

# Advancing Medicine. *Touching Lives.*

For friends and supporters of Rhode Island Hospital  
Spring 2014



## From Medicine Bottles to Bottles of Hope:

Compassionate Care at the  
Comprehensive Cancer Center

*Full story on page 3*



Rhode Island Hospital  
*A Lifespan Partner*

# A Message from the President



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Babineau, MD." The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Timothy J. Babineau, MD**  
President, Rhode Island Hospital  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Lifespan

*Hope* is not a scientific term taught in a medical school classroom. But hope, the feeling that things will turn out for the best, is as important to a physician or nurse caring for a patient as any surgical technique or prescribed medication. And giving hope to our patients and their families—hope for a more comfortable present or a healthier future—has been central to the mission of Rhode Island Hospital for more than 150 years.

The cover of this issue of *Advancing Medicine. Touching Lives.* shows an example of tiny symbols of hope—empty medicine bottles transformed by our patients into works of art—that have great power to lift a patient's spirits when he or she is facing the immense challenges of cancer or other serious conditions.

On behalf of all the staff at Rhode Island Hospital, thank you for helping us make the days brighter for thousands of families from across southeastern New England through the goodness of your philanthropy.

## DR. LATHA SIVAPRASAD APPOINTED SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Rhode Island Hospital welcomes Latha Sivaprasad, MD, FHM, FACP, as senior vice president, medical affairs, and chief medical officer of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Hospital. An award-winning physician executive with more than 10 years of experience in large hospital settings, Dr. Sivaprasad came to Rhode Island Hospital in September 2013 from Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, where she served as associate chief medical officer and chief patient experience officer.

*"It is my honor to serve you as the chief medical officer of Rhode Island Hospital. The oversight of quality, safety, ambulatory care, graduate medical education and credentialing combines all of the elements of daily work that are critically important to me,"* says Dr. Sivaprasad. *"This includes developing others, maximizing talent, innovating programs to help position us for the future, and most importantly, continuously improving upon a delivery system that ensures safer care and exceeds the expectations of the community."*





Carol Massey, Bob Massey and Robin Turnbull, RN, nurse navigator

## Comprehensive Cancer Care *from Diagnosis through Recovery*

A diagnosis, or even the suspicion of cancer, can overwhelm the patient and family alike. At the Comprehensive Cancer Center, we understand this. And you are not alone.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center brings together world-renowned physicians and a team of specialists from Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital, forming a multidisciplinary team whose level of knowledge and experience is unparalleled in Rhode Island. We provide the highest quality care in a warm and comforting setting, close to home. Our team of physicians includes surgical oncologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, hematologists and pathologists. Our support staff of physical therapists, radiologists, nurses, clinical social workers, patient advocates, pharmacists and nutritionists is here to assist patients every step of the way,

from screenings and diagnosis to treatment and follow-up care. This compassionate and expert care has earned many accolades from our patients and beyond. The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Rhode Island Hospital and The Leonard and Adele R. Decof Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at The Miriam Hospital each earned the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons in 2011.

While any diagnosis of cancer can lead to an intensive treatment plan, head and neck cancers typically bring a unique set of complications and challenges. This category of cancer includes any cancer that occurs in the head or neck region including in the nasal cavity, sinuses, lips, mouth, salivary glands, throat or voice box. All of our patients have an entire team dedicated to looking out for them as individuals, not just to treating their cancer—which is illustrated by Bob and Carol Massey's story on page 4.



Bob Massey and his care team



## Meet the Masseys

It all started with what felt like a canker sore. At least that's what Bob Massey thought was causing the pain on his tongue in November 2012. But when he went to the dentist, nothing was visible. A short time later, a sharp pain from his ear to his tongue sent him to an ENT who did a biopsy and referred him to Dr. Ariel Birnbaum at the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Rhode Island Hospital. A PET scan revealed the shocking diagnosis: Bob had stage 4 squamous cell carcinoma.

*"When I got the diagnosis, I stepped back a few feet, collected my thoughts and said to myself, 'It is what it is; let's fix it,'"* Bob recalls. Bob and his wife of 43 years, Carol, began to learn about what was to come—the intensive treatment and possible side effects, including difficulty in swallowing and the possibility he'd need a feeding tube.

*"It was almost a surreal experience,"* recalls Carol. *"I was very scared. I like to be in control, and obviously I was not in control."*

But the couple would not be facing cancer alone. At their first meeting with Dr. Birnbaum, they met Robin Turnbull, RN, the nurse navigator for patients with head and neck cancer at Rhode Island Hospital's

Comprehensive Cancer Center. Robin became the Masseys' anchor and their direct conduit to all the other members of Bob's multidisciplinary care team.

*"Treating for a head or neck cancer is extremely intense."*

**"Treating for a head or neck cancer is extremely intense. The radiation and chemotherapy just wipe you out completely."**

— Robin Turnbull, RN, nurse navigator

*The radiation and chemotherapy just wipe you out completely,"* Robin says. *"It's debilitating and affects everything...simple things like eating and drinking can become extremely painful."*



*“Throughout it all, Dr. Birnbaum and Robin and everyone else on the team were always there for us. The more we got to know them, the more they felt like family,” says Carol. “The day that Bob had his feeding tube put in, Robin came and sat with me the whole time in the waiting room. She held my hand and just chatted to help distract me. She was always positive and upbeat. I can’t say enough about Robin and the other oncology nurses.”*

Bob started intensive treatment immediately—radiation treatments five days a week for eight weeks, coupled with weekly chemo treatments in a two-pronged assault on the aggressive cancer.

“Radiation was the worst for me,” Bob says. “But Robin was unbelievable. If we had any problems, she walked us through it, made the necessary calls. She set me up with speech therapy. She helped with arranging my feeding tube procedure. Whatever was needed, we had our ‘go-to’ person and Robin

*helped to make a very hard time for us much easier.”*

Today, Bob is in remission. “I’m still in the healing process. I lost my taste buds, but they’re coming back.”

Carol adds, “This has been a life-changing experience for us. We’ve found that once cancer becomes part of your life, it

*truly becomes one day at a time. Everybody at the cancer center understood each triumph—celebrating good test results or just making it through a treatment. We are so blessed to have had good results and so thankful the Comprehensive Cancer Center was there to support us.*

*“This experience is still the first thing I think about in the morning, and the last thing at night, but I try very hard to put it in its proper place so that it doesn’t overwhelm me. Life will bring whatever it brings. We are hopeful that we have a whole lot more time. And we are grateful for wonderful caregivers like Dr. Birnbaum and Robin at Rhode Island Hospital.”*

**“Throughout it all, Dr. Birnbaum and Robin and everyone else on the team were always there for us. The more we got to know them, the more they felt like family.”**

— Carol Massey, wife of patient



**Rhode Island Hospital is a founding partner of Lifespan’s Comprehensive Cancer Center, which gives patients access to oncology services at three area hospitals—Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children’s Hospital, The Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital—and many clinical trials through The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and the National Institutes of Health. Rhode Island Hospital is accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. We have also been designated a Blue Distinction Center for Complex and Rare Cancers by the national Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island.**

# Medicine Bottles Deliver Hope

What started as one cancer patient's art project to repurpose medicine bottles used in chemotherapy, and perhaps distract her from her own treatment, has evolved into a powerful way to bring hope to cancer patients across the country. While undergoing chemotherapy treatment in 1999, Rhode Island artist and cancer survivor Diane Gregoire discovered a way to turn medicine bottles into art by decorating them with colorful polymer clay and filling them with a wish or message of hope. Polymer clay is a colorful and versatile manmade clay that can be sculpted, textured, stamped and combined to produce unique designs in pieces of art.

The clever and captivating bottles took on a life of their own, creating the Bottles of Hope project. Today, Diane conducts weekly workshops in the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Rhode Island Hospital, guiding participants in creating their own Bottles of Hope. Philanthropic contributions make this program possible here in Rhode Island. It has also become a popular program at hospitals and treatment centers nationally. On Tuesday mornings, Diane pushes her cart filled with art supplies and completed creations around the treatment areas, engaging with patients. *"It takes you to a different place and provides wonderful release,"* Diane says.



“They come into a scary situation and the next thing they know, they are playing with clay and laughing. There’s also a lot of talking and people ask questions they might have been afraid to ask otherwise.

They leave feeling more comfortable, and some even fall in love with the art itself.”

—Diane Gregoire

Finished bottles take the form of robots, dinosaurs, even a chimney with a bird’s nest on top. Each patient-artist may keep the newly created artwork or place a message of hope inside and give it away. The recipient will know someone is having good thoughts for their



health and wishes them well. Whether the patient keeps the bottle or gives it away, the medicine bottles have been reborn as small but powerful doses of hope—quite a gift from a little bottle that would be simply tossed if it weren’t for Diane and her vision.

## Team Tarro Offers Hope to Breast Cancer Patients



Team Tarro 2013 before the start of the walk at Slater Park in Pawtucket. Photo by Jonathan Flynn.

In May 2013, Team Tarro, Inc. raised \$25,000 for the Anne C. Pappas Center for Breast Imaging at Rhode Island Hospital through the fifth-annual *Team Tarro Walk Through the Park* at Slater Park in Pawtucket. Team Tarro was founded in 2000 by Mary Tarro, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1994 and passed away in 2009. Since 2008, Team Tarro has

donated \$118,000 to the center, and Dr. Martha Mainiero, the center’s director, has used the contributions to purchase the latest diagnostic equipment, including 3D mammography. In 2009, Team Tarro received Rhode Island Hospital’s President’s Pursuit of Excellence Award. To make a contribution, visit [www.TeamTarro.org](http://www.TeamTarro.org).



**Joseph G. Pannozzo**  
Chief Development Officer

Since joining the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation team in March 2013, I have found myself continually amazed—and also humbled—by the tremendous outpouring of generosity from members of our community to help keep Rhode Island Hospital and its Hasbro Children’s Hospital at the forefront of patient care and academic medicine. Our donors, from corporations to private foundations, grateful families to dedicated individuals, are motivated to give to medical science that inspires their imaginations and the experiences that have touched their lives. *Thank you for sharing so much of yourselves.* I am grateful for this chance to share with you stories of how your philanthropy is saving and transforming lives.

## Changing of the Guard: A Time of Gratitude and Welcome

Since 2010, Mrs. Ellen A. Collis was chair of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees and recently passed the torch of leadership to Roger Begin. Our foundation board members are community leaders who serve as vital advisors to hospital leadership and are also invaluable community advocates whose support of fundraising efforts helps us remain on the cutting edge of medicine, research and education.

### About Ellen A. Collis

Throughout the years, Ellen A. Collis and her husband, Charles, have been generous supporters of Rhode Island Hospital. In 2007, to recognize a significant family gift, the Andrew F. Anderson Emergency Center was named in memory of their son. The following year, Mrs. Collis’s countless contributions to our work were recognized when she was honored with the Edward A. Iannuccilli, MD, Civic Leader of the Year Award.

Mrs. Collis has generously given of her time and energy as a volunteer for more than three decades. Her term as chair was highlighted by leading the foundation board during a time of transition that included merging all of the Lifespan hospital boards into one governing body.

*“As I became involved with Rhode Island Hospital, I realized how complex, yet rewarding, the work of caregiving is. I continue to marvel at the dedication, effort and energy everyone at the hospital gives. They literally go above and beyond the call of duty each day to help others,”* says Mrs. Collis.

*“We are extremely grateful to Ellen Collis for her years of service and for her unwavering dedication to our hospital and the lives we touch every day,”* says Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president, Rhode Island Hospital, and president and chief executive officer, Lifespan.



### About Roger Begin

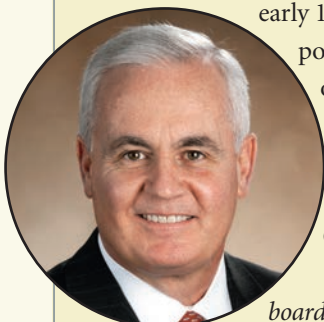
As a lifelong Rhode Islander, Roger Begin has dedicated much of his career to the community, serving as the state’s General Treasurer and Lieutenant Governor in the 1980s and early 1990s before taking executive leadership positions at Fleet Bank, N.A. and Bank of America. Before being named chair, Roger was a member of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees. He is also a member of the Hasbro Children’s Hospital Advisory Council.

*“To become chairman of the foundation board is both an honor and an opportunity,*

*and I’m excited to continue the work of those who have preceded me,”* says Roger, who since 2007 is senior sales director at BNY Mellon Wealth Management.

*“As an ambassador of the hospital, I want to be a voice that helps people better understand Rhode Island Hospital as the state’s premier health care facility and an outstanding academic medical center. It never ceases to amaze me how fortunate we are to have such an incredible institution that all Rhode Islanders should be proud of and preserve for future generations.”*

Dr. Babineau adds, *“Roger’s passion, not only for helping others but also for our hospital’s lifesaving work, is evident in everything he does. We look forward to his leadership in the coming years.”*



# Rhode Island Hospital Receives \$850,000 Grant from The Champlin Foundations



**Rhode Island  
Hospital Foundation**  
*A Lifespan Partner*

## RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Phillips Allura Xper FD20. Image courtesy of Phillips.

The Champlin Foundations have awarded Rhode Island Hospital a grant of \$850,000 to support the purchase of state-of-the-art vascular interventional radiology equipment to be installed in the hospital's Diagnostic Imaging Suite. The new imaging system will increase the hospital's capacity to provide the full spectrum of vascular and interventional imaging applications, including many neuroradiology procedures that are vital to the work of The Norman Prince Neurosciences Institute at Rhode Island Hospital.

*"We are immensely grateful to The Champlin Foundations for their continuing partnership with Rhode Island Hospital in improving the health and well-being of the people of southeastern New England,"* says Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president, Rhode Island Hospital, and president and chief executive officer, Lifespan. *"The new interventional imaging system will increase Rhode Island Hospital's capacity to provide*

*state-of-the-art, timely and effective diagnosis and treatment for those who rely on us for highly specialized procedures."*

Interventional radiology procedures use minimally invasive techniques combined with high-end diagnostic imaging technology to identify and treat a broad range of conditions and disorders including acute stroke, cerebral aneurysms, neurological-related trauma and emergencies, vascular malformations and tumors of the head, brain, neck and spine. Conditions that would have in the past required invasive surgery can now be considered for minimally invasive treatment. As an alternative to invasive surgery, interventional methods can save lives, lower the risk of patient complications, shorten hospital stays and promote faster patient recovery.

**"We are proud of our partnership with Rhode Island Hospital and honored to help provide the clinical staff with advanced imaging technology to diagnose and treat serious illnesses and to save the lives of people from across the state and region."**

— Keith Lang, executive director of The Champlin Foundations



Students in Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital's first neurosurgery residency program review film from a patient's brain scan.

## Neurosurgical Residents Receive International Training Thanks to The Melvyn M. Gelch, M.D. Fund

In Kathmandu, Nepal—some 4,500 feet above sea level—Dr. Jonathan Grossberg entered Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, passing hundreds of people waiting in line for treatment. For the first time, Dr. Grossberg witnessed the challenges, as enormous as the Himalayas in the background, of practicing medicine in Nepal.

Formerly chief resident in neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital and currently a fellow in cerebrovascular surgery and instructor at Emory University Medical School in Atlanta, Dr. Grossberg traveled to Nepal for two weeks in April 2013 to teach and work with members of Tribhuvan's first neurosurgery residency program. This unique experience was made possible by The Melvyn M. Gelch, M.D. Fund for Advanced Training of Neurosurgical Residents at Rhode Island Hospital.

*"This experience was truly the culmination of my residency; it allowed me to use my skills in a very different environment,"* says Dr. Grossberg. *"We helped a lot of people, and I exposed my international colleagues to procedures they had only read about in books. It gave me an incredible appreciation for my training at Brown University and Rhode Island Hospital, as well as the need for neurosurgery across the globe."*

The Melvyn M. Gelch, M.D.

Fund was launched in 2006 by Mrs. Joan Gelch and her children to honor the late Dr. Melvyn Gelch, whose career as a neurosurgeon and associate professor of neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital spanned 37 years. This endowment fund created an annual program that provides neurosurgical residents with intensive international training in neurosurgery.

*"I don't know of any other program in the country that provides this sort of experience,"* says Dr. G. Rees Cosgrove, chief of neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital. *"Dr. Gelch was the heart and soul of neurosurgery in Rhode Island. It's nearly impossible to measure his influence on neurosurgeons who trained here. I can't thank the Gelch family enough for creating a living memory of Dr. Gelch. It's such a blessing for all of us."*

Over the past seven years, our residents have traveled the world—from countries with the most advanced technologies, such as the CyberKnife and Gamma Knife, to those with only the most rudimentary tools for treating neurological illnesses and injuries.

*"One of the most important things to my husband was medical education, where it's so critical to keep up one's skills in a constantly changing field,"* says Joan Gelch. *"Establishing this fund allowed my family and me to memorialize his life by*

*doing something we could all share in. Every year, when we meet the fund recipients, and we see how it has enhanced their professional lives and careers, it gives us a feeling of closeness to husband and father. I know he would be proud of this program."*



The Gelch family

## Jamo Carr Honored with 2013 Edward A. Iannuccilli, MD Civic Leader of the Year Award

**K**nown to family and friends as “Jamo,” James L. Carr, Jr., first became involved with the Hasbro Children’s Hospital Golf Invitational in 1995. He became co-chair with Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr. in 2006 and has helped raise more than \$3.7 million for Hasbro Children’s Hospital’s Child Protection Program. Today, his leadership and generosity continue to improve the lives of the children and families in our care.

*“It’s all about the kids,” Jamo says. “I want Hasbro Children’s Hospital to continue to thrive and be here to ensure a happy, healthy and bright future for all of our children.”*

Recently, Jamo’s exceptional leadership and generosity to Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children’s Hospital were recognized when he was honored with The 2013 Edward A. Iannuccilli, MD Civic Leader of the Year Award. The annual award recognizes an individual who demonstrates exceptional service to Rhode Island Hospital’s mission and serves as an ambassador in the community for the hospital’s vision and values.

*“For years, Jamo has been a true friend and guiding force for our hospital and has worked tirelessly to inspire and motivate others to support our mission,” says Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president, Rhode Island Hospital, and president and chief executive officer, Lifespan. “His deep commitment to our hospital helps us maintain its stature in the community and allows us to continue to meet the standard of excellence that our patients and their families have come to expect.”*



## It’s easy to leave a lasting legacy. Contact us today to find out how!



**Y**our gifts to Rhode Island Hospital work wonders... but did you know that planned giving also provides wonderful benefits to you and your family? When you make a Charitable Gift Annuity to Rhode Island Hospital, you’ll be helping the patients who need our care the most. And a Charitable Gift Annuity can provide you with guaranteed, fixed payments over your lifetime and a charitable income tax deduction. Also, please consider making a bequest to Rhode Island Hospital. We hope you’ll tell us when you have named Rhode Island Hospital in your will. We would very much like the opportunity to thank you for your generosity.

**For more information, please contact Joseph G. Pannozzo, chief development officer, at 401-444-6758 or [jpannozzo@lifespan.org](mailto:jpannozzo@lifespan.org).**

## National Institutes of Health \$7.36 Million Grant to Fund Cardiovascular Research



**R**hode Island Hospital's Cardiovascular Research Center has been awarded a \$7.36 million research project grant (R01) from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health. The research will be focused on mechanisms to develop new therapies and strategies to prevent sudden cardiac arrest and to measure the impact of genetic and environmental factors on risk for sudden cardiac death. The grant will be paid out over five years and is the largest grant of its kind to be given to a Lifespan partner hospital.

*"Academic medical centers around the country bid for these R01 grants to further their research to find cures, diagnostic tools and new therapies for the most pervasive and life-threatening diseases."*

– Dr. Gideon Koren, director of the Cardiovascular Research Center at Rhode Island Hospital



*"This NIH award underscores the quality of research at Rhode Island Hospital and provides our researchers with the means to continue to explore new treatments and preventative measures of an illness that takes thousands of lives each year."*

– Peter Snyder, PhD, senior vice president and chief research officer for Lifespan

## Samuel C. Dudley, MD, PhD, Leads Cardiology



We are proud to announce Samuel C. Dudley, MD, PhD, as chief of the division of cardiology at the Cardiovascular Institute at Rhode Island Hospital and The Miriam Hospital and chief of the division of cardiology in the Department of Medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Dr. Dudley oversees all cardiology services on the two campuses including patient care and clinical research. He is also responsible for the research and educational programs at all the Brown teaching hospitals to further strengthen the program's position as a regional and national leader in cardiac care. His research efforts into such areas as sudden cardiac death have resulted in the development of an innovative blood test designed to identify those patients most at risk. His entrepreneurial spirit has led him to receive more than 20 patents and to launch a biotech firm focused specifically on commercializing this blood test.

Dr. Dudley came to Rhode Island from the University of Illinois at Chicago where he served as chief of cardiology and co-director of the Center for Cardiovascular Research. He previously served as chief of cardiology at the Atlanta VA Medical Center and associate professor of medicine and physiology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

## Help Us Honor the Memory of an Exceptional Cardiologist

**“Dr. Ray Riley set a standard that all could emulate but few if any ever reach. He was undeniably full of life and humanity.**

**Honoring his memory in establishing this fund is a natural thing to do for a man who gave so much to all of us through his life and work.”**

— Dr. Daniel J. Levine, cardiologist at Rhode Island Hospital



Raymon S. Riley, MD

The Division of Cardiology at Rhode Island Hospital has established The Raymon S. Riley, MD Memorial Endowment Teaching Award to honor the legacy of an extraordinary man's care and friendship, and his passion

for education and lifelong learning. Through the efforts of the Division of Cardiology at Rhode Island Hospital, and in coordination with Dr. Riley's family, the fund will provide the necessary resources to support an annual teaching award. The goal for this memorial endowment is \$50,000.

In creating the award, Dr. Riley's colleagues noted that their valued friend was a wonderful clinical mentor to his medical students and a caring physician to his patients. He is remembered as a disciplined, dedicated and successful cardiac physician who was passionate about providing the very best care to his patients and their families. His skills

and understanding demeanor exemplified the traits of a notable physician.

Dr. Riley's love of learning and teaching started early in his life. He completed his high school education at St. Raphael Academy. He graduated from Providence College and went on to the Tufts University School of Medicine. He was also a medical officer in the United States Navy for three years.

He practiced cardiology in Rhode Island for more than 40 years. During that time he was a member of the medical staff at Rhode Island Hospital. He was also a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology and Emeritus Clinical Professor of Medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. At the time of his passing in July 2013, Dr. Riley and his wife Elizabeth “Betty” (Christopher) Riley were married for 58 years. He is survived by his wife, five children and six grandchildren.

**For information about The Raymon S. Riley, MD Memorial Endowment, please contact Emily Quinn at 401-444-6509 or [equinn@lifespan.org](mailto:equinn@lifespan.org).**

## The Station Nightclub Fire: Offering Hope a Decade Later

A decade after Rhode Island made national headlines for one of the worst nightclub fires—the Station Fire where 100 people perished and another 200 were injured—the capital city hosted an international burn conference.

In October 2013, Providence welcomed the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors' 25th annual World Burn Congress, bringing together about 1,000 burn survivors, families, caregivers, burn care professionals and firefighters.

Rhode Island Hospital played a key role the night of the fire, triaging, stabilizing and treating scores of patients. All 64 burn victims admitted to Rhode Island Hospital that night survived. The hospital was a primary sponsor and contributor to the conference program along with University Surgical Associates. Dr. David Harrington, director of Rhode Island Hospital's Burn Center, served on a medical panel and presented a separate talk about the Station Fire.

The conference was so successful that organizers are discussing hosting it in Providence again, perhaps coming back here every third year, according to Dr. William Cioffi, surgeon-in-chief at Rhode Island Hospital.

### Finding Strength in Adversity: Gina Russo Perseveres



Gina Russo, a 29-year employee of Rhode Island Hospital and a Station Fire survivor, had 54 operations and skin grafts following the 2003 fire that changed her life. She suffered burns over 40 percent of her body and fourth-degree burns on her head. Her neck,

shoulders, arms and hands were severely damaged.

The fire also claimed the life of her fiancé, Fred Crisostomi—a fact she learned upon emerging from a drug-induced coma 11 days later, too late to attend his funeral.

Yet Gina doesn't dwell on what she has lost. Instead, she talks about what she has gained as a result of the fire.

*"It was tragic that my boys and I lost an incredible man. But I was fortunate to have him in my life. Thanks to him, I learned to advocate for myself," she says. "I used to be very shy and didn't speak out. Now, I speak out to help others. The fire enabled me to be that strong."*

Since the fire she has authored a book about her experiences, rallied support as the head of The Station Fire Memorial Foundation, earned a national reputation as an advocate for burn survivors and enhanced fire safety regulations.

Gina is now married—to a man she met through a

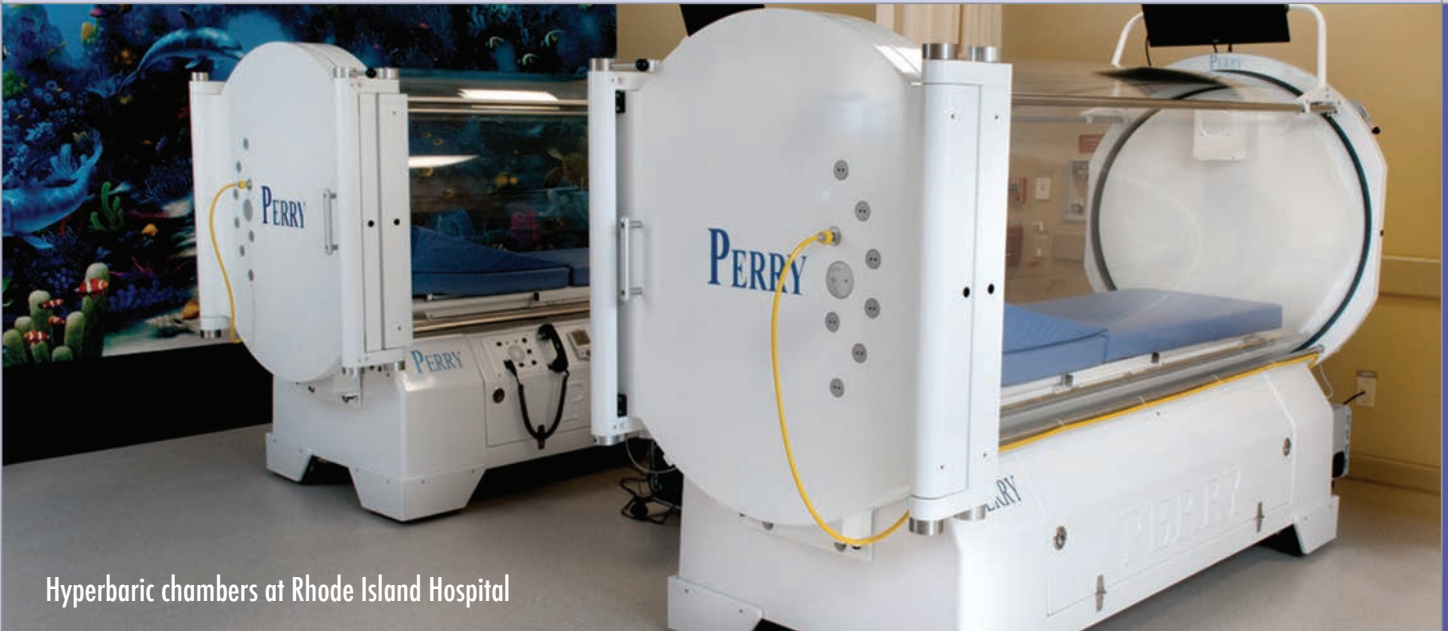
firefighter friend. Her sons are now young men, ages 17 and 22, and she has a teenage stepson, two adult stepdaughters, and a three-year-old grandson.

At the time of the fire, the burn unit was a hybrid trauma and burn unit, not a verified Burn Center from the American Burn Association as it is now. Yet as part of the state's only Level 1 trauma center, it had been preparing extensively for disasters, especially since the events of 9/11, says Dr. William Cioffi, surgeon-in-chief at Rhode Island Hospital, who previously worked at the prestigious Army Burn Center in San Antonio. In addition, the medical staff included Dr. David Harrington, director of the burn unit, and surgeon Dr. Theresa Graves, who also had experience at the Army Burn Center.

According to Dr. Cioffi, the strategy that night was to triage and stabilize the patients and then consider their needs for the next five to 10 days. *"We spread out the most significantly burned patients among nearby burn units to avoid overtaxing the staff and resources of any one facility. We began transferring patients to Boston when we heard from the scene to expect 50 to 100 more patients,"* he says. Gina was one of the patients stabilized and transferred to Boston.

While she doesn't recall anything about the early days after the fire, Gina knows what it takes to get through it. *"My only motivation was my sons—to show my kids that you can rise above challenges and make a good life."*

Now, a decade later, she counsels fire survivors at burn units at Rhode Island Hospital and in Boston. And she continues efforts to raise funds for the planned memorial to the 100 people who lost their lives that night.



Hyperbaric chambers at Rhode Island Hospital

## *Hyperbaric Medicine and Expert Wound Care Alleviate Pain and Improve Lives*

**T**he radiation treatment for oral cancer that saved William Lema's life caused intense pain and wounding, making it extremely difficult for him to swallow, eat or drink. He was receiving all of his nutrition through a tube. The best way for him to heal was treatment in a hyperbaric chamber.

When the Rhode Island Hospital Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine opened in East Providence this past fall, Mr. Lema jumped at the chance to be the first patient.

The hyperbaric chamber—basically a modified diving bell that divers use to combat the bends—concentrates oxygen to 100 percent under pressure equivalent to 30 to 40 feet below sea level. Exposing a wound to 100 percent oxygen at high pressure can speed up the healing process.

Within a week of starting treatment, Mr. Lema's pain began to recede and his spirits lifted. He no longer needed the morphine that had been prescribed for pain management. In fact, he recalls, "After just a few weeks of treatment, I didn't have to use any pain medicine at all. I was very impressed with how well and how quickly it worked."

The wound care center offers the newest and largest

hyperbaric chamber in Rhode Island and employs state-of-the-art wound healing technologies, including negative pressure, techniques to control edema, hyperbaric oxygen, skin substitutes, debridement of infected and chronic wounds, and advanced therapies including revascularization and tissue transfer.

The center's multidisciplinary team treats patients with acute and chronic wounds resulting from a wide variety of conditions, including diabetes, arterial and venous insufficiency, radiation and surgery or injury.

The center is located next to Rhode Island Hospital's Hallett Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology, making wound care for diabetics even more convenient.

*"The Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine demonstrates Rhode Island Hospital's commitment to providing continuous high quality*

*patient care,"* says Dr. Edward Marcaccio, co-medical advisor and vascular surgeon at Rhode Island Hospital. "These slow and non-healing wounds are often very painful and even debilitating. By providing our patients with a comprehensive approach to wound care, we strive to relieve the pain and discomfort, heal the wound and get our patients back to normal life and activity as soon as possible."

**"The Center for Wound Care and  
Hyperbaric Medicine demonstrates  
Rhode Island Hospital's commitment  
to providing continuous high  
quality patient care."**

— Dr. Edward Marcaccio, co-medical advisor and  
vascular surgeon at Rhode Island Hospital



## Rhode Island Hospital

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# Rhode Island Hospital Celebrates 150 Years OF CARING



L-R. Tom Ryan; Ted Fischer; Timothy J. Babineau, MD; Paul Salem; and Brad Faxon



Honorary tri-chairs Michael G. Ehrlich, MD; Ellen A. Collis; and Barbara P. Riley, RN, MS, NEA-BC



Scott B. Laurans, chair, Lifespan Board of Directors, and Monica Laurans

On November 16, 2013, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, Rhode Island Hospital's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Caring highlighted the hospital's past and present accomplishments and shined a spotlight on the future of Rhode Island's premier academic medical center.

Guests enjoyed musical performances by The Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra Chamber Choir, Nancy Paolino and The Black Tie Band, and classical pianist Lance Eskelund. Guests also heard expressions of caring and appreciation from Rhode Island Hospital philanthropists including descendents of the hospital's founding families, staff and grateful patients. Proceeds from the event will support Rhode Island Hospital's legacy of providing exceptional clinical care, research and education.

The honorary tri-chairs were Ellen A. Collis; Dr. Michael G. Ehrlich; and Barbara P. Riley, RN, MS, NEA-BC. The presenting signature sponsors were the Rhode Island Hospital Guild; Mr. and Mrs. H. James Field; and Mr. and Mrs. Scott B. Laurans. The platinum sponsors were University Orthopedics and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Collis.

*"This historic event is truly a momentous occasion, as it caps off our yearlong celebration of 15 decades of medical innovation and exceptional care of our patients and their families," says Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president, Rhode Island Hospital, and president and chief executive officer, Lifespan. "Thanks to our talented colleagues and our generous family of supporters, Rhode Island Hospital has set the standard for medical excellence in southeastern New England. As the state's only Level 1 trauma center, we treat the most seriously ill and injured patients each day. We are also the principal teaching hospital for The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, a premier academic medical center and a hub of groundbreaking research."*

Please continue to Advance Medicine and Touch Lives at Rhode Island Hospital through your generosity.

We invite you to learn more by contacting  
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