

Advancing Medicine. *Touching Lives.*

RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL • 2020



GENEROSITY FIGHTS BACK
AGAINST COVID-19 *Page 4*



Rhode Island Hospital
Lifespan. Delivering health with care.®



The COVID-19 crisis has taught all of us some valuable lessons. It's also underscored the importance of teamwork. Our collective power is inspiring and undeniable, and together we can accomplish so much more than we can on our own.

The same holds true at Rhode Island Hospital. As part of Lifespan, the state's largest health care system, our sights are always set on *Delivering health with care*—and the support of our donor family helps us make good on this promise.

Your generosity makes much of our work possible. Whether it is clinical care, medical research and education, or community services, we strive to attain the next level of excellence and you're always by our side during that pursuit. And for this, we are truly thankful.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Aubin Sr.".

Lawrence A. Aubin Sr.

Chairman,
Lifespan Board of Directors
Chairman, Rhode Island Hospital
Board of Trustees



Timothy J. Babineau, MD

President and
Chief Executive Officer, Lifespan

Here at Rhode Island Hospital, this has been a year like no other and we have been tested in ways we could have never imagined. But *Delivering health with care* remains our singular, driving focus. And our teams are meeting the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic head-on and with a renewed sense of purpose and pride.

The teamwork that our doctors, nurses, and staff have shown has been nothing short of heroic. It's been inspiring to witness up close, and I've never been prouder to lead this organization. From the leadership demonstrated by Dr. John Murphy, who postponed his retirement once again to get us through 2020, to the lifesaving work of our renowned cancer center, to our docs who've emerged as national experts on the coronavirus—I am in awe, yet not surprised, by what has been accomplished and by the genuine compassion exhibited by our caregivers when faced with their most difficult days.

Of course, we wouldn't be able to do what we do without the incredible support of our extraordinary donors and friends like you. You're always there when we need you, and I am eternally grateful for your help and generosity.

THE IMPACT OF GRATITUDE

September 21 is World Gratitude Day, and we often reflect on gratitude at Thanksgiving time, but why wait or limit it? Making an everyday practice of acknowledging gratitude can be an uplifting exercise with proven health benefits.

Even if it's identifying one simple thing you're grateful for it can make a positive impact on you and those around you.

So ask yourself: **What are you grateful for today?**



“I’m grateful. They took wonderful, wonderful care of me. I know they were exhausted, but every time they came in they had a cheery attitude.”

—**Jameela Dunston**, Former COVID-19 patient

GENEROSITY FIGHTS BACK AGAINST COVID-19



Rory Merritt, MD

What followed was a remarkable collaboration—and a shining example of the community’s generosity to patients, families, and providers at Rhode Island Hospital during the COVID-19 crisis.

Dr. Merritt spearheaded an effort to collect tablets so that patients could have their families by their side virtually, and it spread like wildfire.

The teenage son of two of Rory’s fellow ED doctors launched a website, COVID Connectors, to get the word out. The Rhode Island Medical Society volunteered its offices as a collection site, the University of Rhode Island donated devices and provided invaluable tech support, and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation put out a call that brought in 500 devices from Amazon.

Within two weeks, there were nearly 800 new and gently used tablets. Signs 2 Go in Fall River donated 25 carts retrofitted to hold the devices so clinicians could focus on direct care.

“I hope donors know how much their gifts mean during such an incredibly difficult time for everyone...”

—Theresa Jenner, LICSW

“Thanks to those donated tablets, families were able to celebrate birthdays and sing together,” says Theresa Jenner, LICSW, who partnered with Dr. Merritt on the project. “They were able to pray together and be at the bedside at the end of life.”

She adds, “I hope donors know how much their gifts mean during such an incredibly difficult time for everyone, including to clinicians”.

Rory Merritt, MD, is no stranger to raising funds for a good cause. Growing up in a tiny fishing village in Alaska, he says, “You had to raise money to do anything, or go anywhere, with school.”

As a young adult, Rory raised funds and awareness about the Exxon Valdez oil spill, which devastated his hometown.

So, it was only natural that when the novel coronavirus reached Rhode Island earlier this year, Dr. Merritt—an emergency medicine physician at Rhode Island and The Miriam hospitals—dusted off his fundraising skills to help “take back some humanity” from COVID-19.

“People coming to the ED were scared and families couldn’t be there to support them when visitation was suspended,” says Dr. Merritt. “The need was obvious. We had to figure out a way to keep patients connected to their loved ones.”



Ocean State Job Lot donates PPE and hand sanitizer



Theresa Jenner, LICSW

As administrative director of clinical social work and discharge planning for Lifespan, Theresa was well aware of the toll COVID-19 was taking on frontline providers. So, she teamed up with the departments of psychiatry and volunteer services to create a respite room at Rhode Island Hospital for weary staff. And once again, our caring community joined the effort.

Ocean State Job Lot donated a massage chair. Home Depot, Lowe's, and Jordan's Jungle provided the greenery of plants. Local pilates and yoga studios offered QR codes to download stress-reducing sessions. United Natural Foods brought food, and Brown University students recorded pieces of soothing music.

At least 200 clinicians and support staff use the respite room every day, says Theresa, noting that the space is set up for social distancing.

"People just need to breathe," she says.

Additional donations of personal protection equipment, generous contributions to Rhode Island Hospital's emergency response fund, and the expedited support of charitable organizations proved that, during these unprecedented times, we truly are all in this together.

"People gave out of the goodness of their hearts," says Dr. Merritt. "It's been amazing."

MEET THREE OF OUR COVID-19 SUPERHEROES

Q: What do a comic book superhero and a Lifespan COVID-19 expert have in common?

A: They both wear a mask, possess extraordinary powers, and make saving lives their top priority.

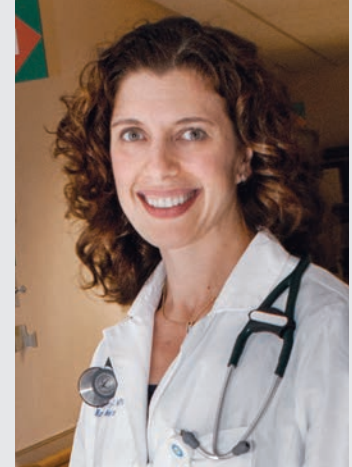
Since Lifespan hospitals treat nearly 85 percent of the state’s coronavirus patients—and you already know about the famous fictional characters protecting our universe—we’d like to introduce you to a few of our real-life superheroes who are battling a once-in-a-century pandemic and making a world of difference right here in the Ocean State!



Dr. Angela M. Caliendo



Dr. Leonard Mermel



Dr. Megan Ranney

DR. ANGELA M. CALIENDO

Go-to source on antibody testing

Angela M. Caliendo, MD, PhD, FIDSA is an infectious disease specialist at Rhode Island Hospital, the Warren Alpert Foundation Professor of Medicine, and Executive Vice Chair of Medicine at Alpert Medical School of Brown University. She’s also a “go-to” source on antibody testing for state health and government entities, as well many prominent news outlets, including *The New York Times*.

In addition to authoring antibody testing guidelines for the Infectious Diseases Society of America, Dr. Caliendo is championing major initiatives in Rhode Island to validate the efficacy of tests and expand and speed-up their delivery. Antibody or serological tests are used to detect the presence of virus-fighting proteins

called “antibodies” in the blood of a person who has been exposed to, or infected by, the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19. Antibody testing is important because the results can show how widespread the virus may be, and also help verify the human body’s response to any potential vaccine.

“The test has to meet the highest standards possible... and we’re committed to meeting those standards...”

—Dr. Angela M. Caliendo

Of course, tests are only as good as they are accurate—and that's where Dr. Caliendo comes in. She has dedicated more than 20 years to the development and validation of tests used to help detect and quantify infectious diseases and assess their clinical utility.

"With antibody testing," Dr. Caliendo warns, "if you don't know the performance characteristics well, you run the risk of getting inflated numbers of false-positive results—and we don't want misleading or inaccurate data informing our decisions." Dr. Caliendo adds that sensitivity and specificity validation numbers in the high 90 percent range are the gold standard. "This will ensure

the test is accurate and that it will flag almost everyone who actually has antibodies with a 'positive' result and, conversely, generate a 'negative' result for those who do not," she says. But achieving that level of accuracy is a test in itself, coming only after collecting, analyzing and building a vast sample bank, and evaluating different test types on multiple platforms. "It's a lot of work," Dr. Caliendo concedes, "but the test has to meet the highest standards possible in order to be clinically useful and safe—and we're committed to meeting those standards because the health of our patients depends on it."

DR. LEONARD MERMEL

Trusted global expert in the top one percent of researchers worldwide

Leonard Mermel, DO, ScM, AM (Hon), FACP, FIDSA is Medical Director for the Department of Epidemiology and Infectious Disease Control at Rhode Island Hospital and a Professor of Medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. He's also a trusted advisor to state health and government entities and a consultant for ministries of health across the globe.

A prolific author, Dr. Mermel has written United States guidelines on the prevention and management of infectious diseases as well as more than 300 articles, textbook chapters, and abstracts. For perspective on his level of expertise, consider this: PubMed is a resource/database for biomedical and life sciences literature. From their millions of titles, they identify the top one percent of researchers worldwide—i.e. those whose publications are cited and referenced the most by others—and Dr. Mermel is on that list. He's also lectured on infectious diseases and pandemic planning at the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine, NASA, and internationally.

"My interest and passion is trying to prevent the spread of infections in health care settings," he says. "I always

feel it's my responsibility to find ways of mitigating risk to patients, staff, and visitors, and that feeling has only intensified since the pandemic hit."

Dr. Mermel says that Lifespan was, in many cases, the "tip of the spear" in the fight against COVID-19 in the United States, because a number of early best practices were introduced here. Mandating masks for all hospital staff and patients, stopping visitations, and reprocessing health care workers' N-95 respirators through an innovative vaporized hydrogen peroxide procedure, just to name a few.

"My interest and passion is trying to prevent the spread of infections in health care setting..."

—Dr. Leonard Mermel

"I was constantly talking with our counterparts in Europe and elsewhere—some of whom had Lifespan connections—about what worked and what didn't," he explains, "because they were a few months ahead

continued

of us in terms of dealing with COVID-19.” One example, he notes, was having Zoom meetings about school openings with a former Lifespan trainee, who is involved with the COVID-19 effort in South Korea.

While Dr. Mermel has been through high-profile public health crises before— such as Ebola, MERS, SARS, and H1N1—he says COVID-19 is different.

“It’s been profoundly taxing,” he admits, “with very long hours for all of us. But the thing that’s really kept me going is the camaraderie and teamwork here. From Dr. Murphy leading our Incident Command Taskforce to the folks handling disruptions in our supply chain and our facilities teams, environmental services, and support staff. . . I don’t recall anyone saying ‘no’ to anything. It’s been amazing.”

DR. MEGAN RANNEY

Champion for PPE for health care workers

Megan Ranney, MD, MPH is an emergency physician and researcher at Rhode Island Hospital. She is also director of the Brown-Lifespan Center for Digital Health and an associate professor of health services, policy and practice, and emergency medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Prior to COVID-19, her work focused on digital health innovations, injury prevention, and public health and safety issues associated with gun violence. But the pandemic added another job to Dr. Ranney’s resume: Co-founder of GetUsPPE, a grassroots organization dedicated to addressing the critical shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline health care workers.

PPE includes things like surgical masks, gloves, gowns, and booties. These basic items, which help protect health care workers from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19, were in scarce supply once the pandemic took hold.

“What we could not have prepared for was the degree to which the entire supply chain fell apart and the speed at which this virus filled our hospitals with really sick patients,” Dr. Ranney recounts. “With SARS and Ebola, we prepared for the really sick patients. But they never really came. With COVID-19, they came. But the PPE didn’t.” Dr. Ranney lent her voice and advocacy to the cause by going on national TV programs “more than 100 times” to talk about it. “Here I am with little media experience

appearing on CNN, Good Morning America, the BBC . . . It was crazy!” she says.

She even got a surprise shout-out from pop icon Katy Perry, who told Dr. Ranney she was the real rock star. As of September, the organization she helped start has delivered more than 2.3 million units of PPE to health care workers in need—so, maybe Katy was right.

“There are innovative, international voices within Lifespan who are determined to provide the best possible care to our patients...”

—Dr. Megan Ranney

COVID-19 will likely be a significant part of caregiver’s daily work for a long time to come. Fortunately, Rhode Island Hospital is well-positioned to meet the challenge. “There are innovative, international voices within Lifespan who are determined to provide the best possible care to our patients,” Dr. Ranney states. “And that’s great news, because our hospital is very closely tied to our community. So much so, that when we thrive, so does Rhode Island.”

THANK YOU

The support of our community is crucial to the mission of Rhode Island Hospital and our fellow Lifespan affiliates to provide the health care our state and region needs. And during the unpredicted challenges of the COVID-19, the community's response fueled us.

The following list acknowledges donors who supported the Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital, or Lifespan, Emergency Preparedness Fund and/or the Lifespan COVID-19 Employee Fund with a donation of \$250 or more.



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CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF DR. MURPHY

One-of-a-kind physician leader retires



Dr. John B. Murphy

Putting others first isn't only a hallmark of the distinguished career of John Murphy, MD, it's the foundation for how he lives his life—a trait that's always come naturally.

"John and I have been together nearly all 12 of my years here," said Timothy J. Babineau, MD, President and CEO of Lifespan. "He's always had a tireless work ethic and incredible values, but most importantly, he's above reproach when it comes to his ethics and honesty."

In January, 2021, Dr. Murphy will retire following nearly 40 years as a physician and after more than a decade-and-a-half at Lifespan. It's a retirement he's graciously postponed at least three times, the most recent in order to lead Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's hospitals as interim president. In June, 2020, he passed the baton of his longtime role as Lifespan's executive vice president for physician affairs to his successor, Kenneth Wood, MD.

"It's nearly impossible to measure John's contributions to moving our organization forward. He sets the standard for what a physician leader is all about," added

Dr. Babineau. Among his numerous accomplishments—of which there are too many to list—Dr. Murphy is a professor of medicine and family medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, a member and former president of the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), and a renowned national and international lecturer who's been published around the globe. Last fall, he received the prestigious Dennis W. Jahnigen Award from the AGS, recognizing his work to train thousands of health professionals in the care we all need as we age and for embedding geriatrics education in the fabric of medical curricula and clinical operations.

At Lifespan, Dr. Murphy's responsibilities ran the gamut. He was lead physician for all hospitals, and oversaw system-wide quality and safety, graduate and continuing medical education, and was pivotal to establishing service lines in cardiology, neuroscience and cancer, and diagnostic imaging. Additionally, he led the system's laboratory, pharmacy, and research.

"John is truly a one-of-a-kind leader and I will miss him dearly."

—Timothy J. Babineau, MD

But during a career filled with distinct moments, it may be the final chapter that ranks among the most impressive. When COVID-19 changed the world, let alone Rhode Island, it was again Dr. Murphy at the front of the frontline, instrumental in leading the state's response efforts while also the point person for Rhode Island Hospital and the entire system. Working around the clock, he ensured our teams had what they needed to treat patients. "John has a lot to be proud of—talk about going out on top, having the pedal to the metal," said Dr. Babineau. "We should all be so fortunate to end our careers the way John ended his."

ENSURING KIDS GET THE DENTAL CARE THEY NEED

Generosity of Delta Dental brings smiles to thousands

Tucked away on the campus of Rhode Island Hospital is perhaps one of the state's best kept secrets: The Samuels Sinclair Dental Center. But for the families who depend on its compassionate care and those who support it, the center is one of the Ocean State's crown jewels.

"The importance of the dental center cannot be overstated," said Joe Perroni, President and CEO of Delta Dental of Rhode Island. "Supporting its work is an easy decision because of how closely it aligns with our mission and with our commitment to accessible care for all. Lifespan and Rhode Island Hospital deserve so much credit for what we have here."

Celebrating its ninetieth anniversary in 2021, the dental center was founded to ensure care for children whose parents could not afford it and for patients of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. It is one of the first centers in the country to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary dental care within a hospital setting.

"Delta's philanthropy is instrumental to everything we're able to do," said Elizabeth Benz, DMD, the center's director. "Their support has been critical to bringing in new technologies. Without them, we wouldn't be able to see the number of patients that we treat, which has grown to nearly 20,000 visits a year."

A longtime, dedicated partner, Delta's latest leadership support is helping to fund facility enhancements, such as new dental chairs, upgraded x-ray units, and soon a special milling machine to furnish crown and bridge units in-house. Additionally, a portion of the gift will benefit the center's burgeoning residency program, allowing Dr. Benz to add a third resident opportunity.

Thanks in large part to the center featuring the latest equipment and leading-edge technology, applications to its residency program have skyrocketed from an average of 20 per year to more than 80.

"Delta's philanthropy is instrumental to everything we're able to do."

—Elizabeth Benz, DMD

"Our residency program has made a name for itself and Delta is a huge part of the reason why – they've helped us create a state-of-the-art facility where students want to learn," said Dr. Benz. "And what we do here isn't something you can learn, you need to experience and practice it. They are amazing skills that you'll keep for your entire career and that make you a better dentist."

Adds Perroni, "When we see a need, we want to help meet that need, and we know that the Samuels Sinclair Dental Center delivers tremendous care to the most vulnerable in our community. Their concerns are our concerns, and that fuels our philanthropy."



Smiling Jaylin

THE 'HOME TEAM' HOSPITAL HELPS A FAMILY BEAT CANCER . . . TWICE!



Laurie and Bill Nichols

Rhode Islanders seeking care for life-threatening health concerns often hear, “You have to go to Boston for that. The hospitals up there have the best doctors and resources.” But the story of a Rumford couple—with connections to those world-renowned hospitals to our north—proves otherwise.

In late 2015, Laurie Nichols was diagnosed with lymphoma. And in the summer of 2016, her husband Bill found out he had pancreatic cancer. The couple, who’d been married for almost 40 years and raised a son and two daughters together, had their beautiful life rocked to its core. As their daughter Elissa remembers, “Everything just came out of left field.”

Using a baseball term to describe the feeling is apt. The Nichols are a baseball-loving family and Elissa is married to former major league pitcher Jason Hammel, who was playing for the Chicago Cubs when Laurie and Bill were diagnosed. The Cubs’ president, Theo Epstein, had been an executive with the Boston Red Sox and maintained strong ties to the medical community there. So, he helped the Nichols get seen at the city’s most respected cancer hospitals.

“In my case, the hospital in Boston basically said, ‘You have great doctors down in Rhode Island and the treatment will be the same,’” Laurie explains. “So, we opted to stay here and avoid the two-hour commute, which can take a toll on a family.”

Under the expert care of John Reagan, MD, hematologist/oncologist at the Lifespan Cancer Institute at Rhode Island Hospital, Laurie was put on a comprehensive treatment plan that included high-dose chemotherapy from January to April 2016, a protocol that was successful.

“Boston’s great...but we’ve got it all right here [in Rhode Island] too.”

—Bill Nichols

Looking back, Laurie not only lauds Dr. Reagan for his exceptional skill, but fondly recalls his team’s personal, compassionate approach. “The first time I asked Dr. Reagan ‘What type of lymphoma do I have?’ he said, ‘Laurie Nichols’ Lymphoma.’ From that moment, I realized that I wasn’t going to be just another case or statistic.”

Dr. Reagan points out that delivering a personalized experience is easier here in Rhode Island, because hospital staff actually know their patients. “We live in the same neighborhoods and have often treated them previously or cared for their family and friends,” he says. “We even bump into each other out in the community. You can’t replicate that kind of connection at one of the giant cancer centers.”

In Bill’s case, it was discovered that he had a tumor the size of a pea pinching his bile duct. Again, the Nichols traveled to Boston for consultation. And again, they went with their ‘home team’ hospital for treatment. “Boston’s great,” Bill notes, “but we’ve got it all right here too.”

Howard Safran, MD, chief of hematology/oncology at the Lifespan Cancer Institute, agrees. “There’s no reason to leave Rhode Island for cancer care,” he says. “We’re part of an academic medical center and an innovative clinical trials site. As such, our patients always have access to groundbreaking new therapies and emerging cancer treatments—including many that are not available elsewhere—at various stages of diagnosis and across many cancer types.”

That’s why, in July 2016, Bill chose to have his tumor removed here, undergoing what’s known as a Whipple procedure. The complex operation, which took more than 10 hours to complete, consisted of removing a section of the portal vein as well as the head of Bill’s pancreas, a section of his bile duct, gallbladder, and one-third of both his small intestine and stomach—then, reconnecting the remaining pancreas and digestive organs. “Dr. Kevin Charpentier performed my surgery

and he and his team were outstanding,” Bill says. “They saved my life and I’m forever grateful.” Bill later received chemotherapy and radiation to safeguard against his disease returning.

Today, Laurie and Bill are cancer-free.

“We absolutely adored our parents’ doctors,” Elissa says. “Not just because they cured them, but because of their bedside manner, the information they gave us, and for how willing they were to talk to a family who was struggling to process everything that was going on.”

In addition to his yearly follow-up visits, Bill stays connected to Rhode Island Hospital by volunteering there and participating in research trials. A talented woodworker, Bill also made an 11-foot sign that strategically hangs in a stairwell at the Lifespan Cancer Institute. It reads: “There’s light at the end of the tunnel!”

“I repeated that phrase often to myself and to others who were going through cancer treatments,” Bill explains. “The sign is meant to give hope to patients as they walk in and strength as they walk out—something that every doc, nurse and support staff at Rhode Island Hospital gave to my family.”



Dr. Howard Safran, Bill Nichols and granddaughter, Dr. Kevin Charpentier, and Jason Hammel

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Robert K. Vincent

Robert K. Vincent

Chair,
Rhode Island Hospital Foundation
Board of Trustees

It has been nearly a year since I became chairman of the board of trustees for Rhode Island Hospital and what a year it has been.

Rhode Island Hospital and Lifespan are going through a period that will be remembered as one of the most defining moments in the history of the institution. There have been, and will likely always be, dramatic challenges in providing quality health care to Rhode Islanders, but perhaps none as daunting as what we are experiencing today.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as challenging as it has been, has brought out the best in the Rhode Island Hospital team. From doctors, nurses, and those who support the operations, we've seen what it means to strive for and achieve excellence in health care delivery. The leadership they have provided this state and our country has brought distinction and an appreciation for their talents and expertise.

The same can be said for the remarkable group of volunteer leaders that stand beside me on the foundation board in advocating and fundraising for the hospital we all love and depend on. I'd like to introduce you to two of our newest members: Dr. Mahesh V. Jayaraman and Keith Kelly.

RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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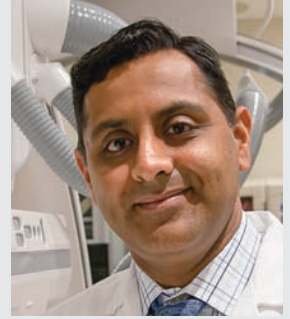
MAHESH V. JAYARAMAN, MD

The moment Mahesh Jayaraman, MD, became interested in neurointerventional radiology is as vivid today as it was when he was a first year resident in Radiology at Rhode Island Hospital.

"I had an epiphany working under the great Dr. Richard Haas who at the time was treating a patient with a brain aneurysm," says Dr. Jayaraman. "I thought to myself, 'this is the coolest thing ever.'" It was then that Dr. Jayaraman's career path to becoming a neurointerventional radiologist was crystallized. Outside of a fellowship at Stanford University, he has worked in Rhode Island. Today, he is the director of the Neurovascular Center at Rhode Island Hospital and Professor of Diagnostic Imaging, Neurology and Neurosurgery at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. "Rhode Island Hospital is a special place to work – my colleagues have incredible pride in their teams and demonstrate

genuine relationships," he says. "This is a hospital that welcomes opportunities to grow programs and advance research. It's an honor to be part of a program that is nationally recognized."

Two years ago, Mahesh accepted an invitation to join the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board, recognizing firsthand the importance of philanthropy in health care. "Philanthropy plays a vital role in funding capital investments and creating new programs," he acknowledges, "and it's great to be a part of the group actively working to increase these efforts. All of us have the important job of ensuring our community is both aware and supportive of the amazing care we have right here, and that's a responsibility I take very seriously."



Mahesh V. Jayaraman, MD

KEITH KELLY

Keith Kelly recalls his introduction to Hasbro Children's Hospital more than 20 years ago, when his two children were young, as experiences that offered valuable insight into the world-class medicine available in his own backyard. And today, as president of Citizens Bank Rhode Island, he considers his community involvement among his favorite aspects of the job.

Citizens Bank has been supporting Lifespan hospitals since the early 1960s, and Keith is honored to continue the tradition. "Building philanthropy for our community's hospitals is critical," says Keith, who joined the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees in 2018. "I thrive on sharing information and fostering meaningful connections, and being a volunteer advocate for the hospital is a perfect use of those skills." A passionate member of his community, Keith is quick to offer advice to new members of the Volunteer Leadership Council, always

encouraging others to get involved early and to learn about the hospital's breadth of programs. "Sign up for an event committee or come out for the Golf Invitational," he says. "These opportunities offer so many grateful patient

stories that you can share with others. The talents and expertise walking the halls of our hospitals are simply incredible." Along with his commitment to Lifespan, Keith also serves on the boards of HopeHealth, RI Public Expenditure Council, the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the RI Bankers Association, and the University Club in Providence. He is a member of the Rhode Island Commodores and on the executive council of Junior Achievement. Keith and his wife, Lynne, are also annual supporters of the Heroes Ball fund-a-need.



Keith Kelly

HELPING ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS BREAK FREE

Philanthropy fuels research breakthroughs at Rhode Island Hospital

Alzheimer's is a cruel and confounding disease that attacks the brain and body slowly over time and robs people of their memory and independence. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the US, and, as of today, there is no cure or effective treatment. Moreover, Alzheimer's mainly affects adults age 65 and older; a segment of our population projected to grow exponentially in the coming years.

Despite—or maybe because of—these realities, Brian R. Ott, MD, clinical research director at the Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Center at Rhode Island Hospital, remains hopeful and committed to finding a cure. "I have a greater sense of optimism now than at any time in the more than 30 years I've worked in this field," he asserts. "The new ways we're diagnosing the disease and recognizing risks, and the groundbreaking work in clinical trials that we're engaged in at the center is all very promising." The center's major role in clinical studies for the experimental drug aducanumab is but one example. Evidence shows that aducanumab reduces amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer's patients and provides a reduction in their symptoms. Biogen, the drug's maker, has filed for approval with the US Food and Drug Administration, and is receiving an expedited review. "If approved, aducanumab would be the first therapy to slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease," Dr. Ott reports, "and the research we did right here at the center will have helped make that possible."

Charles Denby, clinical research supervisor, credits philanthropy for fueling much of the center's great work. "Rhode Island is becoming a nexus of specialty dementia research and we are at the heart of it, thanks in large part to the generosity of our donors," he says. "Their support ensures we have the resources we need to implement improvement processes, enhance patient services, and

be in a position to engage in the types of partnerships and pilot programs that will keep us on the leading-edge in the fight against Alzheimer's."

Theresa Fogerty, the center's community outreach coordinator, adds: "Collectively, these efforts will prove very useful in the long-term, and, I believe, help us find all the pieces we need to solve the Alzheimer's puzzle once and for all."



The center is also working to:

- Develop memory-testing applications—a tablet-based for staff and IOS and Android phone-based for patients—that will make it easier to gather and share vital data;
- Build their biospecimen bank in an effort to identify a peripheral blood marker or diagnostic test that detects early changes that signal Alzheimer's;
- Widen their outreach and awareness efforts to bolster enrollment in the Rhode Island Alzheimer's Disease Prevention Registry; and
- Fortify their infrastructure, including doubling their infusion room capacity, securing additional staff and lab equipment.

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Bob and Erin Mahoney

Bob Mahoney isn't sure exactly how many times he stepped out of the elevator onto the second floor of the Lifespan Cancer Institute at Rhode Island Hospital during the six years his wife, Cheryl, underwent treatment but knows, "it was a lot."

Always present, with its sounds brightening up an otherwise difficult place to be, was an old baby grand piano. "We'd see people, sometimes kids, playing it and making sure it was used," said Bob. "No matter where you are in the waiting room, you can hear it." Cheryl was diagnosed with lung cancer in January 2012 and cared for by Humera Khurshid, MD, the director of the

Institute's Thoracic Multidisciplinary Clinic, until her passing in 2018. In the face of the disease, Dr. Khurshid left no stone unturned in developing Cheryl's treatment plan, which included participating in experimental drug trials for medication that have since reached the market and are helping others today. "We did a lot of research and spoke with a number of doctors and specialists, and we always heard the same thing—that there was no reason to go elsewhere for Cheryl's care," said Bob. "We loved our doctor and everyone at the cancer institute left a mark on our lives."

In spring 2020, when Bob learned that the piano that had become so familiar was beyond repair, he knew he wanted to help. With his daughter, Erin, he funded the purchase of a new digital grand piano that will never need tuning and can also play songs on its own.

The gloss black piano is adorned with a plaque celebrating the life of a wife and mother revered in both the community for her nonprofit involvement and professionally as CVS Pharmacy's first female vice president. "My mom used to play the piano and we hope this will spread music and light, just as she brought to our lives," finished Erin.

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