With more than 50 years of experience navigating Crohn’s disease under his belt, Charles Moses is no stranger to change. Beginning in his teen years, Moses, a 73-year-old retired teacher from Millville, New Jersey, was treated for ulcers, colitis, and seemingly “anything but Crohn’s.” A misread X-ray even led his primary doctor to mistakenly inform him he had cancer. After finally getting the correct diagnosis and realizing that he needed more advanced care to manage this chronic inflammatory bowel disease, Moses made the switch from his local specialists to Presbyterian Medical Center (PPMC). Over the past 30 years, he has undergone bowel resections, infusion therapies, and other treatments, and he has watched the gastroenterology (GI) team at Penn Medicine University City (PMUC), an advanced treatment and outpatient facility on the PPMC campus. This ambulatory surgical facility aims to provide convenient access to both clinic visits and outpatient procedures for patients with a range of GI conditions, and particularly those living in West Philadelphia.

“This is one of the most complicated projects I’ve ever worked on,” said Greta Gilbode, MBA, associate executive director of Service Line Operations. The multidisciplinary team had to “work through mechanical issues, COVID-19, and capital delays, but everyone remained focused on our patients and on the finish line.”

Following a ribbon-cutting ceremony that marked the culmination of the project and the beginning of a new chapter of GI care, the center opened its doors on April 1, 2021.

After three years of planning, PPMC successfully moved the division out of the hospital and across the street. The all-new Penn Digestive and Liver Health Center is located on the 11th floor of Penn Medicine University City (PMUC), an advanced treatment and outpatient facility on the PPMC campus. This ambulatory surgical facility aims to provide convenient access to both clinic visits and outpatient procedures for patients with a range of GI conditions, and particularly those living in West Philadelphia.

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Refreshed and Ready for Remarkable Care

Though the pandemic temporarily stalled the project, it also underscored the importance of the move. The original unit was located in the Wright-Saunders building, the oldest part of PPMC’s campus, and it was time to upgrade. Not only had the GI division outgrown the space through increased volume and expanded services, but it quickly became clear that the small unit wasn’t built to effectively accommodate social distancing. Now, the expanded, 11,515-square foot Penn Digestive and Liver Health Center sets up the team for success beyond COVID-19.

The center boasts a clinic space with a second triage area to cut wait times and 12 spacious exam rooms full of natural light. The four procedure rooms are double the size of the previous rooms, and they feature enhanced video equipment that allows for improved detection of abnormalities. All GI patients are now directed to the center for regular office visits, and many can schedule their colonoscopies and endoscopies there too. Patients on dialysis, requiring more extensive testing, or with comorbidities like severe sleep apnea or high BMIs will continue to get procedures done on the main hospital campus.

“It like we’ve entered the 21st century. It’s beautiful, it’s clean, and it just feels good,” said Lori Fowler-Gagliardi, BSN, RN, MBA, CNOR, clinical director of Perioperative Services. “Our facility now matches the level of expert care that we’re providing, and it’s also a better work environment. We put so much time into this move, and I’m so proud to be able to offer the experience that our patients and staff deserve.”

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Princeton Health Staff Members Help Couple Celebrate 65 Years

It's All About Access
PPMC’s New GI Center Provides Crucial Community Care

Continued from page 1

New Look, Same Familial Feel
Afi Peele’s biggest worry about the relocation wasn’t related to integrating new tech or planning the logistics of moving day, but whether it would be possible to preserve the sense of community that had become a cornerstone of the unit. Fortunately, the practice manager’s concerns quickly abated as she watched the GI and endoscopy staff build stronger relationships, embrace the new space and take steps to improve it further, and welcome patients with even more enthusiasm and care.

“Because we have always been a smaller team, the staff and providers treat each other like family — and we want our patients to feel like they’re part of the family too,” Peele said. “When patients come in, they often aren’t feeling good; they’re dealing with abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhea, all kinds of things. Our goal is to provide a great experience from the moment they’re greeted at the front desk — everyone is just wonderful. It’s beautiful, it’s clean, and it just feels good. It like we’ve entered the 21st century.”

For Moses, “the old location was certainly comfortable because it was familiar. I went through a lot there. But it’s not about the office — it’s about the people,” he said.

He cites nurse Michelle Grazinger, LPN, as a prime example. “I’ve known Michelle since I first came to Penn Presbyterian. At one point, they were giving me Remicade [infusions], and she’d sit and talk to me for hours,” he said. “The nurses, doctors, intake staff — everyone is just wonderful. I can’t stress enough how important it is that every person I have seen makes you feel comfortable, even on the worst days.”

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Babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health’s Women & Babies Hospital will be going home with a special memento thanks to students in teacher Nick Hower’s graphics communications class at Conestoga Valley High School.

Hower’s idea for the project came from personal experience. He and his wife Sandy are the parents of three children, now ages 8, 6 and 3 — all of whom were NICU babies. When the couple had their first baby at WBH, they surprised the staff by dressing their daughter in a onesie that read: “I love my NICU nurses.”

That experience gave Hower the idea to incorporate it into his lessons plans as a teacher. Students from Hower’s class (pictured) custom-designed a onesie with checkboxes that read: “Picked my baby at WBH,” “I love my NICU nurses” and “I’m a WBH NICU ‘GRAD’.”

This is the second year Hower’s students have designed and created onesies for WBH’s NICU grads to wear on discharge day — much to the delight of their families!
GET ENERGIZED! REFOCUS YOUR ENERGY

During National Employee Health and Well-Being Month

Have you experienced pandemic fatigue? You're not alone. More than a year after COVID-19 restrictions were put into place, many employees are feeling stressed and exhausted after putting additional energy towards our “new normal.” Luckily, June is National Employee Health and Well-Being Month, and this year’s theme is Energy. The Wellfocused team recognizes that our workforce needs to come together to overcome challenges, face adversity, and move forward. The team, in collaboration with key health system partners, will support employees with a robust offering of well-being programs throughout the month of June.

At the start of the month, Laura Hamill, PhD, chief people officer and chief science officer of the Limeade Institute, will discuss the importance of self-care and the latest research on the best mindset to address stress. Limeade is Penn Medicine’s well-being technology platform partner, and all UPHS employees have access to the system across the organization.

“The Limeade app promotes wellness accountability … which we could all use a little more of,” said Jamaa Rothschild, senior employee health and well-being coordinator of UPHS. “The unexpected twists and turns of the last year left people feeling a little ungrounded when it came to their healthy lifestyle regime.” Visit www.pennmedicine.limeade.com to join. Additional programs throughout the month — including education sessions, webinars, cooking classes, and lifestyle coaching — will enable employees to refocus their energy. For more information about Hamill’s talk and other events, visit https://bit.ly/3ekfsEJ. For additional information, contact the Wellfocused team at wellfocused@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.

PAH DEDICATES NEW GARDEN TO HEALTHCARE HEROES

Since Pennsylvania Hospital was founded in 1751, it has witnessed several public health crises — outbreaks of smallpox, epidemics of yellow fever, the arrival of cholera, and the 1918 influenza pandemic, for example. But while hospital staff over the centuries weathered these events and did their best to support the Philadelphia community however they could, the boundless compassion, extraordinary courage, and unwavering commitment that PAH staff demonstrated in response to COVID-19 is unique.

To recognize the tenacity, adaptability, and professionalism that every clinical and nonclinical employee showed while navigating a year of unprecedented challenges, and to honor those who lost their lives to the coronavirus, PAH leadership erected a memorial on the hospital grounds. The hospital’s Executive Leadership Team formally dedicated the new Healthcare Heroes Garden in March on the one-year anniversary of the pandemic’s declaration.

The memorial garden is located on the east side of the historic Pine Building, and through the tree design cut into the metal, you can see the hospital’s evergreens — a nod to PAH’s, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit the challenges become even greater. Add in restrictions from a worldwide pandemic and the ability for many families to see their babies becomes even more challenging. Now, thanks to the kindness of several loyal donors and a grant from The Superhero Project, families at the Moore Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Chester County Hospital (CCH) can see their babies 24/7.

With AngelEye Health’s secure, live stream video, families can see their baby anytime, anywhere, using an app on their phone, computer, or tablet. The technology also includes a one-way patient update tool that allows the clinical staff to send parents care updates and fun moments through text, photo, or recorded video.

“Parents tell us they wish they could be here in person all the time, but that these cameras are the next best thing and they hope it will help reduce their anxiety at home knowing they can check in whenever they want,” said Jennifer Cohen, MD, MMS, medical director of the NICU for CHOP Newborn Care Network at CCH, adding “I hope this helps moms take care of themselves more, realize they don’t need to be at the bedside 24/7, and be more confident in their decisions to go home and care for themselves, their loved ones, and the rest of their family.”

NICU mom Katrina Dougherty said “the hardest part about this experience is leaving, going home and not bringing her with me.” Having a toddler at home adds an extra layer of daily planning and most times means she and her husband cannot be at the hospital together. “Having this camera will definitely help us feel less lonely,” said Dana Wilson, mother of baby Sadie who was born at just 25 weeks, said, “The rollercoaster of emotions in the NICU is hard enough to handle. I’m thankful these cameras will allow our families to see her knowing we have eyes on her at all times is such a relief.”

CCH is not the only Penn Medicine hospital to offer this new technology in an intensive care nursery. Both Pennsylvania Hospital and Penrose Medical Center have added AngelEye cameras to each of their infant bedside in the NICU as well! Vaccine House Calls Bring COVID Protection Home

While the COVID-19 vaccine is now available to all Philadelphia residents who are 16 and older, actually accessing the shot is not always easy — especially for those who are elderly or disabled. In an effort to reach those residents, Penn Medicine has put its vaccination efforts on wheels, taking shots directly to patients’ homes.

Led by Nina O’Connor, MD, chief of Palliative Care and chief medical officer of Penn Medicine at Home, the health system has vaccinated more than 1,000 senior citizens living in public housing, as well as more than 600 homebound Penn Medicine patients. The efforts are breaking down barriers — transportation, lack of internet access, and vaccine hesitancy — that may have prevented these Philadelphians from getting immunized, and putting the city one step closer to herd immunity.

Watch a video showing the compelling impact of these efforts via Service in Action at: CommunityImpact.PennMedicine.org

For additional information, contact the Wellfocused team at wellfocused@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.
Farwell to Lead Otorhinolaryngology

D. Gregory Farwell, MD, has been named the new chair of Otorhinolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery. A nationally recognized surgeon specializing in head and neck cancers, thyroid and parathyroid surgeries and microrascular reconstruction, he will assume the role on August 1. Farwell is currently chair of Otorhinolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery at the University of California, Davis.

Farwell’s work developing novel surgical approaches and non-invasive diagnostic tools for image-guided surgery has spanned from bench to bedside. He also brings to Penn Medicine a commitment to creative approaches to medical education and training. He has a demonstrated track record of increasing the number of women and underrepresented minorities among both faculty and trainees in his department, along with work to develop programs to provide STEM education to URm high school students.

In addition to his clinical service, research, and teaching, Farwell has held key administrative and national leadership posts. He is skilled at working across disciplines with other clinical and administrative leaders.

Antoinette Brooke, MPH, chief operating officer of Emergency Medicine, received the 2020-2021 James J. Schulein Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Academy of Administrators in Academic Emergency Medicine (AAAEM) over the course of their careers. With over 30 years of experience in senior healthcare operations, Brooke has served on numerous health system committees and held various roles within AAAEM.

Rajan Jain, MD, assistant professor of Medicine, received the 2021 Donald Selkin–Holly Smith Award for Pioneering Research, which recognizes physician-scientists who have made major contributions to science, mentorship, and translation of discovery to clinical impact. Jain was awarded $30,000 to advance his academic efforts in understanding and deciphering how cells dictate their fate and remember their identity over their lifetime.

Carl June, MD, director of the Center for Cellular Immunotherapies at Penn’s Abramson Cancer Center, received the $1 million Sanford Lorraine Cross Award for his groundbreaking work in developing chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T cell therapy. The biennial award recognizes life-changing breakthroughs and bringing emerging transformative medical innovations to patients.

Brennan Named to Delaware County Board of Health

PJ Brennan, MD, chief medical officer and SVP of UPHS, has been chosen as one of five members on the newly created Delaware County Board of Health.

Without a health department of its own, Delaware County, PA has relied on Chester County’s Health Department for help during COVID-19, but the pandemic “amplified the need for a health department at the local level,” Brennan said. Now, with this infrastructure in place, “there will be a voice on the county council as well as in the state government about what the needs are.”

Brennan believes it’s important that hospitals and health care systems be “major partners” in public health infrastructure at the local level. Indeed, it was the successful partnership between Delaware County and Penn Medicine that resulted in the opening of the COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Penn Medicine Radnor.

According to Tracey Cummack, associate executive director of Penn Medicine Radnor, three days after Delaware County did a site visit to the facility for use as a vaccination center, “we gave our first vaccine.” Ultimately, thanks to the flow of vaccines — which came from the county — Radnor has given over 18,000 COVID vaccinations. “Our partnership has been amazing,” she said.

Brennan stressed that beyond COVID, there are many traditional and emerging public health issues — for example, life expectancy, health disparities, and water quality — that the county’s health department will need to address.

“It’s a multyear process,” he said, “but having a health department will get things moving faster.”

People of the Pavilion

Benjamin Abella and Ursina Teitelbaum

It’s all in the family. “That’s how Benjamin Abella, MD, MPH, professor and vice chair for Research in Emergency Medicine and director of the Center for Resuscitation Science, sees his work with Ursina Teitelbaum, MD, associate professor and clinical director of the Penn Pancreatic Cancer Research Center. “I help her think through problems when her patients have an urgent condition, and she helps guide me when I take care of her cancer patients in the ED,” Abella said. It’s a professional connection that starts at home. They’ve been married for almost 20 years.

While taping each other’s knowledge for patient care is not uncommon for this “HUP-ple,” the opening of the Pavilion will make this clinical connection even easier. “Having the ED and my oncology floors housed in one building, the Pavilion, will make it even easier to integrate my care. It will be easy for me to visit my patients in the ED, easy for Ben to work on oncology teams and nurse navigators, and easier to coordinate cancer patients’ workflows and care efficiently,” Teitelbaum said.

Abella is equally excited about the Emergency Department’s new space. “It’s designed to meet our needs in the ED and beyond, from individual ED exam rooms to state-of-the-art technologies for caregivers and patients.”

Angelica McCoy

As one of the sterile processing technicians at Penn Medicine’s recently opened Interventional Support Center, Angelica McCoy makes sure each instrument set she puts together is clean, sterilized, and complete. Her role is a vital part of patient care… and requires specific skills and knowledge. In fact, becoming a sterile processing technician requires significant training, including successful completion of a certification program through a combination of work experience and an examination.

Right now, assembled instrument sets at the ISC are loaded onto case carts and shipped to HUP, Pennsylvania Hospital, or one of the outpatient facilities the ISC currently supports — the Perelman Center and the Ambulatory Surgery Center at Rittenhouse. But, when the Pavilion opens in the fall, McCoy will be assembling instrument sets for its ORs as well. And the ISC is ready for the increase. It is designed to process instruments from up to 200 cases each day.

The ISC has brought together technicians into one space, as a team. Previously they worked in smaller teams at each location. McCoy likes the new setup. “It’s nice to have everyone in the same space,” she said. And she loves the feeling of accomplishment with every set she puts together. “Before I finish assembling, I say a prayer for the recipient of the set,” said McCoy. “There is a face to every set I assemble.”

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AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

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