

# Better Health • Better Living

## STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER



## HEART CENTER TEAM ENHANCES SCOPE AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

A nationally renowned heart surgeon and leader in surgical research, Todd K. Rosengart, MD, FACS, FACC, joined Stony Brook University Medical Center last year as Co-Director of the Heart Center. His clinical expertise includes surgery for all forms of adult heart disease with a special expertise in treating high-risk and complex adult heart disease. As such, he has performed pioneering work applying novel strategies including minimally invasive mitral valve repair and minimally invasive aortic valve repair, endoscopic vessel harvesting, thoracoscopic "hybrid" bypass that avoids sternotomies (surgical incision through the sternum), "bloodless" surgery for patients wishing to avoid transfusions, and gene therapy, potentially providing a "biologic bypass" for patients with end-stage coronary

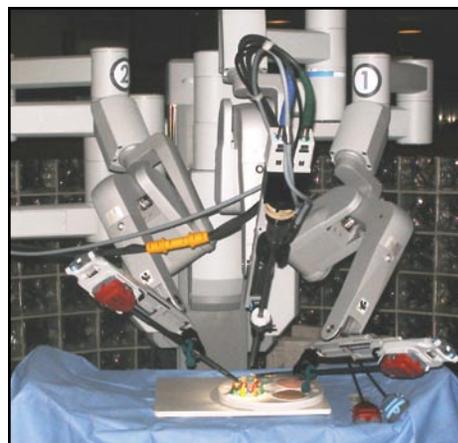
disease. With this array of expertise, he and his team have enhanced the scope and quality of cardiovascular surgical services offered to patients on Long Island.

About 95,000 Americans undergo heart valve procedures each year for problems that are relatively common. They can be caused by congenital defects, aging, or an untreated infection. Left untreated, heart valve problems can lead to heart failure or life-threatening cardiomyopathy. While heart valve surgery has traditionally been performed via a "median sternotomy," surgical division of the breastbone, new minimally invasive approaches to the heart valves allow for much smaller incisions made between the ribs called "mini-thoracotomies." The newly

*continued on page 7*

### Stony Brook Introduces New Robotic Surgical System

**Newly available at Stony Brook University Medical Center is the da Vinci® S HD™ Surgical System, the most technically advanced minimally-invasive robotic-assisted surgical system available.** The da Vinci® S HD™ surgical system provides surgeons with an alternative to both traditional open surgery and conventional laparoscopy. When using the system, a surgeon's hands are at the controls of a robotic platform, an ergonomically designed console, which includes four interactive robotic arms and a vision system. The system provides superior visualization, enhanced dexterity, and greater precision, ultimately raising the standard of care available at Stony Brook University Medical Center. Approximately \$2.5 million was invested to purchase and activate the system, which has been used to treat prostate cancer patients needing radical prostatectomy. Plans are underway to use it for other urologic procedures, as well as for applications in general, cardiac, gynecologic, and pediatric surgery.



## IN THIS ISSUE:

### ➤ FEATURE ARTICLES

Message from the CEO - Page 2

Advancing the Mission  
by Carrie Bhada - Page 2

Multiple Sclerosis: Treatment and Research  
by Patricia K. Coyle, MD - Page 3

Sunrise Fund Shines Bright with the Help of a Winning Smile - Page 3

### ➤ CLASSES AND PROGRAMS - pages 4-5

Register for Winter Classes

### ➤ SPECIAL EVENTS - page 5

### ➤ RESEARCH STUDIES - page 6

### ➤ ASK THE EXPERT - page 7

What are Hospitals Doing to Make Things Safer?  
by Carolyn Santora, MS, RN, CNA-BC


**STONY BROOK  
UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER**

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Steven L. Strongwater, MD**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Stony Brook University Hospital

As we begin 2008, I hope this year finds you in good health and spirit.

Stony Brook University Medical Center (SBUMC) concluded 2007 on a high note that included three staff members being recognized by *Long Island Business News* and North Fork Bank as Health Care Heroes; news that the University Health System Consortium upgraded our quality and accountability performance scores; and, the award of a \$2.85 million Phase 4 HEAL Grant from New York State for our work with the East End Hospitals in fulfilling Berger Commission mandates. In addition, we were recognized with the prestigious Ellison Pierce Patient Safety Award.

To help patients coming to Stony Brook University Medical Center, we now offer front door concierge services, and the Major Modernization Project continues toward Phase 1 completion. I will discuss the progress of our Major Modernization Project and operations at the Mall Walkers meeting in March.

## Three Health Care Heroes Recognized

SBUMC was well represented in a select group of Health Care Heroes honored by *Long Island Business News* and North Fork Bank. Of the 30 finalists, SBUMC had three. Carol Gomes, MS, FACHE, CPHQ, Associate Director, Quality Management, Division of Medical and Regulatory Affairs, was recognized for Achievements in Health Care; Suzette C. Smookler, MS, RD, Administrator for Hospitality Services, as Health Care Professional; and Todd K. Rosengart, MD, FACS, FACC, Professor and Chief, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, as a Physician Hero. These awardees are featured in a special edition of *Long Island Business News*.

## Four-Star Rating! 2007 UHC Quality and Accountability Performance Scorecard Improves

The University Health System Consortium (UHC) prepares an annual scorecard covering performance measures in mortality (35%), effectiveness (35%), safety (20%), and equity (10%) of patient care. (Efficiency and patient centeredness are also recorded although not specifically weighted in scores.) A ranking is then assigned and members are placed in one of five groups: Group 1 has 11 members (five-star rating, which is the best in the nation); Group 2 has 20 members (four-star rating); Group 3 has 21 members; Group 4 has

20 members; and, Group 5 has 10 members. This year, SBUMC moved from Group 3 to Group 2 with a four-star rating. This occurred while other members aggressively improved their quality and safety, which indicates that improving rank is not a simple feat. This elevated ranking is reflective of many programs in place to improve care at SBUMC, perhaps best demonstrated in the continued decline in mortality, now the lowest in Hospital history. Also of note, SBUMC was number one in the UHC membership for equitable care.

## HEAL NY Grant Announced for SBUMC

In the fourth round of grants awarded by the Department of Health, SBUMC received \$2.85 million for work related to helping the East End Hospitals (Southampton, Peconic Bay Medical Center, and Eastern Long Island) to meet the Berger Commission mandates. Funding for the grants was made available through the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY) and the Federal-State Health Reform Partnership (F-SHRP). Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center, Eastern Long Island Hospital, Peconic Bay Medical Center, and Southampton Hospital (Suffolk Health Network) also received a combined award of \$24 million.

## Ellison Pierce Patient Safety Award

The Ellison Pierce Patient Safety Award was  
*continued on page 8*

# ADVANCING THE MISSION

By Carrie Bhada, Director of Development, University Advancement

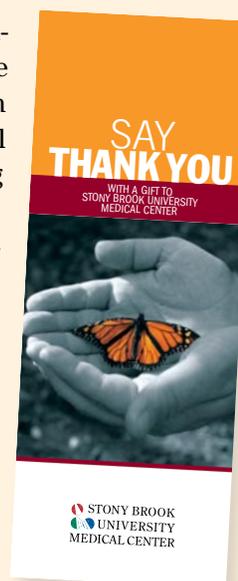
## A NEW PROGRAM FOR PATIENTS TO SAY "THANK YOU"

Stony Brook University Medical Center improves the lives of our patients, families, and communities, educates skilled healthcare professionals, and conducts research that expands clinical knowledge. This mission is driven by a dedicated team, and patients are taking notice. Cornelius McDonnell of East Setauket said, "I cannot stop telling people about the superb care I received. The whole staff should be proud." He and many others are grateful for the expertise and compassion of the talented staff.

Patients like Mr. McDonnell are showing their gratitude by giving back to the hospitals and physicians who cared for them. Contributing to the Hospital is a concrete way of improving the care

of others while satisfying the need to show gratitude. Contributions of all sizes have improved the lives of many through the purchase of items such as isolette covers for the cribs in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, murals and art in waiting areas, toys and children's programs, electronics, including televisions and video games, and life-saving medical equipment. Entire wings, floors, and centers have been renovated or newly constructed as a result of these gifts—they have the power to transform an institution.

Now there is another way to recognize outstanding care and compassion at Stony Brook, and a way to say thank you. A new program offers patients and their families an opportunity by



making a gift to the Medical Center. Gifts can be made in honor of someone special—a doctor, nurse, or staff member who made a difference, or for the benefit of a particular department. There are almost as many ways to give to Stony Brook as there are reasons to give.

To make your contribution, look for the "Say Thank You" brochures throughout Stony Brook, or call the Office of Advancement at (631) 444-4000 for more information.

# MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: TREATMENT AND RESEARCH

By Patricia K. Coyle, MD

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the major neurologic disease affecting young adults. It produces ongoing inflammation, demyelination (a degenerative process that erodes away the myelin sheath that protects nerve fibers), and neurodegeneration (damage to axons and neurons) within the brain and spinal cord. Current estimates indicate that there are 400,000 Americans affected and over two million people affected worldwide.

Recent studies show that the number of people with MS is increasing. It is now seen on a regular basis in African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics, not just Caucasians. Although women are most often affected, men make up 25 to 30 percent of patients. Typical onset of the disease begins between the ages of 15 to 50, with pediatric MS (disease onset before age 17) making up two to five percent of all cases. Epidemiologic studies identify low, medium, and high risk zones. It seems that exposure in childhood determines lifetime risk for the disease.

The cause of MS is not fully known. First, there have been multiple genes linked to the disease (risk/susceptibility, protection, and disease severity genes). However, MS is clearly not inherited; the genes only provide vulnerability. Second, environmental factors in early childhood set the stage for development of MS. These are believed to be exposure to common pathogens such as viruses and bacteria. Finally, the host immune system targets the brain and spinal cord to cause damaging lesions that disrupt nerve conduction and produce a variety of neurologic abnormali-

ties including vision loss, double vision, weakness, numbness, and unsteady gait.

There are two forms of MS: relapsing MS and progressive MS. Relapsing MS, the major form, is characterized by discrete attacks followed by variable recovery. In between relapses, patients are clinically stable. Progressive MS is characterized by slow worsening over months to years, without meaningful recovery. Relapsing MS involves inflammation that produces plaques (areas of damage) that can be seen on MRI scans. Progressive MS damages axons and neurons (neurodegeneration) that causes microscopic abnormalities, which can be imaged only through experimental techniques.

The most dramatic advance in MS has occurred in the last 14 years. This previously untreatable disease now has six FDA-approved therapies. All the treatments, which affect the immune system, work best for relapsing MS. They reduce relapses, disability, and MRI lesion activity. But the therapies are not cures, the individual therapeutic response is quite variable, and none of the drugs repair fixed damage. Dozens of novel therapies for MS are currently in development, including central nervous system (CNS) repair strategies. Still, many questions about MS remain.

The Department of Neurology at Stony Brook has had a major interest in MS for over 25 years. The Stony Brook MS Program is recognized internationally for clinical and research excellence. Stony Brook has the first funded National Pedi-

atric MS Comprehensive Care Center, where children are seen from around the world. They participate in a growing international database to study early onset MS. The adult MS Comprehensive Care Center has been active for over 15 years, with hundreds of patients evaluated and treated annually. MS patients can participate in cutting-edge clinical trials to test new therapies, including oral medications. Stony Brook conducts many MS studies that include novel neuroimaging techniques, analysis of cerebrospinal fluid for unique disease markers, and studies on cognitive and fatigue abnormalities. A novel imaging technique developed at Stony Brook to look at stem cells in the brain is now being applied to MS patients. This is the only study of its kind in the world.

In addition to clinical studies, the MS Program at Stony Brook collaborates with a number of research scientists to study the basic biology of MS. It is our hope that the clinical and research efforts being conducted at Stony Brook not only provide the finest clinical care for MS patients but will also lead to new insights and therapies that will ultimately solve the MS puzzle.

**Patricia K. Coyle, MD**, a Professor at Stony Brook University and the Acting Chair of the Department of Neurology, and Director of the Stony Brook Multiple Sclerosis Comprehensive Care Center, is recognized as a leading expert on multiple sclerosis and neurologic infections.



## SUNRISE FUND SHINES BRIGHT WITH THE HELP OF A WINNING SMILE

Krista Ann is one of the many children who have been treated at the Stony Brook University Cancer Center. She is, however, one of a kind when it comes to using her winning smile and perfected sales technique. Recently in the busy corridor of the Medical Center, you could not help hear this young but confident voice say, "Buy a calendar, \$20 to help the kids with cancer." There was simply no way that she could be ignored. Through the wonderful efforts of Krista Ann, and many others, over 600 Sunrise Fund calendars that include photos of children and staff of pediatric oncology were sold in a matter of a few weeks and an additional printing of 600 calendars was required. As Jeanne Greenfield, Pediatric Oncology Nurse Practitioner, exclaimed, "The outpouring of support from the local community has been

tremendous. It brings great hope to know how much support there is for the Sunrise Fund and the services that it provides."

Launched in 1999, the Sunrise Fund has raised more than \$565,000 through donor support and established several initiatives for children with cancer and their families.

Programs supported through the Sunrise Fund include:

**Our Little Heroes**, hosted by the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Department at Stony Brook University Medical Center, is Long Island's only support group for families of children with cancer.



The winning smile and perfected sales technique of Krista Ann, pictured above with Stony Brook University Medical Center's Jeanne Greenfield, a pediatric oncology nurse practitioner, put sales over the top and required an additional printing of a popular calendar published and sold annually by the Sunrise Fund to support finding the causes and cures of childhood cancers.

# January, February, March - CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

## AUTISM & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

### CODY CENTER WORKSHOPS

Presented by Stony Brook University's Cody Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Registration is required one week in advance of programs to ensure admission.

- **Thursday, February 7, 7-9 pm: From Preschool to Kindergarten: Information for Families of Children with Special Needs**  
Speaker: Chris McCauley, Early Childhood Direction Center
- **Thursday, March 6, 7-9 pm: Estate Planning for Families of Children with Special Needs: Guardianships and Special Needs Trusts**  
Speaker: Audra Dehan, Spanton and Parsoff, LLP
- **Thursday, March 13, 7-9 pm: Preparing for Your Annual Review**  
Speaker: Marcia Vogel, Disability Advocate, Nassau/Suffolk Law Services

**Stony Brook University  
Endeavor Hall, Room 120**

**Fee: For all workshops, suggested donation, \$10**

## CANCER CARE

### LOOK GOOD...FEEL BETTER PROGRAM

Offered in conjunction with the American Cancer Society for women with cancer undergoing treatment, this two-hour beauty program is facilitated by a licensed cosmetologist. Included are tips on skin and hair care, makeup instructions, and demonstrations of wig, turban, and scarf use. Registration is required.

**Mondays, 6-8 pm**

- **January 7**
- **February 4**
- **March 3**

**Stony Brook Technology Park  
Free**

### BREAST CANCER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUP

For men and women diagnosed with breast cancer, this monthly education and support group sponsored by the Carol M. Baldwin Breast Care Center features expert guest speakers who offer information on a variety of topics.

**Wednesdays, 7-9 pm**

- **January 2: Radiation and Breast Cancer**  
Speaker: Allen G. Meek, MD
  - **February 6: General Support Group Meeting**
  - **March 5: General Support Group Meeting**
- Holiday Inn Express  
Stony Brook - Free**

### UPPER GI CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Patients who have had esophageal and stomach cancer are encouraged to attend this informative support group. Registration is required.

**Wednesdays, 7 pm**

- **January 9**
- **February 13**
- **March 12**

**Stony Brook University Cancer Center  
Free**

### LUNG CANCER: UPDATE ON SCREENING, STAGING, AND MANAGEMENT

Presented by the Lung Cancer Evaluation Center, this symposium for oncologists, pulmonologists, nurses, pulmonary therapists, and other health care professionals will review the many advances in the prevention, screening, staging, and treatment of lung cancer. The lecture format will include and an opportunity to interact with Stony Brook University School of Medicine faculty, and invited lecturer, James Jett, MD, Professor of Medicine, Consultant in Pulmonary Medicine and Medical Oncology at the Mayo Clinic, an internationally renowned expert in lung cancer and cancer screening.

**Saturday, January 12,  
8:30 am-1:15 pm**

**Charles B. Wang Center  
Stony Brook University**

**Fee: \$60 for Attending Physicians;  
\$30 for Residents, Fellows, and other  
healthcare professionals**

## DIABETES

### DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CLASSES

A comprehensive three-day educational program for people with type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes which covers meal planning, blood glucose monitoring, exercise, use of medications, acute and chronic complications, stress, travel, vacationing, and community resources. Insurance accepted where applicable. Registration is required.

- **January 7, 8, 9, 9 am-noon**
- **February 4, 5, 6, 6-9 pm**
- **March 3, 4, 5, 9 am-noon**

**Stony Brook Technology Park - Fee**

## DIET/NUTRITION

### TARGET FITNESS WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Tired of the weight loss roller coaster—always losing and gaining the same 10, 20, or 30 pounds? Looking for research-based strategies to lose weight for good?

If so, join the Target Fitness Weight Management Program and learn how to get the weight off and keep it off. This 12-week interactive program includes the following:

- An individualized diet prescription with the carbohydrate, protein, and fat levels based on your medical history and needs
- Body composition measurement and individualized weight goals
- Interactive work with a unique set of strategies and tools to facilitate changing your relationship with food
- Guidelines and goal setting related to exercise
- Comprehensive, research-based lessons on nutrition for managing weight, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and gastrointestinal problems through diet and exercise

The primary goal of the program is to help participants improve their health while managing their weight. The program fee

includes a pedometer and a copy of the book "Losing Weight Permanently with the Bull's-Eye Food Guide."

**Tuesdays, 5:45-6:45 pm**

- **January 8, 15, 22, 29**
- **February 5, 12, 19, 26**
- **March 4, 11, 18, 25**

**Family Practice Center  
181 Belle Mead Road, East Setauket  
Fee: \$210**

## HEART HEALTH

### CARDIAC EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

A six-week heart disease awareness program conducted by healthcare professionals to provide patients, families, and friends with a comprehensive overview of heart health and important information about the factors that influence heart disease. CPR training is offered to participants in conjunction with the program. Registration is required.

**Thursdays, 7-9 pm**

- **January 10: Introduction: Learn about heart disease, treatment, and prevention.**
- **January 17: Risk Factor Reduction—Taking Charge of Your Cardiac Health: Learn ways to lessen your risk for heart disease.**
- **January 24: Stress Management: What is stress? How does stress influence your health and heart? Learn stress management techniques.**
- **January 31: Home Exercise Program: Learn how to begin a home exercise program.**
- **February 7: Eat Your Heart Out: Learn label reading and meal planning skills for a balanced, heart healthy diet.**
- **February 14: Medication Guidelines: What you need to learn about your cardiac medications, what they are used for, and why.**

**Heart Center Conference Room  
Stony Brook University Medical  
Center, Level 5  
Free**

**STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS**

These instructional workshops focus on meditation as a core experience for stress management utilizing breathing techniques, the stress relaxation response, mindfulness meditation, walking meditations, heart-centered meditations, and others. Included are discussions on sound nutrition, movement, sleep practices, time management and prioritization, awareness of thought patterns, and related emotions.

- **Wednesdays, 5:30-6:45 pm**
- **February 6, 13, 27**
- **March 5, 12, 19**

**Stony Brook Technology Park**  
**Fee: \$120**

**MALL WALKERS**

**SMITH HAVEN MALL WALKERS**

Sponsored by Stony Brook University Medical Center, the Mall Walkers Club meets the last Wednesday of every month and provides a snack and blood pressure screening starting at 8 am followed by an informative lecture at 9 am.

- **January 30: How Exercise Restores Your Health & Mind**  
 Speaker: Thomas Loo, MD, DPN(P)
- **February 27: Strength & Flexibility Training for the Older Adult**  
 Speaker: Allyson Stein, MA
- **March 26: CEO's Update for the Community**  
 Speaker: Steven L. Strongwater, MD

**Smith Haven Mall, Food Court – Free**

**MASSAGE**

**INFANT AND CHILD MASSAGE CLASSES**

This three-session program, conducted by a licensed massage therapist and certified infant/child massage therapist, instructs parents in massage techniques to soothe a cranky baby, reduce stress and pain, relieve symptoms of gas and colic, and develop crucial bonding skills. Classes for premature or medically fragile babies are also available. Children of all ages are welcome, and Mom gets a massage as part of the class. Bring baby or doll and a small blanket.

- **Tuesdays, January 8, 15, 22, 10:30-11:30 am**
- **Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 20, 1:30-2:30 pm**
- **Mondays, March 10, 17, 24, 10:30-11:30 am**

**Stony Brook Technology Park**  
**Fee: \$60**

**PAIN**

**HIP AND KNEE PAIN SEMINAR**

Presented by Stony Brook University Medical Center's Joint Replacement Center seminar topics cover the normal anatomy of the hip and knee and call attention to signs and symptoms of what can go wrong, such as tendonitis, bursitis, synovitis, meniscal tears and osteoarthritis. Learn how to get a good diagnosis and about treatments involving diet and nutrition, exercise, medication, and surgery. Call for upcoming seminar dates.

**Monthly Seminars, 9-11 am**

**Stony Brook Technology Park – Free**

**PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH**

**PREGNANCY EDUCATION CLASSES**

For women delivering at Stony Brook University Hospital, these educational classes promote optimal maternal, fetal, and newborn health. Topics of discussion include "Staying Healthy During Pregnancy," "Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Choices," "Preparing for Labor and Delivery," and "Taking Care of Yourself and Baby at Home." Registration is required.

**Thursdays, 11 am-noon**

- **January 3, 10, 17**
- **February 7, 14, 21**
- **March 6, 13, 20**

**Stony Brook University Hospital – Free**

**PRENATAL BREASTFEEDING CLASS**

Learn what you need to know about breastfeeding to help you and your baby get off to a good start and avoid common problems. Registration is required.

- **Wednesdays, 7-9 pm**
- **January 2**
- **February 6**
- **March 5**

**Stony Brook University Hospital – Free**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH**

**THE MENOPAUSAL ROLLER COASTER**

Featuring professionals from Stony Brook University Medical Center's Department of Ob/Gyn and Reproductive Medicine, this community education program provides up-to-date information featuring expert speakers on topics important to women of all ages. Registration is required.

**Wednesday, March 5, 7-8:30 pm**  
**Speaker: Jennifer Johnson, MD**

**Sayville Public Library – Free**

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**SWEET DREAMS**

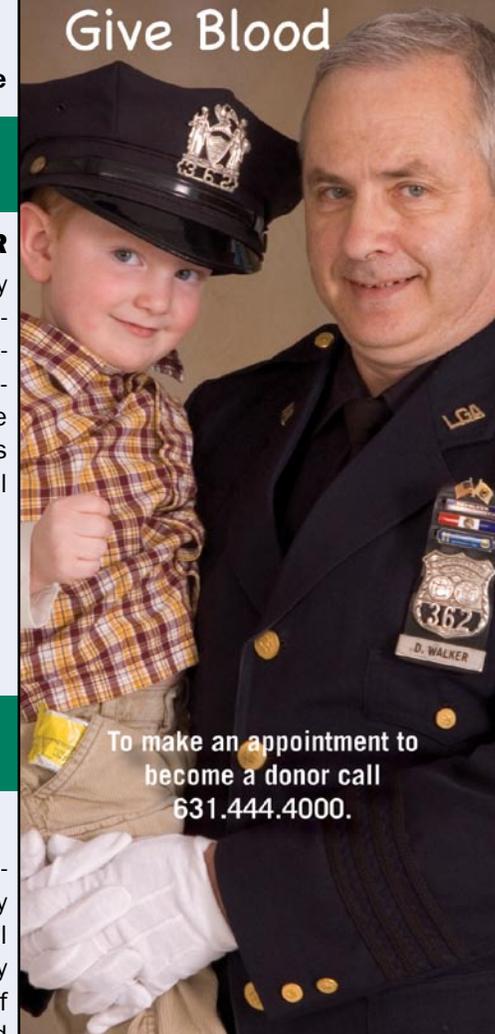
Sweet Dreams is an evening of chocolate indulgence that benefits the Cody Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at Stony Brook University Medical Center. Join supporters of the Cody Center for cocktails, poured champagne, and an exquisite carved buffet. Then view the spectacular chocolate works of art and samplings of the delicious creations prepared by top pastry chefs. Guests will have the pleasure of voting for the best overall table presentation. Sponsorship packages are still available; call for more information.

**Monday, January 28, 6-9 pm**

**Watermill Caterers, Smithtown**  
**Tickets: \$125**

**For up-to-date information on classes, programs, and special events, visit [www.StonyBrookMedicalCenter.org](http://www.StonyBrookMedicalCenter.org) go to the tab, "In The Community," and click onto "Calendar of Events."**

**Become A Hero Give Blood**



To make an appointment to become a donor call 631.444.4000.

**Dennis Walker, Blood Bank Donor, and a Hero to Many**

As a past Army National Guard and Reservist, retired Lieutenant Colonel with the Air National Guard, Army Air Force Chaplain, retired Port Authority Police Officer, and Clergyman for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there have been countless occasions in the past that have qualified Dennis Walker as a hero to many.

He achieved that status again recently when he made his 200th donation to Stony Brook University Medical Center's Blood Bank.

A blood and platelet donor since 1990, and model in the Blood Bank's poster campaign, Mr. Walker's 200 donations have created more than 325 blood products.

**January is National Volunteer Blood Donor Month. To find out about donating at Stony Brook University Medical Center, call (631) 444-4000.**

## ARE YOU OVERWEIGHT?

Men and women, 25 to 45 years of age are needed to participate in a research study looking at markers of pre-diabetes in overweight people. This study is being conducted at the General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) at Stony Brook University Medical Center. Participants will be compensated up to \$500.

## AUTISM RESEARCH TRIAL

Your child may be eligible for an Autism Clinical Research Trial near you. Qualified participants may receive study medication and comprehensive study-related evaluations at no cost. If your child has autism and is between 6 and 17 years of age, has problems controlling his or her screaming, tantrums, or aggressive behavior, your child may qualify. To find out, call or visit [www.LetsTalkAD.com](http://www.LetsTalkAD.com).

## DICE STUDY FOR HEART FAILURE

The Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathy Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center is seeking volunteers with heart failure to participate in the Direct Impedance Cardiography in the Evaluation of heart failure (DICE) study that seeks to prove if a simple device that demonstrates heart function can be used to predict future health. The study includes a monthly phone call to follow your health and symptoms.

## DO YOU HAVE A FOOT OR LEG WOUND THAT JUST WON'T HEAL?

If so, you may be eligible to participate in a research study that investigates a new product that may aid in the healing process. There is no monetary compensation for participating in this study.

## DO YOU HAVE CRACK OR COCAINE PROBLEMS?

Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) seeks people who use crack and cocaine, 18 to 55 years old and in good health, for participation in brain imaging medical research. Confidentiality maintained. Transportation provided. Fee paid.

## DO YOU HAVE PROSTATE CANCER?

If you are on injection therapy for prostate cancer, you may be at risk for

bone loss (osteoporosis). If you are currently receiving injections for treatment of your prostate cancer, you may qualify for a study being conducted by the General Clinical Research Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center to have your bone density checked for free.

## EMU STUDY FOR HEART FAILURE

Has your doctor recommended dialysis as result of heart failure and reoccurring buildup of fluid? If so, you may be eligible to participate in a study of your body's ability to avoid, with ultrafiltration, the ongoing retention of fluid. This study is being conducted by the Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathy Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR STUDY OF PANDEMIC FLU VACCINE

Participants must be 18 to 45 years of age and in good health. Compensation of \$550 will be paid upon completion of study.

## HIV CLINICAL TRIALS

The HIV Clinical Trial Center of Stony Brook University Medical Center offers numerous clinical trials of new medications or combinations of medications for the treatment of HIV for the newly diagnosed patient with HIV and for patients who have developed a resistance to their current therapy. Clinical trial appointments, laboratory studies, and in most cases, medications, are dispensed free of charge. Compensation is offered for time and travel.

## OPTIMAL MEDICAL THERAPY FOR HEART FAILURE

The OPTIMAL study offers a no-cost consultation with a heart failure specialist to review the medical therapy you receive for heart failure and provides a written recommendation based on current national guidelines to be used for discussion with your regular physician.

## POST-MENOPAUSAL WOMEN NEEDED

The General Clinical Research Center at Stony Brook University Medical Cen-

ter seeks post-menopausal women 50 to 65 years of age on hormone replacement therapy for participation in MRI research. Volunteers should be healthy without metal or electronic implants. Confidentiality maintained, volunteer fee paid.

## PROBE STUDY FOR HEART FAILURE

Has your cardiologist recommended an implant of a biventricular pacemaker due to heart failure? In the PROBE study, through the use of a special monitor, investigators are attempting to predict how well patients benefit from biventricular pacemakers ("extra wire") or CRT/resynchronization devices. This study is being conducted by the Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathy Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

## SEEKING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH TYPE I DIABETES

Children and adolescents, 6 to 18 years of age, with a recent diagnosis of type I diabetes are needed to participate in a six month study to see if Pioglitazone can reduce insulin requirements. This study is being conducted at the General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

## SEEKING HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS

Healthy adults, 18 to 65 years of age, non-smokers or those smoke-free for five years, are needed to participate in a research study on the safety and tolerability of Poly-MVA (minerals, vitamins, amino acids) over a 9- to 15-week period. This study is being conducted at the General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) at Stony Brook University Medical Center.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR A CANCER STUDY

Volunteers with colon cancer who are willing to donate a sample of blood are needed for a study conducted by the General Clinical Research Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center. The study seeks to identify new cancer markers in blood, tissue, and body fluids to develop laboratory tests for early diagnosis or to identify patients who

are at risk for a poor outcome and may benefit from more aggressive therapy than is normally recommended. Compensation of \$25 and hospital parking validation will be paid.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS WITH A HISTORY OF ASTHMA

Volunteers 18 to 65 years of age, smoke free for 10 years, and taking a steroid inhaler daily for the past six months, are needed to participate in an eight-week study on the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation on asthma. You will be taught mindfulness meditation techniques such as sitting meditation, body scan meditation, and walking meditation. Compensation of up to \$100 will be paid upon your completion of this study.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Volunteers 18 years of age or older with cystic fibrosis are needed to participate in a 28-week research study conducted by the General Clinical Research Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center to examine the efficacy of IGF-1, a treatment to maintain or improve body weight and composition.

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS WITH EXERCISE-INDUCED PAIN

If you are 50 years of age or older and have experienced symptoms such as exercise-induced pain, cramps and fatigue of the legs (calf, thigh, and buttocks), which are relieved by rest, you may qualify for this study.

## STUDY OF HIV/AIDS AND CHROMIUM PICOLINATE

The General Clinical Research Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center is seeking volunteers 18 years of age and older with a diagnosis of HIV or AIDS to research the effectiveness of chromium picolinate in the treatment of complications of current HIV therapy including insulin resistance (leading to diabetes), and possibly body fat distribution (HIV lipodystrophy). Volunteers are offered compensation up to \$2,050 plus transportation expenses.

# Ask the Expert at Stony Brook University Medical Center

**Q** *There have been a lot of news stories regarding medical errors occurring in hospitals. What are hospitals doing to make things safer, and what can I do to keep myself safe if I have to seek care in a hospital or emergency room?*

**A** In 1999, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published *To Err is Human*. This report brought to light the issue of patient safety as a public health concern. The IOM report has had a great impact on the practice of medicine and the processes of hospital care. It has been a vehicle that has motivated many improvements in how care is rendered. Among those improvements is the concept of the 5 Million Lives Campaign. This is a voluntary initiative started by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement to protect patients from harm, aiming to specifically prevent 5 million incidents of medical harm over two years (from December 2006 to December 2008). Stony Brook University Hospital is one of 3,600 hospitals nationwide to have joined the campaign. As improvements are made, lives are being saved by engaging hospitals to implement specific techniques proven to increase the safety and effectiveness of care. More patients are recovering faster and going home sooner.

One improvement that has been implemented by many hospitals is the establishment of Rapid Response Teams. The Rapid Response Team is comprised of specially trained individuals who rush to a patient's bedside at the earliest sign of a patient's decline. The aim is to recognize poten-

tial problems and stabilize a patient before a potential crisis occurs. Stony Brook established its Rapid Response Team on a medical unit and then expanded it hospital-wide. Any staff member, patient, or family member can call for the Rapid Response Team. One of the philosophies underlying this process is, "No call is a bad call." The team would much rather respond to find out that an issue has already resolved itself than to have anyone hesitate in calling for the team's assistance. Most hospitals with Rapid Response Teams have seen a significant reduction in patients who deteriorate to the point of requiring cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Patients and their families play an important part in maintaining safety. There are specific steps that you can take if you or a loved one is hospitalized:

1. Ask questions. Just as "No call is a bad call," it is also important to understand that "No question is a bad question." Make sure you understand what your doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are telling you. Write down your questions—and when you receive instructions, ask for them in writing. Whenever you are given a new medication, ask the name of the medication and why you are receiving it. You should also know what new treatments and therapies you are receiving, why you are receiving them, and what to expect from them. Ask for the results of your tests. Ask when and how you will receive results. Ask what the results mean for your care. Remember they are your results; you have a right to know. Continue to ask questions until you fully understand the treatment instructions.

2. Maintain a list of all the medications you take. Keep this list with you at all times. Your doctor and pharmacist also should have a complete list of your medications. This list should be presented whenever you come into the hospital.
3. Speak up if healthcare workers do not wash their hands. Good hand hygiene has been shown to reduce the transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms, such as methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), also known as the "superbug." The most important thing you can do to protect yourself from infection when you are in the hospital is to not allow healthcare workers to touch you unless you have seen them wash their hands, or use a hand sanitizer or foam cleaner.

Remember you are the only expert on you; become an active partner in your healthcare.



**Carolyn Santora, MS, RN, CNAA-BC** is the Associate Director for Patient Safety and Regulatory Affairs at Stony Brook University Hospital. She is a graduate of St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing, received a B.S. degree in Nursing from Adelphi University, and a Masters degree in Critical Care Nursing

from SUNY Stony Brook. She has held progressive management positions at SBUH, most recently having served as the Associate Director for Cardiac, Trauma and Emergency Services prior to taking on her current position this past July. She was one of the founding members of the hospital staff. She is nationally known for her expertise in Emergency Department overcrowding.

## February is American Heart Month *See Heart Health on page 4.*

### HEART CENTER TEAM ENHANCES SCOPE AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

developed minimally invasive procedures, using specially designed, long-shafted surgical instruments, allow incisions that are often only two inches long.

In August 2007, Stony Brook University Medical Center's cardiothoracic surgery service performed the region's first minimally invasive aortic valve replacement via a mini-thoracotomy, following a mini-thoracotomy approach to repair and replace the mitral valve. It is believed that these approaches, while easing patients' fears about traditional approaches to the heart, may also allow faster healing, reduced blood loss, reduced postoperative pain and scarring, and improved recovery time.

"Our performing aortic valve replacement via mini-thoracotomy is another very exciting first for us and the region in minimally invasive cardiac surgery, complementing our existing off-pump surgery, mini-mitral/atrial valve surgery, and thoracic stent programs," says Dr. Rosengart.

By bringing many new minimally invasive and state-of-the-art cardiothoracic surgical options and technologies to Stony Brook that often qualify as "first ever in Suffolk" and "first ever on Long Island," Dr. Rosengart and his team have made it so that there is no reason to leave Suffolk County for cardiothoracic surgical services.

The Heart Center conducts a six-week heart dis-

*continued from page 1*

ease awareness program that provides patients, families, and friends with a comprehensive overview of heart health and important information about the factors that influence heart disease. For details on upcoming classes, see the *Heart Health* section on page 4. To find out more about services offered through the Heart Center or to arrange a tour, call (631) 444-4000.



**Todd K. Rosengart, MD, FACS, FACC**, Professor and Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Stony Brook University Medical Center, was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the American Heart Association of Long Island.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO *continued from page 2*

presented to Rishimani S. Adsumelli, MD, and her co-authors for their exhibit “Maternal Hemorrhage: A Proactive Multi-disciplinary Approach to Reduce Mortality and Morbidity” at the American Society of Anesthesiologists conference. Ellison Pierce is one of the grandfathers of patient safety and largely responsible for anesthesia being singled out as the safest medical specialty by the Institute of Medicine. The presentation was commended for its multidisciplinary approach to a very important and real problem with a high mortality.

Stony Brook University Medical Center is a proud member of the National Patient Safety Foundation’s Stand Up for Patient Safety™ program. Participants in the program are a select group of hospitals and healthcare systems that have distinguished themselves as national leaders in the patient safety movement. Find out more about our Patient Safety initiatives in this issue’s “Ask the Expert” column written by the Co-Chair of our Patient Safety Committee, Carolyn Santora, MS, RN, CNAA-BC, Associate Director, Patient Safety and Regulatory Affairs.

### Front Door Concierge Services

Since October 2007, red-coated concierge atten-

dants have been greeting patients and visitors at the main entrance of the Hospital. Our Concierge staff helps patients find their way, provides assistance with transportation needs, and offers other services as requested.

### March Smith Haven Mall Walkers Meeting

Please join me at 9:00 am on March 26 at the Smith Haven Mall’s Food Court. I will give an update for the community during the monthly Mall Walkers meeting. This meeting is open to the public.

It has been an exceptional year at SBUMC. I have enjoyed meeting so many new people and learned a great deal about our community. I continue to be impressed by the passion and commitment SBUMC faculty and staff bring to work every day. The research underway at SBUMC is advancing science in directions I hope will help many of us.

We take our responsibility as an academic medical center very seriously. While we sincerely hope you and your family stay healthy, we are here to provide the most sophisticated care available when needed.

**Happy New Year to all.**

## SUNRISE FUND *continued from page 3*

The **School Re-entry** program eases a child’s transition back into the classroom when he or she is medically able to return to school. It educates classmates about cancer and encourages communication between the hospital, school, and family about the child’s progress.

The **Daniel Brooks Educational Award** provides funds to all pediatric cancer survivors toward their post-high school education costs.

As the only academic research center on Long Island, Stony Brook University Medical Center’s research efforts are supported by the Sunrise Fund through the cancer research endowment which supports finding the causes and cures of childhood cancers.

For more information on how you can support the Sunrise Fund or make a donation and receive a calendar, please call (631) 444-4000.



### New Image-Guided Radiotherapy System

Newly purchased, the ExacTrac® X-ray 6D System is helping cancer specialists at Stony Brook University Medical Center to treat patients. Those whose tumors are medically inoperable, at high risk for surgery, or elect not to have surgical treatment may benefit most from the ExacTrac® X-ray 6D System for image-guided radiotherapy. The system enhances patient options for stereotactic body radiation therapy, a technique that features high radiation doses with pinpoint precision to tumors. ExacTrac® was purchased for nearly \$600,000. Stony Brook is the only healthcare facility in Suffolk County to treat patients with the ExacTrac® system.

## MARCH IS NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

*It’s important for you to know ...*

Colorectal cancer can be prevented. Not only that, it is extremely curable if caught early.

To make an appointment with our colorectal specialists, Drs. Marvin Corman, David Rivadeneira, and William Smithy, call (631) 444-4000.