

# care.together

Atlantic General Hospital & Atlantic General Health System

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*Tracy Brittingham  
Berlin, MD resident  
cancer survivor*

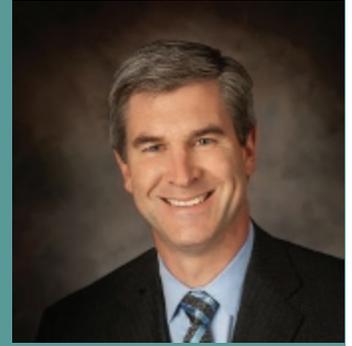
## From the President

Our previous editions of care.together have focused on the strategy and planning of Atlantic General Hospital through our 2020 Vision strategic plan. This edition is focused on how the follow-through on that plan and the associated investments in advanced healthcare services in our community is affecting people who live here. These real stories demonstrate how we're making the healthcare system better for you. Within our strategic plan we state that a key objective for achieving coordinated quality care in our community is ensuring there is access to quality primary care and specialty care physicians and providers. Vital needs for our region include access to care for those who have diabetes. Dr. Faustino Macuha, a board-certified endocrinologist,

has joined Atlantic General Health System, and he will be leading our Diabetes and Endocrinology Center in Ocean Pines. Dr. Oswaldo Nicastro, a family practice physician, will also be joining our Ocean Pines office, working alongside Dr. Lei Gong in Atlantic General Primary Care. Another vital community need is for neurological care, and we are fortunate to have added Emily Laustsen, physician assistant, to augment the neurology practices of Drs. Preeti Yonker and Lawrence Kemp.



The skill level of the physicians we have recruited to work in Atlantic General Health System have also expanded the care available in our community. The physicians who recently joined our general surgery and women's health practices have advanced skills training through additional fellowship programs. Their advanced training allows for the most modern surgical techniques to be employed at AGH. Fellowship-trained physicians demonstrate fewer complication rates in their patients and better surgical outcomes. Advanced surgical techniques require less hospitalization time and result in shorter recoveries. Providing these capabilities in our community means less travel time for advanced surgery and follow up, and less risk from complications that may need immediate care. By having a community with the right physicians and providers, advanced methods of care are



available right here. AGH's investment in telemedicine has changed how care is delivered to those most vulnerable in our community. We are reducing the cost of healthcare services in our community by deploying telemedicine-driven patient care monitoring into the homes of those with chronic illnesses who are recently discharged from Atlantic General. Employing a team of care coordinators through our Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), directly connected to devices in the homes of patients, is preventing trips to the emergency room and admissions to the hospital. This is saving dollars to the Medicare and

*continued on p.10*

Michael Franklin, FACHE  
President & CEO  
Atlantic General Hospital

# Right Place: *Taking Care into the Home with Telehealth*

Atlantic General Health System now offers a new resource to patients who struggle to keep health conditions in check: remote home monitoring and supportive care services.

Remote home monitoring uses technology to collect health data from patients at home and electronically transmit that information securely to health care providers for assessment and care plans.

In addition to daily transmission of information like body weight, blood glucose, blood oxygen levels and blood pressure, the program also enables coordinators to provide supportive services to relieve symptoms such as pain, stress and nervousness, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite and trouble sleeping.

The new 30-day program spans the delicate time between a patient's hospital discharge and the following weeks when he or she is working to establish good health practices with his or her regular doctor. It can also intervene when someone's health starts to fail but before there is a need to be admitted to the hospital.

For Atlantic General Health System patients who qualify, a tablet computer, a connecting blood

*See RPM, p. 5*



Ms. Waddell is a patient of Atlantic General's new Transitional Care and Supportive Services Telehealth Program. With the installation of the remote monitoring equipment, community care coordinators were able to track Ms. Waddell's daily weight, in addition to other health data. When they saw she had gained more than six pounds in two days, a sign that her congestive heart failure was not in check, they notified Ms. Waddell's physician, who promptly ordered appropriate medication. When a coordinator called Ms. Waddell, they learned that she had also been experiencing increased fatigue and shortness of breath but was hesitant to call the doctor's office. With the intervention, Ms. Waddell is feeling much better and was able to avoid a trip to the ER. She is pictured here with Gail Mansell, the Director of Supportive Care Services, on the day the technology was installed.

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**Atlantic General Health System patients can learn more about the Transitional Care and Supportive Services Telehealth Program by speaking with their primary care provider.**

# By Her Side



Tracy Brittingham fought multiple myeloma surrounded by friends and family, and the caregivers at Atlantic General's Regional Cancer Care Center

Tracy Brittingham credits not only her family, friends and faith for getting her through cancer diagnosis and treatment, but the caregivers at the AGH Regional Cancer Care Center, especially her physician, Dr. Rabindra Paul.

In May 2015, Tracy's busy life as a correctional officer changed dramatically when she received her multiple myeloma diagnosis. She had been seeing Dr. Paul already for a blood clot and felt so comfortable and well-cared for by him and his team that when the time came to choose a cancer care provider, she felt no need to look elsewhere.

"I love Dr. Paul and his team. He was by my side from diagnosis throughout my entire treatment. The Regional Cancer Care Center team makes you feel at home. They are so supportive and treat you like family," said Tracy.

***"The caregivers at the Regional Cancer Care Center were a Godsend. What was supposed to take me out only made me who I am today."***

***– Tracy Brittingham***

The proximity of the Regional Cancer Care Center to Tracy's home was another deciding factor. She is a Berlin native, and the fact that she was able to remain independent, even driving herself home after treatments from time to time, made all the difference. She felt as if she was being cared for by friends and neighbors who were invested in her health and wellbeing.

Even though the diagnosis and treatment led her to retire early from her physically demanding job as a correctional officer, Tracy has a zest for life and appreciates each day.

"When you're going through cancer diagnosis and treatment it can be very hard to deal with and process. Friends and family, like my daughter, Star, my mother and Reverend Barbara Harmon, all provided the support when I needed it. That, a

positive, fighting attitude and my caregivers at the AGH Regional Cancer Care Center got me through it," said Tracy.

Tracy added that if a friend or relative were diagnosed with cancer, she would not hesitate to recommend the Regional Cancer Care Center, adding that you absolutely need a team of caregivers that will provide support and treat you like family.

**The Regional Cancer Care Center**  
At the Regional Cancer Care Center in Berlin, MD, we know that cancer care is about so much more than medical treatment. We're sensitive to each patient's emotional and mental state, in addition to the needs and wishes of family members and other caregivers. We are committed to ensuring that each patient receives quality, holistic treatment for the best outcomes.

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, call 410-629-6888. Visit us at [www.atlanticgeneral.org/cancercare](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/cancercare).

# Breaking Ground

**John H. “Jack” Burbage, Jr.**  
**Regional Cancer Care Center**  
9707 Healthway Drive, Berlin, MD



In May, Atlantic General Hospital held a formal groundbreaking ceremony at the site of our new cancer center, slated to be completed in spring of 2018.

The groundbreaking event, held at the address for the new John H. “Jack” Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center, 9707 Healthway Drive, was well attended with more than 250 guests present.

Local dignitaries, chamber representatives and donors joined community members, hospital and health system leadership and associates, including the cancer care team, to break ground on the site where the 18,000 square foot building will be completed next spring.

To learn more about the center and check progress of the construction by watching our time-lapse video, visit [www.atlanticgeneral.org/thenewrccc](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/thenewrccc).

*RPM, from p. 3*



pressure cuff, a pulse oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood, a blood glucose monitor and a scale to measure body weight will be installed in the home.

All information collected by these devices will be sent electronically each day to the secure Clinical Call Center staff that monitor daily progression to manage symptoms and achieve best outcomes.

Patients can also set up video conferencing on the tablet, similar to Skype, to speak with the care coordinators or specialists involved in their care.

Initially, the program will have the capacity to monitor 30 patients at any given point in time. Future plans include expansion to care for more patients.

*Top Photo: A multidisciplinary team composed of supportive care services staff, community care coordinators, and telemedicine experts work with their partners at Philips Healthcare to launch the new Transitional Care & Supportive Services Telehealth Program*

# 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

May 2017



The Atlantic General Hospital Foundation held the Anniversary Celebration on May 18<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the hospital's 24 years of service to the community. The event was graciously hosted by Raymond C. Nichols at the family's stunning, waterfront property "Mirador."

*The weather was perfect for an evening spent in celebration of our not-for-profit community hospital. A sincere thank you to the Nichols family for sharing their beautiful property for the occasion – and to all our friends and supporters. This year's event raised \$91,000 for the Foundation and Atlantic General Hospital. From left: Kim Ruark Mihaly, Anniversary Celebration Co-Chair; Raymond C. Nichols, host of the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Chairman of BSC America; Emily Tunis, Anniversary Celebration Co-Chair; and R. Charles Nichols, co-host and President of BSC America.*



## 2017 Robert E. Warfield Memorial Tournament



**Thursday, September 28, 2017**

Ocean City Golf Club – Berlin, MD

*Sponsored by The Carousel Group*

AGH's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Golf Classic is just around the corner. Sponsorship and team play opportunities are still available.

Questions? Contact Joy Stokes, Event Coordinator, at 410-641-9671 or [jstokes@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:jstokes@atlanticgeneral.org).

## Right Hospital:

# Providing the Best Intensive Care

with Full Time Intensivist Monitoring and Best Practices for Infection Prevention

Patients admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU) require rigorous attention, whether it be constant monitoring, breathing support, treatment for life-threatening medical problems, or palliative care while dying. Prolonged ICU stays are extremely difficult for patients and families, emotionally, physically and financially.

Atlantic General Hospital and healthcare organizations across the country continuously strive to improve the quality of critical care they provide while also decreasing the length of stay for these individuals.

### Zero Infections

Medical procedures can make hospitalized patients, especially those in the ICU, more vulnerable to infection. Nationally, healthcare associated infections, or infections that occur while receiving medical treatment, affect one in 25 hospital patients on any given day, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

“When you think of a hospital, you think of it as a place you go to get well,” said Scott Rose, RN, director of the ICU at Atlantic General Hospital. “Unfortunately, patients who need medical or surgical care are often in a weakened state due to illness and it’s very easy for germs to attack. But, most healthcare associated infections are preventable.”

At Atlantic General, the ICU has had no pneumonia infections associated with the use of ventilators, the machines that assist patients with breathing, since 2008.



Ventilator associated pneumonia (VAP) is very common in the U.S. According to studies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and the BMJ, roughly half of the antibiotics given in the ICU are for the treatment of this type of infection.

Atlantic General has documented zero blood stream infections caused by central lines since March 2015. Central lines are catheters, or long thin tubes, inserted into major veins to provide nutrients, medication, or fluids or blood over an extended period of time.

Because the central line creates an opening from the surrounding environment directly to the circulatory system, blood stream infections can occur. The CDC says central line-associated blood stream infections (CLABSIs)

account for thousands of deaths each year and billions of dollars in additional healthcare costs.

Atlantic General has also had no catheter associated urinary tract infections in their ICU since April 2014.

Efforts to prevent these kinds of infections are manifold, including extreme vigilance to remove central lines, catheters and ventilators the moment it is determined they are no longer needed.

*See ICU, p 15*

ATLANTIC GENERAL *Campaign*  
FOR THE  
*Future*

Financial support is crucial to bridging the gap between the cost of modern medicine and the growing needs of our community.

We are pleased to announce that we have secured \$3.5 million of the \$10 million goal in pledges, commitments and grants for the Atlantic General Campaign for the Future, which will help fund five major healthcare initiatives for our residents and visitors.

But, we still need the community's support for...

**John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center**

**Modernization of our Inpatient Care Area**

**Modernization of our Surgical Facilities**

**Expansion of the AGH Emergency Department and Outpatient Services**

**The New Atlantic General Women's Health Center**

To learn how you can support the Atlantic General Campaign for the Future, visit [atlanticgeneral.org/campaign](http://atlanticgeneral.org/campaign) or contact Atlantic General Hospital Foundation at [foundation@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:foundation@atlanticgeneral.org).

# Centers of Care ... that *Care*

*Our medical specialists and clinical staff are with you every step of the way.*



## **Atlantic General Hospital**

### **Atlantic General Endoscopy Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 205  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6800

### **Atlantic General Bariatric Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 207  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9568

### **Behavioral Health Services**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-3340

### **Regional Cancer Care Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Boulevard  
Suites 208 & 210  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6888

### **Wound Care Center**

10231 Old Ocean City Blvd., Suite 104  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6863

### **Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9726

### **Developmental Health Telemedicine**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-3340

### **Diabetes Education Program**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9703

## **Atlantic General Pain Center**

9714 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6321

## **Center for Joint Surgery**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9189

## **Designated Stroke Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811

## **Eunice Q. Sorin Women's Diagnostic Center**

9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-641-9215

## **Atlantic General Health System**

### **Atlantic General Dermatology**

38394 Dupont Highway, Suite F  
Selbyville, DE 19975  
302-564-0001

### **Atlantic General Urology**

10231 Old Ocean City Boulevard  
Suite 206  
Berlin, MD 21811  
410-629-6277

### **Atlantic General Women's Health Center**

12308 Ocean Gateway, Suites 5 & 8  
West Ocean City, MD 21842

Gynecology

443-728-1050

Women's Imaging

443-728-1090

# New Faces & Places

**Emily Laustsen, MPAS, PA-C**, recently joined Preeti Yonker, MD, and Lawrence Kemp, MD, at Atlantic General Neurology in Berlin, MD, from Riverside



Neurology in Salisbury. She is certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, licensed by the Maryland Board of Physicians, and has been practicing in internal medicine and neurology

since 2009. Emily graduated Cum Laude from Salisbury University with a Bachelor of Science and obtained her Master of Physician Assistant Studies from James Madison University. She is a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants. To make an appointment, call 410-641-4765.



**Endocrinologist Faustino Macuha, MD**, recently

joined Atlantic General Health System to provide care for patients with diabetes, thyroid, adrenal, and other hormone and metabolic disorders in Ocean Pines. Dr. Macuha

is past medical director for the Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at University of Maryland Shore Regional Health at Easton. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York and his endocrinology fellowship at Stony Brook University Hospital in New York. He provides care to patients in Ocean Pines alongside the Diabetes Education Program. Dr. Macuha is dual certified in endocrinology and internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. To make an appointment, please call Atlantic General Primary Care and Endocrinology at 410-208-9761.

**Patricia Marks**, Patricia Marks, is the new Director of the Regional Cancer Care Center at Atlantic General Hospital. Patricia has 17 years of clinical experience and more than seven years of leadership experience, most recently serving as practice administrator for neurosurgery and



multispecialty practices at Albany Medical Center in Albany, N.Y. Prior to her role at Albany Medical

Center, she was the Director of Oncology Services at Ellis Hospital in Schenectady, N.Y. Patricia earned a bachelor of arts in sociology before achieving certification as a radiation therapy technician at State University of New York at Stony Brook. In 2007, she received her master's in health administration from State University of New York-Empire State College.

**Oswaldo Nicastro, MD**, is the newest family practitioner with Atlantic General Health System (AGHS), now caring for patients alongside Dr. Lei Gong at Atlantic General Primary Care in Ocean Pines. He came to AGHS from St. Francis Healthcare in Wilmington, DE, where he served as medical



director of outpatient family medicine for seven years. Dr. Nicastro completed his residency and an internship at St. Francis Family Practice before achieving board certification in family medicine. He is

bilingual, fluent in English and Spanish. To make an appointment with Dr. Nicastro in Ocean Pines, call 410-208-9761.

## Diabetes Education Program Moves

We are excited to share that the Diabetes Education



Program has moved from the Atlantic Health Center to Atlantic General Health System's offices in Ocean Pines

to be near the practice of our new endocrinologist Faustino Macuha, MD. In addition to offering diabetes education, medical nutrition therapy and goal planning, the certified diabetes educators and nutritionists of the Diabetes Education Program now provide glucose meter downloads and interpretation, insulin pump initiation and instruction and in-office A1C results. Group classes will continue to be held at the Atlantic Health Center. Individual sessions and all other appointments will be held at the new location. To schedule an appointment with the Diabetes Education Program, please call 410-208-9761.



Fiscal responsibility is a core value of Atlantic General Hospital and Health System (see our Values on p. 14). Our use of group purchasing contracts and analytics to achieve cost savings supports this value. By lowering the cost of supplies and equipment, we are able to use these savings for new services for our community.

Changes in national healthcare policy and payment models have heightened efforts to assure equipment and supply purchases meet cost, quality and patient outcome measures. This is achieved through the hospital's Product Review/Value Analysis Committee, chaired by the Director of Materials Management, Jan Geiger, with representatives from various disciplines.

One of the many tools AGH uses to obtain cost savings is the Accelerated Supply Chain Endeavor (ASCEND). This program is a cost savings program offered by Premier, a company that has built an alliance of thousands of U.S. hospitals that participate in group purchasing programs for supplies and services.

There are 210 ASCEND groups, which include more than 6,900 healthcare facilities.

## Right Partners

### Atlantic General Hospital and Health System Recognized for Cost-Saving Efforts

This year, Atlantic General Hospital received the ASCEND Award for the highest achievement of cost savings and contract compliance for hospitals with 100 or fewer beds. The award recognizes the hospital's commitment to fiscal responsibility and reinforces the importance of team work to create an effective value analysis process.

"Our hospital was compliant in all contract levels of the program and achieved more than \$600,000 in savings from just this one Premier program. We are extremely honored to be one of the six winners," said Geiger. "The addition of a nurse, in the role of Supply Chain/Contracts Coordinator, to our Materials Management team has been a huge asset. Amy Holloway, a registered nurse, comes from our surgical department and lends a great deal of clinical credibility and knowledge."

"We are now a cohesive unit and apply the principles of value analysis to evaluate products based on cost, quality and patient outcomes," said Holloway. "The goal is to provide quality supplies to our patients at the best cost."

Not all hospitals involved in group purchasing programs are able to achieve such savings. It has to be a priority to everyone in the organization, including the medical staff. Chief of Staff Alae Zarif, MD, who chairs the OR

*See Award, p 11*

#### *Pres, continued from p2*

Medicaid systems, to the patients, and to the community. Deploying advanced technology in this fashion helped make Atlantic General Hospital one of only 26 hospitals in the U.S. to be awarded the 2017 Most Wired Hospital – Advanced distinction by the American Hospital Association. Breaking ground on our new John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center in June was another milestone in the achievement of our 2020 Vision.

While we have been providing cancer care in our community for years, having a comprehensive facility on a hospital campus in our community – with easy access to surgical oncology care, radiation oncology, and chemotherapy consultation and services – makes quality coordinated care a reality. Community support for this and the other major programs is making it possible for Atlantic General to invest \$35 million in modernizing the healthcare facilities in our community to match the capabilities of our physicians and providers.

What we are demonstrating in this issue is Atlantic General being true to our community. We created our 2020 Vision based upon the Community Health Needs Assessment feedback we received from those who live in our community. Having quality, dedicated leaders who are deploying this plan will help continue our tradition of providing award-winning care and services to our community. Atlantic General Hospital is continuing to lead the way for the most advanced care delivery anywhere, right here.

# Calendar of Events

## Hypertension Clinics

*First Monday of every month*  
Apple Discount Drugs, Berlin  
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

*First Tuesday of every month*  
Rite Aid, Selbyville  
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Hocker's Super Center, Clarksville  
1 – 3 p.m.

*First Wednesday of every month*  
Rite Aid, Berlin  
1 – 3 p.m.  
Rite Aid, Ocean Pines  
1 – 3 p.m.

*Third Wednesday of every month*  
Hocker's Grocery Store, Bethany Beach  
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

## Diabetes Support Group

Ocean Pines  
*First Wednesday of every month*  
7 – 8 p.m.  
Ocean Pines Library

Berlin  
*First Monday of every month*  
6 – 7 p.m.  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
For more information, contact the Diabetes  
Outpatient Education Program at 410-208-  
9761.

## Stroke Support Group

*Last Thursday of each month* • 2 – 3 p.m.  
Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1  
For more information, contact Anne Waples at 443-  
614-5720.

## Parkinson's Disease Support Group

*Second Tuesday of each month* • 3:15 – 4:30 p.m.  
Gull Creek Senior Living  
For more information, contact Kay Rentschler at 410-  
641-4765 or krentschler@atlanticgeneral.org.

## Ocean Pines Health Fair

*October 7* • 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Ocean Pines Community Center  
Free screenings, flu shots and health education. For  
more information, contact Dawn at 410-641-9268.

## Power to the Parents: Hidden in Plain Sight

*October 12* • 6 – 8 p.m.  
Worcester Technical High School  
Interactive program with half-hour sessions for  
parents/caregivers of teenagers. Learn to look for  
clues that might indicate destructive behaviors. For  
more information or to register, call Donna at 410-  
629-6820.

**Want more information about upcoming events or health news that comes directly to your inbox? Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at [www.atlanticgeneral.org](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org).**

### *Award, continued*

Committee and serves as a savings advocate for surgical services, has helped foster a culture of thriftiness.

“In the OR, we had to work as a team with all the nursing personnel and the medical staff. The first thing we tackled is changing the culture of old practices,” said Dr. Zarif. “For example, disposable materials used to be routinely opened in preparation for surgical cases, but much of it would not be used and would be wasted. We have changed to a practice of only

opening supplies when we need them, saving thousands of dollars over the years.

“The second step was working with all the surgeons to identify common supplies that work well for everyone, yet save money. It is an ongoing process, but it is working.”

Now, the first thing staff consider when looking at supplies is price. Then, they make sure those supplies will meet expectations and high quality standards, as our patients expect.

“That’s a huge shift,” said Holloway.

**In January 2017, Atlantic General became a Direct Affiliate of Premier. Rather than participating in the group purchasing program under a larger hospital in the region, Atlantic General now participates directly with Premier. The benefit: Atlantic General now receives Revenue Shares from each Premier contract. This equates to more savings for the organization that can be devoted to patient care.**

# Awards & Recognition



## Nurse of the Year

Niki Morris, RN, CNOR, received the 2017 Nurse of the Year Award during this year's National Nurses Week in May. Morris, who recently achieved certification in critical care nursing, will complete her bachelor of science degree in nursing this year. Described as a nurse with impeccable ethics and professionalism and a mentor and leader, Morris said "I am humbled and honored to be acknowledged for what I love to do. I am fortunate to be able to work with and learn from such amazing people in an awesome hospital like Atlantic General."

## Friend of Nursing 2017

The 2017 Friend of Nursing was awarded to a member of the AGH Auxiliary for the first time ever. Nick Bartolomeo, who volunteers in the ambulatory surgery unit (ASU) and is the volunteer coordinator for that department as well as an Auxiliary board member, was nominated by multiple staff and is described as one of the hardest working individuals at AGH. Bartolomeo has volunteered for Atlantic General Hospital since 2002.



## American College of Healthcare Executives

Kim Justice, FACHE, Vice President of Planning/Operations at Atlantic General Hospital, recently became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders. Justice has been with Atlantic General Hospital since 1993. She coordinates all aspects of the hospital's facility expansion and renovation projects, which have included a new emergency department and administrative wing, infusion center, pharmacy, women's diagnostic center, radiology suites including MRI and CT, endoscopy suite, urology center, site and plant improvements, the James G. Barrett Medical Office Building and now the new John H. "Jack" Burbage, Jr. Regional Cancer Care Center. She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and serves on the Worcester County Health Planning Advisory Council, Tri-County Regional Health Planning Committee and Worcester Technical High School Advisory Committee.



## Most Wired Hospital –Advanced Award

Atlantic General Hospital is among less than one percent of U.S. hospitals to receive the 2017 Most Wired Hospital-Advanced distinction, bestowed by the American Hospital Association's (AHA) Health Forum. Only two Maryland hospitals received the award, with Atlantic General Hospital being the only one on the Eastern Shore. The awards are based on the results of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual HealthCare's Most Wired® survey and benchmarking study. The survey examines how organizations are using information technology (IT) to improve healthcare delivery in the areas of quality and safety, clinical integration, infrastructure and business management.

## Atlantic General's Wound Care Center received the Robert A. Warriner II Center Excellence Award

for the eighth year in a row, the only center nationwide to do so. The award is given by Healogics, a management company with a network of more than 800 centers. Our center has achieved patient satisfaction rates higher than 95 percent and a healing rate of at least 91 percent along with other quality standards for nine consecutive years. The Wound Care Center offers highly specialized wound care to patients suffering from diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, infections and chronic, hard-to-heal wounds.



## ASCEND Award

This year, Atlantic General Hospital received the ASCEND Award for the highest achievement of cost savings and contract compliance among hospitals of like size from Premier, an alliance of thousands of U.S. hospitals that participate in group purchasing programs for supplies and services. Through Premier's ASCEND program, Atlantic General has achieved \$600,000 in cost savings for expenses ranging from exam gloves to freight fees. *See full article on page 10.*



## Right People

# Advanced Surgical Care, Right Here in Worcester County

When your doctor recommends surgery, don't overlook your local hospital when considering your choices. Smaller healthcare organizations can offer the latest procedures, and studies have shown that large academic medical centers don't have an edge when it comes to quality and patient outcomes.

At Atlantic General, this holds true. Patients have access to highly

skilled surgeons as well as the comfort and convenience of local medical care.

In addition to common procedures such as hernia repairs, appendectomies and gallbladder removals, our patients' surgery needs run the spectrum.

Our specialists provide the latest in bariatric, gynecologic and pain management procedures in

addition to general surgery and joint replacements and other orthopedic surgeries.

"We are committed to recruiting highly skilled specialists who can bring the latest in patient care to our community. We will continue to do so to keep pace with the rapid growth of the area," said Colleen Wareing, Vice President of Patient Care at Atlantic General.

### ***Pain Management***

When pain specialist Wadid Zaky, M.D., joined



*Wadid Y. Zaky, MD*

Atlantic General Health System in the fall of 2015, individuals experiencing severe chronic pain were given new alternatives to pain medication:

Kyphoplasty involves making a tiny incision and filling a collapsed vertebra

with special fast-drying bone cement to restore height and take pressure off spinal nerves. Patients typically suffer from spinal arthritis due to age or an injury.

Intrathecal catheters (small tubes precisely placed between the vertebrae of the spine) allow for minimally invasive therapies to reduce or eliminate pain. The therapy could involve delivery of non-opioid medication through a special pain pump. Or it could be the use of mild electrical currents that are undetectable to the patient to disrupt harmful pain

signals to the brain.

This year, Dr. Zaky began offering dorsal root ganglion (DRG) therapy. DRG therapy is a form of neuromodulation, in which small electrical pulses are sent to the nerve to block out pain signals. While most neuromodulation addresses pain of the head, neck and spine, the new DRG therapy can help with pain of the torso or extremities. One example is treatment of neuropathy, a common condition related to diabetes that can cause loss of feeling as well as extreme pain in the hands, arms, feet and legs.



*Kevin J. Lee, MD, MSPH, FCOG*

### ***Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery***

Two gynecologists on our women's health team, Drs. Kevin Lee and Brandi Musselman, have extensive fellowship training in minimally invasive surgery. These

*See Surgery, p. 15*

Do you have feedback about the care you received from Atlantic General Hospital and Health System?  
**Please, tell us!**

We value the opinions of our patients and families. If you have a less than satisfactory experience, please share it with us so we can improve how we provide care. If you have a positive experience we would love to share kudos with our associates, volunteers and medical staff. We strive every day to bring you the best care possible.

There are several ways you can share your opinions with us:  
**Fill out and return surveys you receive in the mail.** An agency conducts surveys on our behalf to collect valuable information about our patients' experiences. Survey responses are confidential.

**Fill out a comment card.** These are available in every hospital department and physician office of Atlantic General Health System. Just hand the completed survey to any associate.

**Consider giving to our Grateful Patient Program.** This is a wonderful way to honor a caregiver while sustaining quality healthcare for our communities. More information can be found at [www.atlanticgeneral.org/honoracaregiver](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/honoracaregiver).

**Send us an email.**

Drop us a line at [pr@atlanticgeneral.org](mailto:pr@atlanticgeneral.org) and we will respond to your comment or question within 72 hours.

**Write or call.**

Letters can be sent to:  
Atlantic General Hospital  
Patient and Family Relations  
9733 Healthway Drive  
Berlin, MD 21811  
Or, call our Patient and Family Services Representative at 410-629-1500.



**VISION**

To be the leader in caring for people and advancing health for the residents of and visitors to our community.

**MISSION**

To create a coordinated care delivery system that will provide access to quality care, personalized service and education to improve individual and community health.

**VALUES**

*(Keeping "PATIENTS" at the Center of our Values)*

- P** Patient safety first
- A** Accountability for financial resources
- T** Trust, respect & kindness
- I** Integrity, honesty & dignity
- E** Education – continued learning & improvement
- N** Needs of our community – Participation & community commitment
- T** Teamwork, partnership & communication
- S** Service & personalized attention

These values are honored in all we do for our patients, visitors, medical staff, associates, partners and volunteers.

**ETHICAL COMMITMENT**

To conduct ourselves in an ethical manner that emphasizes community service and justifies the public trust.

**QUALITY STATEMENT**

We deliver care that is accessible, safe, appropriate, coordinated, effective, and centered on the needs of individuals within a system that demonstrates continual improvement.

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- Director, Imaging*
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- Rebecca Taylor, *Fundraising Co-Chair*

*Surgery, from p. 13*



*Brandi Musselman, MD*

procedures involve small cuts and the use of tiny cameras called laparoscopes.

For women who need hysterectomies or other gynecologic surgery, this means less pain and

bleeding and a quicker recovery.

### **Cancer Surgeries**

When Meshach Heenatigala, M.D., joined Atlantic General Health System last year, he increased



*Meshach Heenatigala, MD, FACS*

access to general surgery care for the community. Trained at a critical access hospital that cares for communities a remote area, Dr. Heenatigala became expert in a wide range of surgery procedures, including removal of adrenal gland

tumors and placement of stents in the colon and esophagus for patients who have blockages caused by cancer.

### **Bariatric Surgeries**

With Dr. Xin Zhong's arrival, patients now have more bariatric surgery options to choose from; in addition



*Xin Zhong, MD, FACS*

to providing sleeve gastrectomy, she and Dr. Alae Zarif now provide the latest in gastric bypass procedures.

Dr. Zhong, who completed advanced training in bariatric surgery, will soon be offering gastric

ballooning. This non-invasive treatment involves placing a balloon down the throat and into the stomach. The balloon is then filled with a sterile saline solution to give the patient a feeling of fullness after eating a small meal. The balloon is left in place for several months to allow an individual to establish new eating habits before it is removed.



For more information about surgery services provided at Atlantic General Hospital, visit [www.atlanticgeneral.org/surgery](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/surgery).

For patient ratings of these providers, visit [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com).

*ICU, continued from p 7*

### **Around-the-Clock Intensivist Monitoring**

Unlike in most rural acute care hospitals, our ICU patients receive the benefits of ongoing remote monitoring through Maryland eCare. This partnership supports the care provided by Atlantic General's full-time board certified intensivists, including Atif Zeeshan, M.D.

In the ICU, patient conditions can

change very quickly. Studies have shown improved patient outcomes and decreased lengths of stay for patients managed by critical care physicians.

Complementing local ICU care, Maryland eCare's critical care physicians and nurses – based at University of Maryland Medical Center – closely watch patient conditions 24/7 remotely, through video and audio technology combined with intelligent

monitoring and alarm systems.

While maintaining patient privacy, the Maryland eCare remote center closely monitors patients for any physical change, immediately alerting local caregivers and recommending corrective action. Atlantic General joined the eCare collaborative in 2008.

For more information about the ICU at Atlantic General Hospital or the Maryland eCare partnership, visit [www.atlanticgeneral.org/icu](http://www.atlanticgeneral.org/icu).

*Friends and Neighbors of Atlantic General Hospital*

## care.together

*care.together is the community magazine published by Atlantic General Hospital and Health System.*

### General Information

(410) 641-1100

### Physician Referral Line

(410) 629-1500  
(877) 641-4244

### Patient & Family Relations

(410) 641-9654

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## Minor Emergencies. Major Care.

If you or a family member suddenly becomes sick, it's good to know you have a better choice than going to the hospital Emergency Room.

**Come to Atlantic ImmediCare instead!** It's where you'll be treated by top-quality providers who are affiliated with Atlantic General Hospital. At a cost that's much lower.

At Atlantic ImmediCare, we provide treatment for all kinds of common illnesses and minor injuries. And here's more good news:

- **We're open 7 days a week** (*Memorial Day - Labor Day at Ocean City location*)
- **We accept most insurance plans**
- **We have free off-street parking ... and we're conveniently accessible via public transportation**

Plus, your medical history is available through our PERKS electronic record-keeping service, adding an even greater measure of efficiency and safety.

**Ask about our 30-minute service promise!**

**Two locations to serve you:**  
9714 Healthway Drive, Berlin  
**410-641-3340**

1001 North Philadelphia Ave.  
Suite A, Ocean City  
**410-289-0065**  
(Open Sat/Sun seasonally)



[atlanticgeneral.org/immediCare](http://atlanticgeneral.org/immediCare)