

Healthy Living



Advancing vascular care

New procedure prevents stroke

Now nationally recognized by Magnet® | Specialty care in Charlotte Hall
Rugby president tackles injury | Colorectal cancer can lack symptoms

Summer 2024



Letter from the president

Dear friends,

Summer is here! Like many of you, I have eagerly awaited the return of warm weather, especially after a rainy spring. I hope this finds you all doing well and looking forward to chances to relax and spend time with loved ones this season.

At MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, increasing access to high-quality care for our community is always a priority. We are proud that **Melissa Meghpara, DO**, successfully completed the first Transcervical Carotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR) procedures at MedStar St. Mary's, expanding the minimally-invasive services available without a need for a drive into the city. Meet one of Dr. Meghpara's patients in our cover story.

I am incredibly proud of our nursing team for their recent Magnet® Program recognition. Earning this designation is a reflection of the high-quality care provided not just by our nursing team, but by our entire hospital. The prestigious honor is awarded to less than 10% of hospitals nationwide and is a testament to our culture of excellence.

Wherever your adventures take you this summer, we remain here for you and your family as both your care team and neighbors.

Wishing you sunshine and good health!

Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP
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MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

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Healthy Living is published by MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. The information is intended to inform and educate about health, not as a substitute for consultation with a physician.

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Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP



I was honored to deliver opening remarks at the Southern Maryland Caregivers Conference in April, sharing updates about our hospital, new providers and services, plus innovative healthcare practices that may be of benefit to patients and their families. Telehealth, patient portals, and other current technologies can seem overwhelming at first, but they were truly designed to serve and empower patients and their caregivers by increasing ease of access to care.



ON THE COVER
Lisa Yager, CRNP, and Melissa Meghpara, DO, right, from the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

Now
nationally
recognized
as a **Magnet®**-
designated
hospital.



Our nurses and hospital team don't just say they're committed to high-quality care—they deliver it every day.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) agrees, awarding us our first **Magnet® recognition!**

Organizations awarded through the Magnet Recognition Program® embody a collaborative culture, where nurses are valued as integral partners in the patient's safe passage through their healthcare experiences. Our team reflects that commitment to excellence for our patients and community.

It's how we treat people.

A new level of life-saving care

TCAR procedure now available to help prevent strokes in patients with carotid artery disease

The human body has two major arteries that carry blood from the heart to the brain. Blockage of these carotid arteries is a leading cause of ischemic strokes, which could lead to permanent brain damage or death. MedStar Health is now offering a procedure at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital that may be a lifesaver for many people suffering from carotid artery disease.

"We can easily evaluate and monitor patients with carotid artery blockages using in-office ultrasound," said **Melissa Meghpara, DO**, with MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at Leonardtown. "Once a blockage becomes significant, we can take their care one step further and reverse the blockage by either cleaning out the plaque or placing a stent."

Transcervical Carotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR) is a less invasive surgical procedure to improve blood flow through the



Melissa Meghpara, DO, examines Lorraine Bauckman during a follow up visit. Lorraine was the first person to receive a Transcervical Carotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR) procedure at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

carotid arteries which reduces the risk of stroke by placing a stent. In March, Dr. Meghpara, a vascular surgeon, performed the first TCAR procedures at MedStar St. Mary's.

First case success

Lorraine Bauckman, 78, knew she had a partial blockage in her carotid artery for more than a decade and had been monitored regularly before moving to St. Mary's County several years ago. When she switched primary care offices,

her new physician recommended Lorraine undergo a Duplex scan to determine if the blockage had increased.

"I have had quite a few Dopplers done," said Lorraine. "I knew what was going on with it, but every time I had a scan it was never enough to have surgery."

When Lorraine was referred to the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at Leonardtown, her latest test results showed the blockage had increased. Lorraine met with Dr. Meghpara in

March to discuss her options.

"I was a little nervous," said Lorraine. "Dr. Meghpara gave me pamphlets explaining the TCAR procedure. I was very comfortable with her, and I really liked her."

Lorraine was the first of four patients to have the procedure performed on March 21. The minimally invasive technique involves having the surgeon place a stent in the blocked artery to restore blood flow.

"During the operation, the carotid artery is exposed through a small incision above the clavicle. We then divert blood flow from the carotid artery to the femoral vein using a flow reversal device," said Dr. Meghpara. "This device helps us protect against small pieces of plaque going to the brain while we are working. I then deploy the stent across the blockage and after a few more pictures, we are done. The whole



The surgical team with Dr. Meghpara, center, following the first TCAR procedure performed in March.

procedure takes about 90 minutes."

Lorraine spent the night in the hospital and returned home the next day. And other than being a little sleepy from the anesthesia, she said she felt great.

"I was happy to be able to have the procedure at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital," said Lorraine. "When I saw Dr. Meghpara after the surgery, she seemed pleased, and if she is pleased so am I."

"We are delighted to be able to offer this procedure here," said Dr. Meghpara. "When I first started here, one of my major goals was to bring procedures like this to Leonardtown. I am not only thrilled that we can offer this to the community, but that I have such dedicated staff helping me both in and out of the operating room. Without my team, I would not be able to provide care like this."

Free screenings to determine your risk of vascular disease



The expert providers at MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital offer a free, non-invasive 30-minute screening for the three major types of vascular disease. The appointment includes:

- **Carotid ultrasound** to look for conditions that cause a stroke
- **Abdominal aortic ultrasound** to identify abdominal aortic aneurysms
- **Ankle-Brachial index (ABI)** to assess for peripheral artery disease

Participants receive a report detailing test results and information on vascular diseases.

Call **240-434-4072** to make an appointment.

MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

With more than 200 specialists throughout the greater Washington, D.C., area and Central Maryland, MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute gives patients access to the most advanced care close to where they live and work.

**25500 Point Lookout Road
Outpatient Pavilion, Suite 200
Leonardtown, MD 20650
P 240-434-4072**

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Vascular** to learn more.



Ray Trigger of Lusby tore a bicep playing for Pax River Rugby during a match in 2023. He's back to doing what he loves after orthopedic surgery.

Rugby president tackles own elbow injury



A search for brotherhood and camaraderie brought Ray Trigger to rugby—a sport he loves, with sometimes punishing results.

Representing Pax River Rugby at a tournament last spring, Ray went to make a tackle with an extended arm. “I heard and felt the tear in my left bicep immediately,” he said.

Ray made his way to the medic table in “intense pain,” and was advised to make an appointment with a professional. “I asked around for recommendations, and friends all said, ‘You should go see Dr. Kuri,’” said Ray, 40, of Lusby.

Connecting with **John Kuri, MD**, orthopedic surgeon, MedStar Orthopedic Institute at Leonardtown, Ray received confirmation that he’d torn his left bicep.

“A strain or tear in the bicep muscle can occur in the elbow or shoulder. We see this injury often in athletes, but it isn’t limited to those playing sports,” said Dr. Kuri. “A quick burst of pain in the upper arm is the most common symptom. Patients often report hearing a ‘pop’ as the tendon separates from the bone.”

Not every injury requires surgery, Dr. Kuri shared; more minor strains can be treated with measures such as ice and

pain relief medication. In Ray’s case, however, the situation was serious. “This injury was a total rupture, which can only be repaired through surgical intervention to reattach the tendon to the elbow,” said Dr. Kuri.

Ray underwent a successful procedure in May 2023. Throughout that summer, the Calvert native focused on regaining his strength, mobility, and dexterity at physical therapy. Rugby plays an important role in the U.S. Marine Corps veteran’s life, fostering the sense of teamwork he greatly valued during his military service—and he was determined to rejoin his teammates.

Starting services at MedStar Health Physical Therapy at Leonardtown, Ray received personalized help to get back on the field for their seven-game season that fall. Today he’s as active as before, serving as the team’s president and fostering a passion for his sport especially through their youth program, in addition to his career as a mechanic. He has regained his mobility and dexterity, if not all his previous strength.

“Honestly, I forget that I had surgery, except when I see the scar,” he continued. “Dr. Kuri was great. It was such a good experience from top to bottom. I’m grateful, just really pleased with the results.”

MedStar Orthopedic Institute at Leonardtown

23503 Hollywood Road,
Suite 101, Leonardtown, MD
P 240-434-7483

[MedStarHealth.org/Ortho](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Ortho)



John A. Kuri II, MD



Emmanuel Atiemo, MD



William Lennen, MD



MedStar Health in Charlotte Hall

9955 Three Notch Road
Suite 201
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

[MedStarHealth.org/
CharlotteHall](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CharlotteHall)

Great care, only closer

At MedStar Health, we love taking care of our community. That's why we have expanded our specialty care options in northern St. Mary's County. With primary care on the first floor, a range of expert specialists now offer office hours on the second floor of our MedStar Health location in Charlotte Hall. This allows residents in northern St. Mary's and Southern Charles counties to spend less time traveling and more time doing the things they love.

The next time you make an appointment with one of our specialists, ask about being seen in our Charlotte Hall office. We love being part of your neighborhood!



Women's health

Appointments with providers from MedStar Health Women's Health at Leonardtown and **Kelly Fritz, MD**, breast surgeon

Pediatrics

MedStar Georgetown University Hospital pediatric endocrinologist **Evgenia Gourgari, MD**, and a pediatric urologist and cardiologist

from Children's National Medical Center

Vascular

Vascular surgeon **Melissa Meghpara, DO**, and **Lisa Yager, CRNP**

Coming soon

General and bariatric surgery providers



Bonne Soiree a Paris!

Enjoy an evening of high fashion, elegance, and romance at our annual black-tie event with a Parisian twist. MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's 37th annual Gala will be held **Friday, Nov. 22**, from 7 p.m. to midnight at the Hollywood Social Hall. Join us for an unforgettable night dedicated to the celebration of generosity.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Paris](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Paris) for more information.

Colorectal cancer doesn't always cause symptoms, especially at first.



A patient could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it, which is why it's so important to be screened regularly. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that **adults at average risk begin screening for colorectal cancer at age 45**. Those at a higher risk (including a family history of the disease) should speak to a provider about when to start.

If you do experience symptoms, they may include:

- Bowel habit changes
- Unexplained weight loss
- Blood in or on your stool
- Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling the bowel does not empty completely
- Abdominal pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away

These concerns could be caused by something other than cancer, but a provider check-in is the best way to be sure.

Colonoscopy or at-home stool test?

Colorectal cancer screenings commonly include a colonoscopy procedure or at-home stool test, with the colonoscopy considered the "gold standard" tool. "The procedure itself is not uncomfortable for most patients, and complication rates are very low," explained gastroenterologist **Anand Nath, MD**. "Colonoscopies offer the highest accuracy and ability to both screen and potentially treat at the same time."



At-home stool sample kits can provide important information for those at an average risk for colon cancer. They do not have the dietary restrictions and preparation of a colonoscopy, but "their detection rates are lower and results can be falsely positive, leading to significant anxiety between positive test and follow-up colonoscopy," said Dr. Nath. Still, they can be an effective tool, provided patients act quickly on a positive screening. Regardless of method, **"The most important thing is that adults do get screened."**



Anand Nath, MD



Mark Real, MD



Heather Tennyson, FNP



**MedStar Health
Gastroenterology
at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital**

Outpatient Pavilion, second floor
25500 Point Lookout Road
Leonardtown, MD

P 240-434-7474

Outpatient rehabilitation honored nationally for patient experience

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's outpatient rehabilitation services have been named a 2023 Human Experience (HX) Guardian of Excellence Award® winner by Press Ganey, a global provider of healthcare experience solutions and services. This award is part of Press Ganey's annual national ranking of the top hospitals and health systems according to performance in key measures, including patient experience.



As a winner of the Press Ganey HX Guardian of Excellence Award® for outpatient rehabilitation services, MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is in the top 5% of the 41,000 healthcare organizations that partner with Press Ganey on patient feedback. In 2023, more than 95% of rehabilitation patients indicated they would recommend the hospital's team for outpatient physical and occupational therapy needs.

As part of MedStar National Rehabilitation Network, physical therapists and occupational therapists at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital work with individuals to relieve pain and discomfort, manage chronic conditions, and improve their ability to successfully complete activities of daily living.



Pictured, from left, are Hayley Mesmer, PT, DPT; department director Virginia Morris, MIPH, OTR/L, FACHE; Dana Nichols, PTA, PORI; Nicole Spadavecchia, OTR/L, CLT, LGPC; Jan Watson, COTA, CLT; Erica Pirolli, MS, CCC-SLP; Carlee Cooksey; Robin Remaly, MSEd, PT; and Tracy O'Donnell.

To learn more about Rehabilitation Medicine at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital or to make an appointment, call **301-475-6062** or visit **MedStarHealth.org/Rehab**.

Achieving clinical excellence in wound care

MedStar Health's Wound Healing Center at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital has been awarded the prestigious President's Circle award by Healogics, the nation's largest provider of advanced wound care services.

The center also received the Center of Distinction Award for 2023 and the Robert A. Warriner III, Clinical Excellence Award.

Healogics recognizes centers that

achieve clinical and operational excellence. Advanced wound care modalities provided by the center's wound care experts include negative pressure wound therapy, total contact casting, bio-engineered tissues, biosynthetic dressings and growth factor therapies, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which works by surrounding the patient with 100% oxygen to help accelerate wound healing.



Read more about the Wound Center's achievements on MedStar St. Mary's Hospital's Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages.

News **briefs**



Named a 2024 Top Hospital for Fair Share Spending

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital was recently named a 2024 Top Hospital for Fair Share Spending by the Lown Institute in its annual 2024 Fair Share Spending Report, an independent analysis of nonprofit hospital's community investments. MedStar St. Mary's was identified as being among only 20% of nonprofit hospitals nationwide to exceed—or even meet—their obligations for community investment. Visit [LownHospitalsIndex.org](https://www.lownhospitalsindex.org) to learn more.

Dr. Novello among Maryland's Top 100 Women

Mimi Novello, MD, MBA, FACEP, president and chief medical officer of MedStar St. Mary's Hospital is among *The Daily Record's* Top 100 Women for 2024. The *Daily Record's* annual award celebrates high-achieving Maryland women who are making an impact through their leadership, community service, and mentoring. Winners are selected by past Top 100 Women and business leaders. "I am extremely honored to be included in this group of amazing women," said Dr. Novello.



Surgeon celebrates his 100th robotic surgery

Gustavo Franco, MD, recently reached a remarkable milestone at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital: completing 100 robotic surgeries with the daVinci Xi surgical system. Since 2021, more than 800 procedures have been completed at MedStar St. Mary's, the first hospital in Southern Maryland to establish a robotic surgical program. Turn to the back cover to learn more.

Drill brings together community partners

Collaboration and teamwork extend far beyond our hospital walls. The St. Mary's County Department of Emergency Services and the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office recently led an active threat tabletop exercise at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, providing compelling training and discussion to foster proactive preparedness and communication amongst law enforcement, emergency services, and our healthcare professionals. **Capt. Richard Russell** (pictured) shares recommendations during the event.



Summer 2024 calendar

Support groups

Health Connections at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital hosts support groups. Because no registration is required for these, please reach out using the contacts below to verify if meetings are scheduled as planned.

- **Lactation** (every Wednesday, 10 a.m. to noon)
- **Parkinson's*** (second Tuesday of each month, 4:30 p.m.)
- **Stroke Survivors*** (second Tuesday of each month, 1 p.m.)

**No meetings during July and August. Meetings will resume in September.*

Call 301-475-6019 to learn more or register.

Bariatrics

Virtual **Bariatric Support Group** meetings at 10 a.m., second Saturday of each month. Initial registration required. Call 240-434-4088.

Blood drives

June 27, July 26, Aug. 22, Sept. 27, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Health Connections. Register at [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org).

Cancer care

Cancer care support group

Meetings held virtually the first and third Wednesday of each month. Call 240-434-7247 to register, or join "MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Cancer Support Group" on Facebook.

Breast cancer support group

Monthly, virtual. To receive an invite or learn more, please call 301-877-4673. Visit [Facebook.com/groups/MedStarBreastHealthProgram](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MedStarBreastHealthProgram) for support.

Community education

Diabetes Self-Management

Four-week, in-person classes on Mondays. In this self-management program, participants engage in conversations about their experience with diabetes, blood sugar monitoring, healthy eating and activity, and long-term disease management. Call 301-475-6019 to register or learn more.

Take Control of Diabetes

Appointments available to meet one-on-one with a registered dietitian. A provider's order for diabetes education is required. Services may be covered by



Ask the Experts: Quarterly Lunch and Learn



Topic: Hospice & Palliative Care
Thursday, Aug. 15 • from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.,
The Blue Heron Café,
MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

No cost. Call 301-475-6019 to register.

Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans. Call 301-475-6019.

Childbirth & family education

Parents-to-Be Workshop

In-person classes: July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 7, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Health Connections, \$100/couple. Combines four traditional parenting classes into a one-day overview. Topics include childbirth, breastfeeding, infant CPR, and practical baby care skills. Virtual options also available. Call 301-475-6019 to register.

Please note: some classes require a minimum number of participants to hold the course. If the need arises to cancel a class, we will make every effort to accommodate you on an alternate date.

Safe Sitter

June 22 and Aug. 17, 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Health Connections, \$65. Adolescents age 12-14 learn babysitting tips, basic first aid, and CPR. Call 301-475-6019 to sign up.

Pulmonary

Quit Tobacco Program

Virtual program to help participants stop using tobacco products. Visit [SMCHD.org/Tobacco](https://www.smchd.org/Tobacco) for dates and details.



First Last Name
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
City, State, Zipcode Here

Experience matters.

We're leading the region in robotic surgery.

Three years ago, MedStar Health was the first in the Southern Maryland region to introduce patients to the benefits of robotic surgery. Surgeons at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital have performed **more than 800 surgeries** with the daVinci system. From bariatrics to urology, patients who have these minimally invasive procedures typically experience smaller incisions, less pain, and faster healing.

We're proud to be advancing healing with industry-leading techniques that optimize surgical performance.



Sameer Alrefai, MD
Bariatric surgery



Gustavo Franco, MD
General surgery



Arthur Greenwood, MD
Obstetrics/
Gynecology



Jordan Luskin, MD
Urology



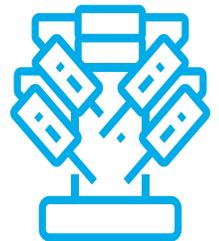
Veronica Marshall, DO
General surgery



Sharan Mullen, DO
Obstetrics/
Gynecology



Lindsey Threlkeld, MD
Obstetrics/
Gynecology



More than 800 robotic procedures performed by our local providers

Patients who have minimally invasive robotic procedures typically have:

- Smaller incisions
- Less pain
- Faster healing times

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Robotics](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Robotics) to learn more and find a local provider.