

Health

**4 Heart
Symptoms**
You Should
Never Ignore

**Kesha's
Journey**
Triumph Over Two
Cancer Diagnoses

Proud to be a Best
Regional Hospital
for Equitable
Access

ZAP-X[®]:
Revolutionizing
Brain Tumor
Treatment



Letter from the president.

Dear Neighbor,

Providing accessible, equitable, and exceptional care for every patient who turns to us for care is at the heart of everything we do here at MedStar Southern Maryland. I'm constantly in awe of the giving spirit of our staff and their commitment to improving the lives of people in our community. When we say, "It's how we treat people," we mean it both medically and personally—providing our patients with advanced treatment options and care that truly focuses on the needs of the individuals and families we have the privilege to help each day.

Take the Community Baby Shower, which was held this past spring, and offered hundreds of new parents and families throughout the community access to vital resources that help improve the health and well-being of new mothers and their babies. In conjunction, one of our very own associates is heeding the call for infant car seats so that new parents can safely bring their newborns home through her partnership with our community outreach and labor and delivery departments. The saying "it takes a village" is a mantra our team takes to heart.

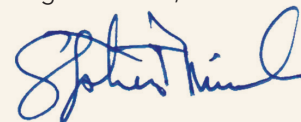
On the medical side, patient Kesha Troublefield, whose story is featured in this issue, exemplifies the meaning of collaborative care and how acts of

kindness, compassion, and teamwork make a difference in a patient's frightening cancer journey.

This issue of *Health* also gives you a deeper understanding of the amazing medicine being delivered on all fronts at our hospital, from preventative care and important health screenings to advances in radiation oncology, neurology, and cardiac care. As you read about some of the groundbreaking treatments being employed here at MedStar Southern Maryland, remember that we're working every day to bring these advanced services to patients throughout Southern Maryland, close to home, because access to the highest level of health care is critical to our mission.

I hope you enjoy the remaining days of summer and time spent with loved ones, friends, and neighbors. Until next time, thank you for being a valued member of our hospital community.

In good health,



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



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Prince George's Suite Magazine & Media (page 16)

Health is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. It in no way seeks to diagnose or treat illness or serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Please see your physician if you have a health problem.



Tidbits

1

Hospital Associate Helps Orchestrate Car Seat Donation



With the dire need for baby car seats to bring newborns safely home from the hospital, Janet Overton, a hospital guest relations associate, and her non-profit organization Kingdom Daughterz, Inc., stepped in to assist. Working with MedStar Southern Maryland's community outreach and labor and delivery departments, the organization recently donated 17 car seats for local families with plans to continue to donate car seats to the labor and delivery unit for those in need.

"Our mission is to help underserved people in our community," said Overton. "We are glad to be able to help by donating these car seats to new parents."

2



MedStar Southern Maryland Recognized as a Best Regional Hospital for Equitable Access by U.S. News

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center was recently recognized as one of the "Best Regional Hospitals for Equitable Access" by U.S. News & World Report. The hospital was the only hospital in Prince George's County and the Southern Maryland region recognized for providing high-quality care to underserved populations. Read more about this significant recognition on page 15.

3



PACU Gets a Facelift

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) is undergoing renovation to modernize the undersized existing space. The revamped PACU and pre-operative areas will feature an open floor plan to improve patient flow and comfort. Read more about the plans on page 16.

4



Local Leaders Discuss the State of Healthcare in Prince George's County

MedStar Southern Maryland President Stephen Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE joined other hospital leaders at the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable on May 8 to discuss healthcare successes and challenges facing the region. Read more on page 16.



How One Cancer Patient Beat the Odds Thanks to Many Helping Hands

A cancer diagnosis is life-changing. But a diagnosis of two types of cancer at the same time seems insurmountable. Just ask Kesha Troublefield.

Kesha's cancer journey began during a routine follow-up visit for fibroids with OB/GYN Roshiel Tiu, MD, where Kesha explained some unusual symptoms. When an ultrasound detected a mass on her right kidney and pancreas, Dr. Tiu advised Kesha to go to the emergency department (ED) at MedStar Southern Maryland for further evaluation. In the ED, multiple exams and

tests were performed to figure out what was wrong. The next morning, Kevin Scruggs, MD, chair of emergency medicine, called Kesha with the news—the MRI confirmed pancreatic and stage one kidney cancer. He then got to work, calling specialists and lining up appointments to get Kesha the care she desperately needed.

"Anytime anybody gets a cancer diagnosis, it's frightening. I know because I received my own cancer diagnosis years ago," said Dr. Scruggs. "I wanted to share my experience with Kesha who was facing a frightening

diagnosis of two cancers. I tried to be as calm as possible and let her know I had once been in her shoes. I wanted to give her hope and comfort."

The Path to a Cure

Dr. Scruggs consulted with Walid Chalhoub, MD, division chief of gastroenterology at MedStar Southern Maryland, who scheduled an immediate follow-up appointment with Kesha. The tumor in her pancreas had disconnected her bile duct from her small intestine and a temporary stent needed to be placed to prevent sepsis. Kesha recalled Dr. Chalhoub's

kindness and care in explaining the procedure beforehand, as well as the status of her cancer before referring her to Marcus Noel, MD, gastrointestinal medical oncologist at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, for further consultation and chemotherapy.

While at MedStar Georgetown, Kesha had two additional procedures performed by urologist Gaurav Bandi, MD, who removed the kidney tumor, and Thomas Fishbein, MD, executive director of MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute who performed Whipple surgery which removed the head of the pancreas, the first part of the small intestines, the gallbladder, and bile ducts. Mohit Gupta, MD, director of urologic oncology, continued her kidney care following surgery.

Kesha shared how these physicians offered compassion, reassurance, and detailed surgical options to help combat both cancers. She also credits physician assistant, Erin Meslar, PA-C, as well as Erin Wetzelberger, RN, clinical oncology nurse coordinator, for going above and beyond in her cancer care.

A Perfectly Choreographed Dance

The entire process, from Kesha's initial visit to the ER at MedStar Southern Maryland to her additional surgeries at MedStar Georgetown was like a perfectly choreographed dance. The highly coordinated care received across the MedStar Health system saved her life.

Just before Christmas 2023, Kesha called Dr. Scruggs

to let him know she was finally cancer-free.

One year later, Kesha has much to live for, including a new grandbaby. Through her ordeal, Kesha, a MedStar Health associate, graduated with her bachelor's degree and is now working on her Master's. She's finding hope and camaraderie with fellow cancer survivors through support groups and the pancreatic cancer walk.

"All of these doctors from different MedStar Health hospitals came together, working as a team, and making sure I got the best treatment possible," said Kesha. "I am so grateful. There are truly no words to express my gratitude to all the providers and associates who helped me along the way."



Gaurav Bandi, MD
Urology



Walid Chalhoub, MD
Gastroenterology



Thomas Fishbein, MD
Transplant Surgery



Mohit Gupta, MD
Urologic Oncology



Erin Meslar, PA-C
Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery



Marcus Noel, MD
Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology



Kevin Scruggs, MD
Chair of Emergency Medicine



Roshiel Tiu, MD
Obstetrics and Gynecology



For more information about the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/Cancer](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Cancer).

Men's Health:

Prioritizing Optimal Health at Every Stage of Life

Maintaining good health is important at every stage of life. Carl Johnson, MD, a primary care physician at MedStar Health's Camp Springs location, shares important tips for men to improve overall well-being and longevity.

Here's a look at how to stay healthy in every decade:

In Your 20's

Your 20s are a perfect time to establish healthy habits that will set the foundation for the long term. In addition to eating a well-balanced diet, exercising, and getting enough sleep, young men should establish a baseline for cholesterol and A1C (measuring your blood sugar levels which can indicate prediabetes). As testicular cancer affects predominantly younger men, Dr. Johnson emphasizes the importance of regular testicular self-exams, recommending men do these monthly self-checks in the shower to be aware of any

changes, lumps, or unusual bumps in the scrotum.

Important health screenings:

- Yearly check-ups with a primary care provider to monitor overall health
- Testicular exams
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing for sexually active men
- Blood pressure, cholesterol, and A1C checks to establish a baseline
- Preventative vaccinations as recommended by your doctor

In Your 30s

Men in their 30s need to maintain healthy habits established in their 20s. Regular exercise and a nutritious diet remain essential, alongside efforts to manage stress and address mental health issues such as anxiety or depression.



By the end of this decade, Dr. Johnson stresses the importance of knowing your family's medical history. "Start talking to older male relatives about family history of prostate cancer, colon cancer, and cardiovascular disease so that you can share this information with your primary care provider and understand what to watch for in the future," he said.

Important health screenings:

- Continue yearly check-ups
- Continue to monitor cholesterol, A1C levels, and blood pressure

In Your 40s and 50s

Many men begin to notice changes in their health in their 40s as metabolism and muscle mass change. Men should continue to follow a



well-balanced diet, and focus on exercise that keeps the heart pumping and muscles strong. Be aware of changes that can signal underlying health issues such as erectile dysfunction. Your 40s and 50s are an important time to focus on cardiovascular health and disease prevention, as well as early detection of health conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Important health screenings:

- **Prostate health:** Discuss prostate cancer screening with your doctor especially if there's a family history of prostate cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends that men should be screened with a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test and digital rectal exam (DRE) beginning at age 40 for men at very high risk, age 45 for men at high risk, and age 50 for men at average risk of developing prostate cancer.¹
- **Heart Health:** Monitor cholesterol and blood pressure and consider a cardiac risk assessment especially if you have a family history of cardiovascular disease or

sudden cardiac death.

- **Diabetes check:** Continue annual checks of A1C.
- **Colon cancer screening:** A colonoscopy or a test such as Cologuard is recommended starting at age 45.
- **Shingles vaccine:** Get your shingles vaccine after age 50.

"Men should be aware of any changes in bowel habits or blood in the stool. Also notice any changes in your erections, whether you experience testicular pain, or any other changes that are not normal for your body. These all need to be discussed with your doctor," explained Dr. Johnson.

In Your 60s and Beyond

In your 60s and beyond, focus on managing existing health conditions and preventing new ones. Continuing annual check-ups is essential for the early detection of any new and potentially serious health issues. Stay up-to-date with annual flu, pneumonia, and shingles vaccines.

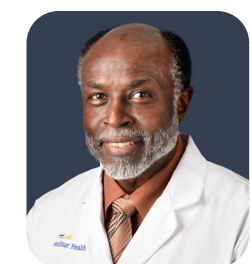
Health and Wellness Tips for Every Age

- Stay active.
- Eat a low-fat, low-

cholesterol, well-balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep every night.
- Monitor your blood pressure regularly.
- Get involved in some type of social or religious group; studies have shown that people who regularly engage with others tend to have better health as they age.
- Exercise your mind—read, listen to music, do crossword puzzles, or other activities that engage your brain.
- Help prevent falls by focusing on exercises that maintain or improve your balance.
- Prioritize mental health through stress management or social connections. Seek help from a professional when needed.

¹<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/prostate-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/acs-recommendations.html>



Carl Johnson, MD
Internal Medicine



Office location:



5801 Allentown Road,
Suite 510
Camp Springs,
MD 20746



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Johnson, please call **301-899-0020**.



Hundreds Attend First Annual Community Baby Shower and Resource Fair



Dr. Stephen T. Michaels
President
MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



Charmaine Scarlett
Population and Community Health Director
MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



Before the doors even opened to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's first Community Baby Shower and Resource Fair, the line of attendees stretched through the parking lot of the Clinton Baptist Church. Close to 500 expectant mothers, new parents, and families came out to this free event on Saturday, May 11 which also featured more than 30 vendors. Dozens of community-based organizations provided attendees with essential resources and expectant and new mothers had access to lactation consultants, free blood pressure checks, education on safe car seat installation, WIC, and much more to give them and their families a healthy start. Fresh groceries were also provided to 200 families. "We held this event to help

provide the community with equitable access to resources, addressing the significant disparities in maternal morbidity and infant mortality that exist in Prince George's County," explained Jessica Gamero, program coordinator for community health at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. The day also included an abundance of raffle prizes thanks to the generosity of community partners and hospital associates who donated items during a newborn supply drive. More than 100 prizes were awarded including strollers, car seats, pack and plays, breast pumps, nursing bags, baby wipes, and clothing. Through the hospital's community health department's partnership with the Greater DC Area Diaper Bank, over 12,300 diapers were

provided. To receive the diapers, attendees presented a bingo card stamped by at least 10 Resource Fair organizations. "Everyone who came through the doors left with at least two packs of diapers and wipes," said Gamero who added that the hospital was also very grateful to Pastor Colin Pugh and the Clinton Baptist Church's support of the event. The magnitude of the event had a lasting impact on all in attendance. "The education provided at this event not only improves the community but supports moms, babies, and families within the county," said Charmaine Scarlett, Ed.D., MPH, CHES, director of population and community health.



To learn more about Community Health at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/MSMHCOutreach](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/MSMHCOutreach).

Two Health Screenings You May Have Never Considered

Esophageal and pancreatic cancer screenings are not for everyone, but you should know they exist.



At some point, you have most likely experienced heartburn—that burning sensation in your chest that typically occurs after you’ve eaten. Called acid reflux or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), the condition is common and usually nothing to worry about. Acid is present in the stomach to aid in digestion. When the acid comes up into the esophagus, the tube that carries food and fluids from the mouth into the stomach, it causes irritation and inflammation.

Gastroenterologist Mark Real, MD, explained that occasional acid reflux isn’t usually harmful; however, when acid reflux becomes a regular occurrence, the inflammation of the esophagus can lead to bigger problems down the road.

“If regular acid reflux goes unchecked for an extended period, the exposure to the stomach acid and the chronic inflammation of the lining of the esophagus can result in the narrowing of the esophagus, scarring, bleeding,

and even a precancerous change in the cells that line the esophagus called Barrett’s esophagus,” stated Dr. Real.

If you experience recurrent symptoms of GERD, it may be time to see a gastroenterologist. These symptoms include:

- A burning sensation in the chest
- Difficulty swallowing
- An acidic taste in the mouth
- Chronic cough or asthma-like symptoms along with other symptoms of acid reflux

Treatment for Symptom Relief

GERD can be treated with simple lifestyle changes such as limiting or eliminating foods considered irritants such as citrus fruits, tomato-based products, coffee, fatty foods, chocolate, and caffeine. When diet modification isn’t enough, Dr. Real recommends over-the-counter acid relievers or proton pump inhibitors. Prescription medications may also be recommended depending on the severity of symptoms.

These treatments, alone or in combination, typically control GERD and rarely is surgery necessary to treat the condition.

GERD and Esophageal Cancer: Should You Be Screened?

Dr. Real emphasized that anyone with chronic symptoms of acid reflux, a family history of esophageal cancer, and/or Barrett’s esophagus should talk to a gastroenterologist about screening for esophageal cancer.

In addition to GERD, risk factors for esophageal cancer include:

- Age (older than 50 years)
- Being male/assigned male at birth
- Obesity
- A history of smoking

“People do not need to have a family history of esophageal cancer to be recommended for screening. If you have acid reflux and one additional risk factor, screening is a good idea,” Dr. Real said.

What Does Esophageal Screening Entail?

An outpatient procedure called an upper endoscopy is the screening used to identify esophageal cancer or Barrett’s esophagus (pre-cancerous changes). Under sedation, a thin, flexible tube equipped with a camera is inserted into the mouth and down into the esophagus to examine the area between the upper esophagus and the stomach for any precancerous changes and severe inflammation. If abnormalities in the lining of the esophagus are found, the physician takes a biopsy, or tissue sample, to look for irregular cellular changes.

Dr. Real explained that in some patients, ablation or cryotherapy, where the precancerous cells are destroyed by being frozen, and regular follow-ups with an esophageal specialist may be recommended. If changes in the esophagus are very advanced, surgery may be needed.

“It’s important to catch a seemingly benign digestive problem like acid reflux early so that it doesn’t lead to long-term and sometimes severe health problems down the line,” emphasized Dr. Real.



Mark Real, MD,
Gastroenterologist



Things to Know About Pancreatic Cancer Screening

1 Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Screening for this type of cancer is not as common as it is for cancers of the colon, breast, prostate, or lung. While the number of cases of pancreatic cancer are lower than other types of cancers, this disease is more deadly and less treatable typically because people do not often have symptoms until it is in a very late stage.

2 According to Dr. Mark Real, people should be screened for pancreatic cancer if:

- They have a family history of the disease
- There’s a family or personal history of the BRCA-1 or BRCA-2 genetic mutation which is often associated with

breast cancer and gynecologic cancers

3 Pancreatic cancer screening is performed annually for high-risk patients using MRI imaging and an endoscopic ultrasound that uses a camera and ultrasound waves to look closely at the pancreas.

“Despite the advances in cancer treatments including surgery, chemo and immunotherapy, and radiation therapy, the outcomes for pancreatic cancer have traditionally been poor because it is usually found at a more advanced stage when treatment is less effective,” explained Dr. Real. “Early detection and screening for patients at very high risk of developing pancreatic cancer can lead to better outcomes.”



To schedule a consultation or find out if you are a candidate for esophageal or pancreatic cancer screening, contact Dr. Mark Real at:

7501 Surratts Road, Suite 203
Clinton, MD 20735

P: 301-877-4599



ZAP-X® Is Changing Lives of People with Brain Tumors

For patients at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, ZAP-X® Gyroscopic Radiosurgery™ is changing the lives of patients with brain tumors and benign brain conditions.

For one young patient, ZAP-X proved lifesaving when an arteriovenous malformation (AVM), an abnormal collection of blood vessels in the brain, caused a life-threatening brain bleed. Determining that surgery was not an option to stop the bleeding because of where the blood vessels were located in the brain, the patient was treated with ZAP-X at MedStar Southern Maryland. Eighteen months after a single treatment, there was no evidence of the AVM seen on MRI, eliminating the risk of future brain bleeds. The patient was taken off seizure medicine, no longer experienced headaches or balance issues, and was back to playing golf and working full-time.

“ZAP-X’s radiation delivery is

so precise with very low scatter rates of radiation affecting surrounding, healthy tissue or structures. It is extremely effective at eliminating brain tumors and preventing them from returning,” said Andrew Satinsky, MD, clinical director of radiation oncology. MedStar Southern Maryland was one of the first three centers in the entire world, and the first provider on the East Coast Region, to offer ZAP-X.

What is ZAP-X?

ZAP-X is a premier radiosurgery system dedicated to the treatment of brain tumors by delivering radiation inside the skull with pinpoint accuracy. Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) is not surgery in the traditional sense as it does not require any incisions or anesthesia and is painless. ZAP-X is often an alternative to invasive brain surgery.

Other benefits of the ZAP-X SRS technology include:

- Highly targeted treatment for brain lesions

- Non-invasive with no uncomfortable head frames like many traditional radiation systems
- Most patients can return to normal activities immediately following treatment

A Unique Blend of Technology and Multidisciplinary Care

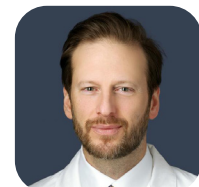
Radiation oncologist, Matthew Witek, MD, noted that the ZAP-X technology sets MedStar Southern Maryland apart, expanding its capabilities and treatment options to patients in the community. He emphasized the team approach to patient care that includes radiation oncology, medical oncology, radiology, and neurosurgery working together to offer the most personalized treatment.

Dr. Satinsky added, “No other stereotactic radiosurgery technology supersedes ZAP-X’s ability to treat conditions of the brain. I encourage anyone who has been told there is nothing else that can be done or who needs a second opinion to call MedStar Southern Maryland to see if ZAP-X could be a viable option.”

For more information on ZAP-X, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/ZAP-X](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/ZAP-X).



Andrew Satinsky, MD
Radiation Oncology



Matthew Witek, MD
Radiation Oncology

What is PAD and Are You at Risk?



Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a chronic condition that affects nearly 6.5 million people in the United States aged 40 and older. Many people have heard of atherosclerosis, the buildup of fatty deposits that lead to narrowed or hardened blood vessels, as it relates to heart disease, but it can happen in the arteries of the legs too, which is called PAD.

What are the signs of PAD?

Because atherosclerosis leads to reduced blood flow to the arteries in the legs, people with PAD may experience:

- Cramping or pain in the leg muscles when walking or climbing stairs
- Pain in the feet or toes while resting, especially if the legs are elevated
- An open wound or ulcer on the foot that won’t heal
- A decreased pulse in the lower extremities on examination by a healthcare provider, a lack of hair growth on the legs, or cold feet

Many people with PAD do not experience symptoms and the condition can go undetected unless signs begin to surface, which is why it’s important to manage any potential risk factors.

Who is at risk of developing PAD?

Atherosclerosis and peripheral artery disease are caused by:

- Smoking
- Chronic medical conditions that affect the blood vessels, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Age; nearly 20 percent of men and women in their 80s have PAD

How is PAD treated?

Although there is no cure for PAD, treatment is individualized based on your age, disease severity, symptoms, and related health conditions. Treatment may include:

- Lifestyle modifications including quitting smoking, modifying your diet, and exercise
- Medications to control chronic conditions such as blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, and diabetes
- Surgery for more severe cases of PAD where blood vessels in the leg are significantly restricted. MedStar Southern Maryland vascular surgeons are highly skilled in advanced surgical procedures that restore blood flow to the legs.

According to vascular surgeon Joshua Dearing, MD, “Surgical options for peripheral artery disease range from minimally invasive procedures that involve placing a balloon and/or stent to open the blockage in the arteries of the legs to bypass surgery that



uses your own vein or a prosthetic graft to reroute blood flow.”

Talk to your healthcare provider about your risks for developing PAD, how to effectively manage these risks, and for a referral for a consultation with a vascular surgeon to discuss treatment.

If you experience symptoms of PAD, it’s important to seek medical care right away.



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Dearing, please call **301-877-7353**.



Joshua Dearing, MD,
Vascular Surgery

Infusion Therapy Offers Hope, Advanced Treatment for Neurological Conditions



For patients living with neurological conditions, treatment has come a long way over the years. The Infusion Center at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center offers access to new, cutting-edge neurological infusion therapies close to home, making treatment convenient while offering care from some of the region's leading neurologists.

Improved Treatment and Significant Designation for Multiple Sclerosis Care

For individuals living with and managing the symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS), infusion therapy has vastly improved their quality of life. Patients who previously needed to take these MS medications every day, twice a day, or had to inject themselves with the drugs several times a week can now come to the Infusion Center once or twice a year to prevent their MS from worsening.

Recently, MedStar Southern Maryland was designated as a Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care Center by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, a major milestone marking the hospital's vast capabilities to slow disease progression while offering a

wide array of MS treatments. MedStar Southern Maryland is the only comprehensive MS center in Prince George's County and Southern Maryland.

New Therapies for Alzheimer's Disease and Migraines

For Alzheimer's disease, new drugs slow the progression of the disease in some patients. Clinical trials for new medications led to the FDA approval of a drug now being used at MedStar Southern Maryland's Infusion Center to treat early-onset Alzheimer's disease. The antibody intravenous infusion therapy targets and removes beta-amyloid from the brain and reduces cognitive and functional decline in people living with early Alzheimer's.

The Infusion Center also offers IV infusion of migraine-specific drugs including FDA-approved monoclonal antibody therapy to help prevent the onset of recurring migraines and targeted anti-inflammatory medications to treat migraine attacks.

"We're now providing these advanced therapies right here in our community, which is greatly improving the quality of life for so many people locally," said neurologist Tian Wang, MD.

The hospital's Infusion Center, located within the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, has 13 infusion treatment bays, including several private treatment rooms, and a dedicated team of clinicians.



Tian Wang, MD,
Neurologist



For patients seeking care for neurological conditions or to learn more about the neurology clinical trials, call **301-877-4540** to schedule a consultation.

Tidbit



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Named a "Best Regional Hospital for Equitable Access"

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has been recognized as one of the Best Regional Hospitals for Equitable Access by U.S. News & World Report. The hospital was among 53 regional hospitals in the U.S. and the only hospital in Prince George's County and the Southern Maryland region recognized for providing high-quality care to underserved populations.

"Healthcare disparities in traditionally underserved communities is a real-world issue that we are committed to solving. This recognition is a testament to our entire team's dedication to health equity in Prince George's County," said Stephen Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE, president of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

Over the past several years, MedStar Southern Maryland has committed to creating

accessible and comprehensive healthcare programs that meet the community's diverse needs. These programs include:

- The opening of the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, which marked its fourth anniversary as a cancer center in the region in 2024 and complements the hospital's 40-plus years of providing integrated cancer services in Prince George's County.
- The addition of new cardiac services such as the advanced heart failure program and innovative minimally invasive catheterization procedures are improving the heart health of people throughout the county.
- The designation as a primary stroke center, serving the community with the highest level of stroke care 24/7.

- Community outreach services to address health disparities in Southern Maryland's underserved patient populations with programs such as the Community Baby Shower, the community caregivers workshop, and the HRSA Healthy Start Grant aimed at improving health outcomes for mothers and babies before, during, and after pregnancy.

"This 'Best Regional Hospitals for Equitable Access' honor highlights the important and necessary work MedStar Southern Maryland is committed to as we work to break down barriers to accessible, high-quality healthcare in our community," added Dr. Michaels. "We have accomplished so much, but there's still much work to be done to continue addressing the social and economic challenges that exist."

"Healthcare disparities in traditionally underserved communities is a real-world issue that we are committed to solving. This recognition is a testament to our entire team's dedication to health equity in Prince George's County,..."

—**Stephen Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE**
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center





Local Hospital Leaders Share Successes and Challenges at Roundtable Event

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center was among several hospitals in attendance at the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable on May 8 to discuss healthcare successes and challenges with other local healthcare leaders.

President Stephen Michaels, MD, FAAOS, FACHE addressed the issue of boosting employee morale among staffing shortages that have continued to challenge hospitals throughout the region since the pandemic. He noted that MedStar Health continues its focus on recruiting and training qualified people for high-tech and critical jobs like nursing. He also proudly highlighted the recently awarded \$5.5 million federal HRSA Healthy Start grant which will assist the hospital and its community partners in improving health outcomes

before, during, and after pregnancy for Black and underserved women throughout Prince George's County. The five-year program is dedicated to enhancing a new mother's well-being and health, preventing infant mortality, and eliminating health disparities by ensuring every mother, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity, has access to quality care.

He shared that at the program's core is the development of a specialized care team of perinatal navigators, health educators, and community health workers to address the multifaceted factors



Photo provided courtesy of Prince George's Suite Magazine & Media

that negatively impact Black maternal and infant outcomes. "This will be a comprehensive care model that aims to bring substantial improvements in health outcomes to this vulnerable population."



Existing Pre-Op/PACU Gets a Facelift

Thanks to the many advanced clinical services brought to residents of Prince George's County and Southern Maryland over the past several years, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has seen a significant increase in surgical and procedural volumes. As a result of this growth, MedStar Health is addressing the urgent need to renovate the pre-operative and post-anesthesia care unit (PACU) and recovery areas, which are currently undersized

and no longer optimal.

The current 4,000 sq. ft. of space is segmented, inhibiting patient flow and causing the dedicated care team to continuously adapt to the tight space to deliver high-quality patient care. The renovation will convert the area to an integrated, open-floor plan for pre-op and PACU to help foster collaboration and efficiency. Pre-op will occupy one side and PACU the other, with a total of 17 patient bays that can be utilized as needed in addition to two nurse's stations.

The revamped space will enhance patient flow, comfort, privacy, and accommodate the state-of-the-art medical equipment and technology already in use for an improved overall patient experience.

Kelly Haynie, vice president of operations, stated that the much-needed renovation will establish a physical environment that reflects the exceptional level of care consistently provided to hospital patients.

Heart & Soul

Helping you get to the heart of the matter.



Prevent Disease Before It Starts—Steps You Can Take Now

People typically seek treatment for an illness once they experience symptoms or have a diagnosis. MedStar Health cardiologist Tarana Nekzad, DO, wants to help patients prevent disease before it occurs with a focus on metabolic health and an anti-inflammatory lifestyle.

What is Metabolic Health?

Being metabolically healthy means that the body uses food and nutrients in a way that reduces the risk of metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes, obesity, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, heart disease, and stroke.

Dr. Nekzad stressed that most individuals who do not have a genetic predisposition to metabolic disease can help prevent conditions like diabetes and heart disease. "This means having an annual physical with a primary care physician, checking in with a cardiologist when necessary, and living an anti-inflammatory lifestyle."

What is an Anti-Inflammatory Lifestyle?

Chronic inflammation in our bodies can lead to disease. The environment, genetics, and certain foods like red and processed meats, fried foods, as well as foods high in sugar, trans-fats, and refined carbohydrates (white flour, cakes, cookies, sodas, etc.) can cause inflammation.

"Inflammation and disease are our body's way of telling us that it's time to make changes," Dr. Nekzad said, urging patients to focus on anti-inflammatory behaviors and foods that can help prevent metabolic disorders including:

- Eating an anti-inflammatory diet such as the Mediterranean Diet, which has been proven in studies to lower risk factors for heart disease including cholesterol and blood pressure. This way of eating emphasizes lean proteins and fish, plant-based

foods, beans and legumes, nuts, vegetables, fruits, olive oil, and whole grains.

- Getting adequate exercise such as walking, swimming, and biking for at least 30 minutes a day, five to seven days a week.
- Seeking preventative care and getting annual check-ups.

The Best Time to Focus on Preventative Health

Incorporating heart-healthy and anti-inflammatory behaviors at a young age helps the body stay healthy. Dr. Nekzad emphasized, however, that it's never too late to focus on your health. "I tell my patients in their 50s for example, that making these important lifestyle changes can make a big difference on their next 20, 30, and even 40 years of life."



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Nekzad, please call **301-782-2220**.



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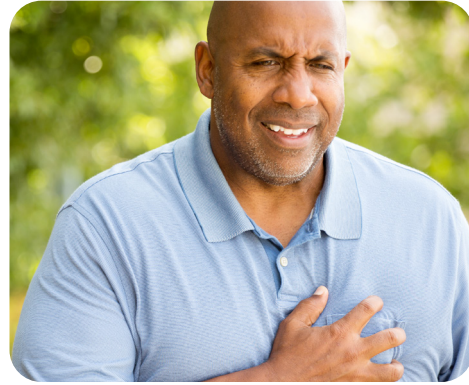
4 Heart Symptoms Never to Ignore

Not all heart problems come with obvious warning signs. How do you tell if something is not quite right with your heart? Cardiologist Rahul Malik, MD, says to listen to your body. Here, he outlines some common heart symptoms and when it's time to see a cardiologist.

1 Chest pressure, discomfort, or pain is one of the more obvious symptoms of a heart problem. Pressure in the chest that comes and goes should be checked by a cardiologist as soon as possible. People who have chest discomfort along with other risk factors for cardiac disease such as family history, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, and diabetes, should be evaluated for blockages of the coronary arteries.

When is chest pain an emergency?

"If you experience chest pain or sudden pressure that does not go away, call 9-1-1 immediately," Dr. Malik stated. "People sometimes wait, thinking their symptoms are just indigestion. But if the chest pain doesn't go away or gets more frequent, don't drive to the ER,



call 9-1-1 so paramedics can attend to you."

2 Shortness of breath can signal a weak heart or heart failure, where the heart is not pumping efficiently. Shortness of breath can also be a sign of fluid build-up around the heart or even a heart attack.

3 Swelling in the ankles, feet, or legs can also be a sign of congestive heart failure.

4 Dizziness accompanied by heart palpitations may be a sign of atrial fibrillation, a problem with the electrical system of your heart. Heart palpitations, where your heart skips a beat or feels like it is fluttering or racing, are common and can be caused by stress, anxiety, too much caffeine, pregnancy, overactive thyroid, dehydration, or certain medications.

Heart palpitations may come and go and are usually not a cause of concern if they are infrequent or episodic. But an irregular heartbeat that doesn't go away, happens frequently, causes shortness of breath, or causes you to feel dizzy or even pass out should be assessed by a cardiologist.



Walk to Protect Your Heart

Dr. Malik emphasized that regular exercise, in addition to a heart-healthy diet, can keep your heart strong and healthy. Begin with walking. This low-impact activity offers many cardiac benefits:

- Reduces stress
- Can lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Aids in weight loss
- Can be a social activity

"Begin with five minutes of daily walking and work your way up to 10, 15, and then 30 minutes each day," Dr. Malik advised. "Take the stairs or park at the back of the parking lot to add steps to your daily routine. Some exercise is better than none and keeps your heart pumping."



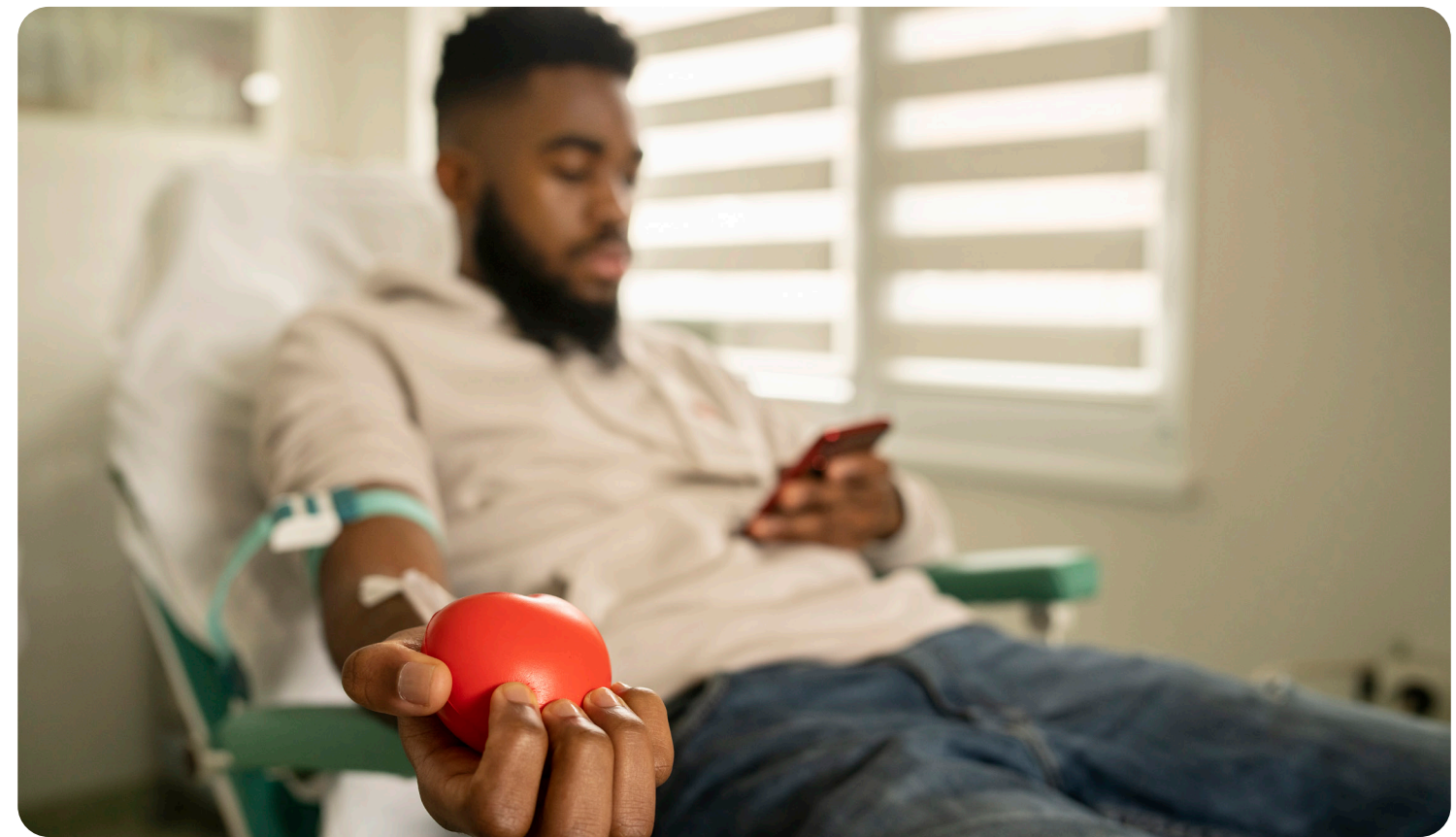
Rahul Malik, MD



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Blood Drives at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

Helping Others in Great Need

Did you know? One blood donation helps three patients.

Blood drives are important to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and the community as they assist in meeting the need for the national blood shortage. Blood drives are held at the hospital once a month in the multipurpose room.

Who can donate blood?

- Any individual over the age of 18 who is not pregnant or breastfeeding and can pass a preliminary health screening
- Any individual under 18 can donate with parental consent
- All individuals must feel well and weigh at least 110 pounds



Become a blood donor today! Call **301-877-5633** to register.

Or, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdh3xk6u> to register for a blood drive.



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