in the form of video, image, text and audio.

Patient satisfaction and outcomes improve with patient-engagement solutions such as Playback Health, and the technologies have become investment priorities for providers, payers and health care IT companies. In fact, Northwell Health recently invested $500,000 to become a strategic partner with the Mount Kisco, NY-based startup — part of $1.25 million in funding Playback has received.

David Langer, MD, chair of neurosurgery at Lenox Hill Hospital, championed the Playback partnership. He is overseeing the Department of Neurosurgery’s reengineering of the technology for use in other clinical areas at the Manhattan hospital and across the health system later this year.

On the vanguard at Lenox Hill

Patients have benefited from Lenox Hill’s Department of Neurosurgery video technology since 2013. Patient satisfaction scores significantly increased and overall hospital ratings were higher with the use of screen-capture video technology during office visits and for discharges, according to a 2017 retrospective study conducted over three years.

Playback Health’s newly redesigned, enhanced mobile technology is expected to build upon those results, making the most of physician-patient communication.

“Playback Health has value in further enhancing the patient experience and reducing hospital readmissions by using technology that is proactive, interactive, personalized and, most importantly, outcome driven,” said Richard Mulry, senior vice president of operations at Northwell Ventures. The health system plans to sell the technology to other health systems in 2019.

Better physician-patient communication and higher patient satisfaction scores can reduce the likelihood of hospital readmission by 39 percent. — BMJ Quality & Safety, 2017
Novel treatment may prevent blood clots in the acutely ill

Helping patients who are at the greatest risk.

A novel treatment may prevent clots from forming in acutely ill people after they are discharged from the hospital, according to research conducted by Alex Spyropoulos, MD, director of anticoagulation services at Lenox Hill Hospital and professor at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research.

Venous thrombosis, commonly called a blood clot, can form after surgery, cancer, immobilization or long-term hospitalization. Acutely ill people are at greatest risk during hospitalization and up to three months after discharge.

Dr. Spyropoulos’ double-blind, randomized clinical trial showed that anticoagulants such as Xarelto could help prevent venous thrombosis after the hospitalization. The New England Journal of Medicine published the findings which demonstrated reduced instances of nonfatal blood clots and pulmonary embolism by more than half for acutely ill patients.

He examined whether the medication rivaroxaban would help prevent symptomatic venous thrombosis and blood clot-related mortality after acutely ill patients were discharged from a hospital. The clinical trial involved 6,007 participants who received rivaroxaban and another 6,012 who got placebo during hospitalization and for 45 days after discharge.

The results were statistically significant: only 0.18 percent in the rivaroxaban group suffered from nonfatal venous thromboembolism versus 0.42 percent of patients in the placebo group.

“Maimonides continues to be a critical component of Northwell’s expansion strategy in Brooklyn,” said Mark Solazzo, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Northwell. “This extension will enable us to make continued progress in strengthening our relationship.”

Maimonides partnership extended

Northwell Health and Maimonides Medical Center recently extended their strategic partnership by two years.

Northwell and Maimonides will continue the phased partnership approach as they deepen their relationship over the extension period. Both institutions will expand their current range of initiatives, with physicians from both organizations collaborating and sharing best practices across multiple specialty areas. Maimonides and Northwell will each continue to maintain their independence and separate governance structures.

“The investments have helped position Maimonides for continued success and strengthened its ability to provide tertiary services for Brooklyn residents. In addition, Northwell has provided Maimonides with access to the health system’s extensive shared services infrastructure and expertise, and has helped Maimonides continue to achieve operating efficiencies.”

Northwell and Maimonides will continue the phased partnership approach as they deepen their relationship over the extension period. Both institutions will expand their current range of initiatives, with physicians from both organizations collaborating and sharing best practices across multiple specialty areas. Maimonides and Northwell will each continue to maintain their independence and separate governance structures.

“We were able to reduce instances of nonfatal blood clots and pulmonary embolism by more than half, which shows that the use of direct oral anticoagulants such as Xarelto after the hospitalization of medically ill patients could help prevent clots from forming,” said Dr. Spyropoulos.

More than eight million U.S. patients and another 12 million in the European Union fall in the “acutely ill” category, so the discovery could prevent tens of thousands of venous thrombosis events each year.

See the study at bit.ly/nejm-vt
Telehealth may combat Type 2 diabetes in Hispanic adults

$3 million grant supports study for an underserved community.

By Heather Ball Mayer

Hispanic community members with Type 2 diabetes will soon test how digital tools may give them broader access to care. A $3 million grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is supporting a new study of home telehealth to combat this devastating disease.

“A diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes can mean a major lifestyle change, with regular blood testing, changes in diet and exercise and even insulin shots,” said Renée Pekmezaris, PhD, recipient of the PCORI grant. Dr. Pekmezaris is Northwell Health’s vice president of community health and health services research and associate professor of the Center for Health Innovations and Outcomes Research at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research.

There’s a dire need for the study. Thirty-three percent of all U.S. Hispanics develop Type 2 diabetes. Mortality rates are 50 to 100 percent higher for this community than for non-Hispanic whites.

Language barriers and cultural differences can make managing the disease overwhelming, Dr. Pekmezaris said.

A multifaceted research approach

Previous studies have shown positive results with telemedicine tools in managing Type 2 diabetes programs, but there isn’t a current program tailored for the Hispanic community. Dr. Pekmezaris and her team are working to change that.

First, they are learning more about the unique needs of Hispanic adults with Type 2 diabetes by conferring with the Diabetes Community Advisory Board, which comprises patients, caregivers and clinicians from multiple disciplines.

Phase two of the study will be a clinical trial. Clinicians and patients will “meet” regularly via video conference. Patients can share health data and symptoms from home using a mobile device, and clinicians can adjust treatment plans as needed.

The trial will determine whether health outcomes improve with telehealth compared standard outpatient care. Dr. Pekmezaris is confident that the telehealth program will offer Hispanic patients the support they need to make living with Type 2 diabetes less challenging.

“By offering regular check-ins from a medical professional and identifying early warning signs of larger medical issues before the patient becomes sick, we hope to improve quality as well as length of life,” she said.
Recovering from a cardiac crisis is easier to understand and manage with help from the new Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at the South Site of Staten Island University Hospital (SIUH). The program assists people with a history of bypass surgery, heart attack, heart failure and other cardiovascular diseases.

“After a cardiac event, patients are always instructed to change their lifestyle and get started on an exercise regimen in an enjoyable way,” said Leonard Lefkovic, MD, director of cardiology at SIUH and leader of the program. “This center offers a controlled environment to track vital signs and see what patients are capable of before they set out on their own.”

Partially funded by a $250,000 donation from Staten Island borough president James Oddo, the 36-week course emphasizes cardio exercise with education, smoking cessation, behavioral health support and pulmonary rehab.

“If heart surgery is like engine repair for your car, cardiac rehab is the tune-up before you get back on the road,” said Dr. Lefkovic.

A grateful ‘science guy’

The customer is always right, so it’s meaningful when they write to express appreciation.

Lawrence Matenson, an East Meadow resident, was diagnosed with a rare skull tumor in 2015. He underwent surgery at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and then received proton beam therapy at ProCure in Somerset, NJ.

“I was pleased to hear about Northwell Health’s recent partnership with ProCure, due to my personal experience with them,” Mr. Matenson wrote. “All of my outcomes were extremely positive, especially my course at ProCure.”

A “science guy” who works at Cohen Children’s Medical Center as a pharmacy technician, Mr. Matenson said the experience “most likely saved my life.”
Around the system: Southside Hospital

Expanding cardiac capabilities

Southside Hospital’s new cardiac catheterization and electrophysiology labs give Suffolk County residents more access to complex cardiac care and minimally invasive procedures.

Electrophysiology specialists treat blockages and identify and treat heart rhythm abnormalities with the labs’ new Siemens imaging equipment. The technology reduces radiation exposure by one third while producing images that are significantly clearer than other similar systems, said Puneet Gandotra, MD, vice chair of cardiology at Southside Hospital.

Furthermore, the labs’ operating room-like environment allow for a higher level of care. That lets cardiologists handle more complex cases, according to Donna Moravick, RN, NP, executive director of the hospital.

The new additions give Southside three cardiac catheterization labs and two electrophysiology suites, enhancing a program that has been performing these types of procedures in Bay Shore for more than a decade.

Southside ranks among the top 10 percent nationwide for coronary interventional procedures for 2018, according to Healthgrades. The hospital’s increased capacity is likely to increase that percentage, not to mention reducing the wait times for appointments.

In memoriam

The Northwell Health community lost a great surgeon recently with the passing of L. Michael Graver, MD, chief of adult cardiac surgery at the Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital. Dr. Graver died in early September in a private plane crash. An experienced pilot, Dr. Graver and his wife, Jodi Cohen, were flying their single-engine plane from Republic Airport in Farmingdale to Bedford, MA, when it crashed in a residential area about four miles from the airport. Ms. Cohen also died in the accident. They were traveling to Massachusetts to meet Dr. Graver’s son, Adam Graver, MD, an orthopedic surgeon in Olympia, WA, and a former orthopedic surgery resident at Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center.

Dr. Graver joined the health system in 1985, performing cardiothoracic surgery at LIJ for more than 30 years before moving to the Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital at North Shore University Hospital two years ago. He routinely distinguished himself by delivering some of the best heart surgery outcomes in New York State, according to the state Department of Health.

In addition to his son Adam, Dr. Graver is survived by his daughter-in-law Puneet Bhullar, MD, and his sisters Jane and Nancy. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital through the Northwell Health Foundation.
Targeting sepsis via the vagus nerve

$1.65M grant supports study of the nerve’s role in serious immune response.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) have awarded a $1.65 million, five-year grant to Valentin Pavlov, PhD, a professor at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research.

Dr. Pavlov will examine the vagus nerve’s role in the inflammation and metabolism associated with sepsis. A better understanding of the nervous system’s signaling during sepsis could benefit patient by leading to identification of new therapeutic targets for bioelectronic medicine.

In this new study, Dr. Pavlov will examine how the vagus nerve originating in the brainstem plays a role in regulating immune responses and metabolism during sepsis.

“With this support from the NIH, we aim to better understand the communication between the vagus nerve and the body’s immune and metabolic responses during sepsis,” said Dr. Pavlov. He added that the investigation can help identify new therapeutic targets, leading to new medications or bioelectronic medicine therapies for sepsis and its long-reaching consequences.

Get ready to Outpace the Impossible

What matters most to us is caring for people. We want to better the lives of every person that we touch through innovation that reinvents the highest possible standards of care. It’s our vision to do things differently, see health care differently and see people fully. It’s our unique attitude that makes this moment in Northwell Health’s history possible.

Outpacing the Impossible is our largest comprehensive fundraising campaign to date. It describes everything we are and everything we hope to do. As a nonprofit organization, contributions from the community help to fuel innovation. To reach our fundraising goal of $1 billion by 2022, we rely on the generosity of donors from across the communities we serve. As the campaign continues, you will see exciting news and information launching across our footprint — and we hope that it makes you feel proud.

What’s it all about?

A gift to Outpacing the Impossible allows us to continue our work to make life-changing, life-saving innovations and lead the future of care. We’re asking for support so that we can take on new, difficult challenges and create treatments and therapies with the potential for dramatic and positive impacts on health — not just locally, but globally. That’s What matters most.

How can I help?

Take a moment to think about What matters most to you and then let’s work together to make it possible. Many of you have already been supporting Northwell fundraising events such as the Northwell Health Walk and Casual for Cohen. You can help further by talking to your friends, family and neighbors about the work we already do. You can also fundraise or make your own gift through convenient payroll deduction via myGiving under mySelfService on the Employee Intranet, or contribute myRecognition points to a system-wide initiative or hospital or program of your choosing.

Let’s outpace the impossible together. Visit support.northwell.edu/employeegiving to learn more about how to participate.
The story of Northwell

Colleagues meeting up on the waterfront.

Health system staff members recently enjoyed a day of celebration and camaraderie during the Northwell Health Story of Us event at Jones Beach.

It was a memorable day full of music, wellness activities, healthy snacks and more. One highlight was recognition of the 2018 President’s Awards winners by Michael Dowling, the health system’s president and CEO. Honorees were:

- **Exceptional Patient/Customer Experience**: Urszula Monaco, lobby service representative for radiology at the Center for Advanced Medicine
- **Leader of the Year**: Melonie Pernice, director of radiology at Plainview and Syosset Hospitals
- **Physician of the Year**: Tarek Zetoune, MD, Hospice Care Network
- **Nurse of the Year**: Vivian Buccino, RN, charge nurse at South Oaks Hospital
- **Teamwork**: Staten Island University Hospital’s Project Search

Another high point of the day was when Mr. Dowling also withdrew the winning tickets for three teams in the Walk to Dublin step challenge. Receiving trips to Dublin, Ireland, were the 10-member teams of FS Happy Feet (Corporate Facilities Services), Stern Hooligans (Stern Rehabilitation) and Southside Minions (Southside Hospital).

See the President’s Award winners in-depth at [bit.ly/pres-awards18](bit.ly/pres-awards18).


White coats for NP students

Fifty-one advanced-practice nursing students at the Hofstra Northwell School of Graduate Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies recently received their white coats. A special ceremony marked the completion of their first year of graduate study. The students transitioned to clinical study at Northwell facilities this fall. “The white coat marks the students’ transition from learning in the classroom to training in actual healthcare settings as they begin their professional journeys,” said Dean Kathleen Gallo, RN, PhD. “NPs make a commitment every day to provide empathetic, patient-centered care.”
In early August, Kylie Rose Capra helped her family surpass a milestone. Elizabeth and Robert Capra III’s newborn daughter became the family’s fourth generation to be come into the world at Huntington Hospital.

It began with the 1921 births of Jean Mortensen and Robert Capra. Later, a Mortensen girl and a Capra boy joined their clans when they were delivered at Huntington Hospital.

Ms. Capra, born at Huntington in 1982, describes herself as sentimental. She entered the care of Mitchell Kramer, MD, the hospital’s chair of obstetrics and gynecology, specifically to deliver Kylie at Huntington. “It’s so special to have a nurse who went to high school with you to help with your delivery and be part of this momentous occasion,” she said.

Dr. Kramer has a 29-year history with Huntington Hospital. “It has been very special to care for multiple members of a family — and especially to be part of a legacy such as the Capras,” he said.

Gerard Brogan Jr., MD, has been appointed Northwell Health’s senior vice president and chief revenue officer. Dr. Brogan has been with the health system for more than 20 years, most recently as executive director at Huntington Hospital. In this new position, he oversees inpatient and outpatient revenue cycle management, the reporting and coding of illnesses and mortality risks, and patient access capabilities. He reports to Rich Miller, executive vice president and chief business strategy officer.

Taking over for Dr. Brogan at Huntington is Nick Fitterman, MD, who previously served as Northwell’s vice chair of medicine. Dr. Fitterman joined Huntington in 1992 and has held several leadership roles there, including chief of staff and medical director of hospitalist services. His achievements include election as governor of the American College of Physicians’ Long Island Region and being awarded a mastership in the college. A fellow of the Society of Hospitalist Medicine, Dr. Fitterman has served on panels for the American Board of Internal Medicine, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the National Quality Forum.
Banking on sweet new digs

Peconic Bay Medical Center (PBMC) senior executives are joining staff members from the hospital’s Foundation, finance, billing, human resources operations and home health services at new headquarters in downtown Riverhead. Named to honor a longtime PBMC supporter, the recently-opened Robert Entenmann Campus boasts 40,000 square feet of office space. It is located at 4 West Second Street in the former Suffolk County National Bank building.

Mr. Entenmann’s children, Jackie and Robert, have honored their father’s legacy by supporting the revamp of the facility that bears his name. Through the Robert Entenmann Advisory Committee to the New York Community Trust, they donated $5 million to PBMC’s New Era Campaign.

“Robert Entenmann was not just a community benefactor, he was a community visionary,” said Andrew Mitchell, PBMC president and CEO. “All of us here on the East End are fortunate to have had him as a neighbor, a friend and a leader of our community. It will warm my heart to see his name every morning when I come to work. It will remind all who come to work here of the legacy we want to live up to.”

Brain Aneurysm Walk

Several hundred attendees recently enjoyed “getting their steps” in the sea air during the 10th annual Brain Aneurysm Awareness Walk at Jones Beach. The event raised more than $90,000 to help fund research at the Northwell Health Brain Aneurysm Center at North Shore University Hospital and the Brain Aneurysm Foundation.

“This was a very special year for us, celebrating the walk’s 10th anniversary,” said David Chalif, MD, director of Brain Aneurysm Center. The event not only funds research, but also increases awareness about the warning signs of a brain aneurysm: severe headache, nausea, blurred or double vision, stiff neck or neck pain, pain above or behind the eye and loss of sensation. The event has raised more than $700,000 since its inception.
Around the System:
LIJ Forest Hills, North Shore University Hospital

Dragon boat races promote friendly competition

Flash-flood warnings, torrential rain and thunder didn’t deter a dozen Long Island Jewish Forest Hills and North Shore University Hospital (NSUH) employees from competing in the 28th Annual Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in August. Amid lion dancers, music, martial arts demonstrations and food vendors at Flushing Meadows Corona Park, the group contended with five other squads in a 250-meter race.

“LIJ Forest Hills wants to be part of this community,” said Orlando Santandreu, MD. “Events like this are a good way to mingle with people, have fun and share cultures.” His teammates included Jerold Scherer, Bridgette Payne, PA, Jee Shim, MD, Nadine Simmons, Diana Yacoub, Kervin Morgan, Anita Rice, Teri Manno, and Michael Santandreu, MD, plus Louis Romo and Yasmine Jaber from PurpleSun.

Around the System: Syosset

Furry face of friendship

Gracie, a mellow mixed breed, is “a sign of comfort and normalcy of everyday life,” said Beth Steinberg, a Northwell Health pet therapy volunteer and the dog’s guardian. Ms. Steinberg adopted the dachshund-shih tzu-spaniel mix four years ago and Gracie began making rounds with her at Syosset last year. “When Gracie walks in, she’s very comforting to patients and visitors,” Ms. Steinberg said. “A lot of people will say, ‘You made my day,’ because they’re feeling nervous or afraid, and Gracie helps calm them.”
Rothman surgeons join orthopedic leadership

Combining strengths to create a premium destination for orthopedic services.

By Terry Lynam

Six surgeons from the Rothman Orthopaedic Institute have been appointed to clinical leadership positions at Phelps and Lenox Hill hospitals. This development advances the strategic affiliation between Northwell Health and the Philadelphia-based practice signed in 2017.

The five specialists who now lead Phelps’ orthopedic services are based at Rothman’s new Tarrytown office: Justin Tsai, MD, chief of foot and ankle surgery; Dan Seigerman, MD, chief of hand surgery; Joseph Lee, MD, chief of spine surgery; Brandon Erickson, MD, chief of shoulder/elbow surgery; and Meghan Bishop, MD, chief of sports medicine. The new 658 White Plains Road office is the prestigious orthopedic group’s first New York practice.

Anthony Romeo, MD, chief of orthopedics at Rothman Orthopedic Institute – New York, who is overseeing Rothman’s New York expansion, also serves as chief of shoulder and elbow surgery at Lenox Hill. Rothman just opened an office at 176 Third Avenue in Manhattan; another midtown location will open in the spring.

Rothman surgeons and Northwell physicians will continue developing the health system’s orthopedic services network throughout the region.

“This partnership with a nationally recognized orthopedic group like the Rothman Institute, combined with the expertise of the physicians of Northwell Health's Orthopedic Institute, positions the health system as New York’s premium destination for orthopedic services,” said Nicholas Sgaglione, MD, Northwell’s senior vice president, executive director and chair of orthopedics.

“Our clinical integration is key,” Dr. Romeo said. “By establishing leadership positions, our surgeons can define the protocols, personnel, and pre- and post-op care our patients require. This is just the beginning, but we are confident that once we establish our processes we can provide the best orthopedic care in the region.”

Internationally known for innovative treatment methods, research, education and technology, the Rothman Orthopedic Institute is one of the world’s highest-volume orthopedic surgery groups. Its 30-plus locations throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York perform approximately 13,000 hip and knee replacements, more than 3,000 spine procedures and 10,000-plus surgeries as part of its sports medicine practice. Rothman team physicians serve the Philadelphia Eagles, Phillies, Flyers and 76ers, plus NCAA basketball champions Villanova University and St. Joseph’s University.
Inspiring organ donation

Nationwide recognition for Northwell hospitals.

Northwell Health’s promotion of organ and tissue donation has resulted in several hospitals receiving honors from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration and LiveOnNY.

The HHS Division of Transplantation awarded Platinum recognition to North Shore University Hospital (NSUH), Huntington Hospital, Northern Westchester Hospital, Phelps Hospital and the Staten Island University Hospital (SIUH) north campus for successful participation in the Hospital Organ Donation Campaign, which helped increase enrollment in New York State’s registry for organ, eye and tissue donors. Cohen Children’s Medical Center and LIJ Medical Center, LIJ Forest Hills, Southside Hospital and the south campus of SIUH received Gold honors.

Furthermore, LiveOnNY recognized NSUH for its significant impact on organ donation in 2017: 28 individuals receive new organs from nine families who chose to participate in organ donation at the time their loved one died at the hospital, and 14 tissue donors healed hundreds of recipients. As part of the Sandra Atlas Bass Heart Hospital at NSUH’s elevation to a heart transplant center, Northwell launched a campaign focusing on organ donor registration to help patients living with heart, liver and kidney disease.

Nationwide, 114,000 people await transplant, according to OrganDonor.gov. About 10 percent of that list comprises New Yorkers — many falling within Northwell’s service area.

Learn about signing up for organ and tissue donation at bit.ly/organ-tissue.

Around the system: Lenox Hill Hospital

The curious case of the collapsing lungs

Zara Altbach is glad that her ordeal has been “ancient” history for a year. The mother of twin daughters experienced pneumothorax three times. Commonly called collapsed lung, the condition occurs when air escapes from the lung and then fills the space outside of the organ, between the lung and chest wall. This air buildup puts pressure on the lung, so the organ cannot expand normally. Ms. Altbach’s pneumothorax episodes caused a tiny rupture in her lung.

Multiple episodes and surgeries puzzled her and her clinicians. Byron Patten, MD, a thoracic surgeon at Lenox Hill, treated Ms. Altbach and was looking for answers. He conferred with Tamer Seckin, MD, the hospital’s endometriosis expert, and determined that it was best to remove Ms. Altbach’s uterus to eliminate associated health threats.

It may be unusual to associate endometriosis with pneumothorax, but she has been free of episodes since undergoing surgery with Dr. Seckin.

“I can now start to pick my kids up again,” Ms. Altbach said. “I can be present, be a wife, be a human being and not just be broken — I was broken.” Now she’s whole, for a whole year and counting.
Northwell’s not ‘FINished’

Helping amputees resume active lives.

Northwell Health has launched a new study to produce and commercialize the The Fin, the prosthetic swim leg that lets amputee swimmers navigate from land to the water and back without having to switch prosthetics.

“We made something that didn’t exist yet and solved a specific problem,” said Northwell Health researcher Todd Goldstein, PhD, who designed and developed the new amphibious prosthetic. “My hope is that this device creates unforeseen opportunities for amputees everywhere.”

Dr. Goldstein’s team collaborated with Eschen Prosthetic and Orthotic Laboratories, in Hicksville, to design and print the original Fin, and Northwell Ventures supported its development.

The new research will aid in a future application to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, with the goal of collaborating with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to make the prosthetic more widely available.

“We hope to develop other customized solutions that will enable approximately 1.9 million Americans who have lost a limb to resume active lifestyles,” said Thomas Thornton, senior vice president of Northwell Ventures.

Pediatric Cancer Survivors Day 2018

Hundreds of young people who beat cancer and their families took center stage recently at the Sixth Annual Les Nelkin Pediatric Cancer Survivors’ Day at Jones Beach. Ambassadors of Survivors Facing Forward Program at Cohen Children’s Medical Center epitomized hope for the future. “Today is the reason why all of us who work in health care come to work each and every single day,” said Charlie Schlein, MD, Northwell’s chair of pediatrics and executive director of Cohen Children’s. The pediatric hospital treats more than 200 new cases of childhood cancer each year.
Hockey marathon generates smiles, donations

By Jason Molinet

For a dizzying 24 hours, Adam Graves came out of retirement and skated once more – for Northwell Health.

There was no Stanley Cup to hoist this time, but the mission was just as compelling. Mr. Graves, a New York Rangers legend and 16-year National Hockey League (NHL) veteran, suited up with a group of Northwell employees to take on rivals and raise money.

There was elation – followed very closely by exhaustion – after the final shot skidded down the ice. After a full day and night of nonstop hockey, the fifth annual marathon charity event known as 24 Hours of Hockey was history.

And it proved to be historic.

Nine teams made up of weekend warriors and a few former NHL stars – like Mr. Graves, and his teammate on the Rangers’ 1994 Stanley Cup championship team, Stefan Matteau (who also skated with Northwell), Brian Mullen, Benoit Hogue and Arron Asham – combined to skate in 24 games over as many hours, including a contingent that represented Northwell Health. All told, 24 Hours of Hockey raised more than $850K for several nonprofits.

“Everyone had a blast. The fact that pros were playing with us – our players were over the moon about it,” said Peter Lantry, a senior infrastructure project manager at Northwell Health who served as the team’s coach.

Michael Dowling, the health system’s president and CEO, cheered on Team Northwell in its opening-, second- and closing-round games at the Dix Hills Ice Rink. The health system also donated $50,000 and served as a sponsor.

Funds raised supported six organizations, including Smilezone Foundation. Northwell is collaborating with Smilezone to support the transformation of the pediatric Emergency Department at the Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, a clinical affiliate of Northwell’s.

This marked Northwell’s first time in the tournament. But given everyone’s enthusiasm, Mr. Dowling included, there’s every reason to expect that Northwell will be back – possibly with a second team next year. Mr. Dowling watched from the team bench and gave the group a pep talk in the locker room afterward.

“We had 19 individuals in the beginning,” said Mr. Lantry, who noted that the players never skated together before the marathon day. “By the end we had a team. We just can’t wait to do this again.”
Outpatient footprint grows in Manhattan and beyond

New construction on a block-long parcel on Third Avenue in Manhattan between East 76th and 77th Streets will provide space for a new Northwell Health outpatient care center, ambulatory surgery center, cancer center and medical offices.

University Financing Foundation purchased the property this summer and will collaborate with the health system to raze and develop the site, which was formerly owned by University Financing’s parent company, Mautner-Glick Corp.

“We are deeply invested in the Upper East Side and look forward to the potential to provide additional services in the neighborhood and surrounding communities,” said Michael Dowling, Northwell’s president and CEO.

Former residents relocated to other Mautner-Glick Corp.-managed properties or moved as their leases expired. Housing Works and McCabe’s Wines & Spirits, former retail tenants, have already reopened in the neighborhood.

More major expansion plans for Lenox Hill are scheduled to be announced in November.

Multispecialty Greenwich Village practice

When St. Vincent’s Hospital closed in 2010, Northwell Health soon promised to fill the West Village’s health care void. The latest example is Northwell Health Physician Partners at Greenwich Village, a two-story, 15,000-square-foot, multispecialty practice located on the grounds of the former St. Vincent’s at 7 Seventh Avenue.

This is Northwell’s first primary multispecialty center in Manhattan and 78th outpatient practice overall in the borough staffed by Northwell Health Physician Partners. Located within the Greenwich Lane Townhouses, the new facility features 28 exam rooms, a noninvasive cardiology testing suite, chest radiography, audiology testing and a pulmonary function laboratory. Available services include adult cardiology, rheumatology, pulmonology, gastroenterology, otolaryngology, general surgery, and pediatric neurology, allergy and cardiology. Future plans include surgical consultative services of thoracic, bariatric, vascular, colorectal, plastic, urologic and general surgery.

Kid-friendly urgent care centers

Extending a rapidly growing network, Cohen Children’s Medical Center and Northwell Health-GoHealth Urgent Care are now offering pediatric care at two new locations — Five Towns and East Northport. The pediatric-only facilities offer a child-friendly atmosphere that includes large, engaging exam rooms that can accommodate strollers and siblings; child-sized rest rooms; germ-free entertainment tablets; and comforting colors and accents proven to help reduce anxiety in children.

Both pediatric urgent care locations are open seven days a week from 10am to 10pm and are staffed by board certified pediatricians. Furthermore, the centers’ integrated electronic health records ensure uninterrupted and informed care within Northwell Health and Cohen Children’s.
Surpassing quality milestones

Northwell Health has further cemented its status as a standard-bearer for improving access to care and boosting patient safety by winning two prestigious awards this summer.

Northwell’s Chief Quality Officer Mark Jarrett, MD, accepted the American Hospital Association Quest for Quality Prize at the association’s 2018 Leadership Summit in San Diego.

Northwell received the Quest for Quality Prize for its exemplary achievements in improving and preserving access to care, addressing the social determinants of health and encouraging innovation, and commitment to value, partnership, well-being and coordination.

The health system works with communities to address social determinants of health. Free clinics, veterans’ and behavioral health services, and preventative health education allow the health system to reduce disparities and cost while increasing access.

Northwell is the first health system honored with the Quest for Quality Prize, which the AHA began awarding to hospitals in 2002 and expanded to include health systems this year. See more at bit.ly/quality2018.

In addition, the health system received the 2018 Pinnacle Award for Quality and Patient Safety from the Healthcare Association of New York State. The association recognized Northwell’s Path of Least Resistance Program for reducing unnecessary antibiotic use to address serious infections associated with resistant organisms and the aggressive pathogen called Clostridium difficile (C. diff).

Between 2016 and 2017, Northwell reduced the total number of days that patients were on antibiotics by 9,318. Antibiotic days for five targeted high-use, high-cost antibiotics decreased by 19,231. Also, the C. diff standardized infection ratio, which tracks health care-acquired infections, went down 18.52 percent across nine acute-care facilities and Cohen Children’s Medical Center.