

your Health Matters

A publication produced four times a year as a community service of South County Health

CONTENTS

- Message from the President...2
- PBN Healthiest Employer...3
- Diabetes Team Improving Diagnosis and Care3
- Initiatives to Support Behavioral Health.....4
- Helping Young Moms and Moms-to-be Get Children Off to a Healthy Start5
- Why Should You Make an Unrestricted Annual Fund Gift.....6
- SCH Nurse Provides Help to Seniors Through SRIV...6
- Q&A with Marcia Werber Feldman.....7
- “SCH Talks” Lecture Series ..7



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SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH

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US NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKS SOUTH COUNTY HOSPITAL AMONG “BEST HOSPITALS”

South County Hospital has been recognized as a High Performing Hospital in the U.S. News & World Report 2017-18 edition of “Best Hospitals.” It was the only hospital in Rhode Island to receive the High Performing rating for knee replacement surgery.

Of the approximately 4,500 hospitals evaluated, fewer than 30 percent earned a High Performing rating in any category.

To be nationally ranked in a specialty, a hospital must excel in caring for the sickest, most medically complex patients. The ratings in procedures and conditions, by contrast, focus on typical Medicare patients.

“Best Hospitals” ratings and rankings are based on millions of data points, in-depth analyses, and expertise. The rankings give consumers the information they need to make healthcare decisions, leading to better care for

patients and more incentives for hospitals.

Knee Replacement Scorecard

South County Hospital’s score on its knee replacement specialty is based on multiple data categories, including patient survival, readmissions, and volume.

Hospitals received one of three ratings – high performing, average or below average.

Hospitals that earned a high performing rating ranked significantly higher than the national average.

Significant high scores were given to South County

Hospital for survival, based on U.S. News analysis of Medicare claims, preventing readmissions, preventing prolonged hospitalizations, preventing complications after hip or knee replacement, and the number of patients receiving surgery.



DO YOU KNOW ALL THE THINGS YOU CAN DO ON OUR NEW WEBSITE?

Check us out at www.southcountyhealth.org!



Learn about our services, obtain health information, discover community resources, find a doctor, look up events, and get the latest news. The website also makes it easy to make a donation—using your credit card on our secure Giving page!

TO YOUR HEALTH

THE JOINT COMMISSION INSPECTION—A TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS



Louis R. Giancola
President & CEO
South County Health

Every three years, South County Hospital undergoes a rigorous inspection of the conditions we maintain, as well as the protocols and practices we have in place that directly or indirectly affect patient care and safety. Inspectors from an organization known as The Joint Commission conduct these inspections unannounced and target areas of hospital operations at random. The inspectors are at liberty to request any documentation relevant to the

1,633 standards within the purview of the The Joint Commission, interview administration and staff to ensure that all are aware of and adhering to best practices, and physically inspect any area they choose. The surveys help to ensure that we are in compliance with stringent standards for cleanliness, organization, training, communication, and what is seemingly an endless list of areas that could ultimately affect the quality of patient care.

Since their recent, four-day visit, we are pleased to report that the majority of their findings were positive, including the transparency of information and the responsiveness of staff who interacted with the inspectors during their visit.

The Joint Commission is an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. Joint Commission accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards.

Meeting and exceeding high-performance standards in patient care is nothing new to South County Health. We are continuously scrutinizing the quality of the care we provide by participating in patient care initiatives, evaluating outcomes and processes, reviewing performance data and monitoring patient satisfaction both through independent third-party assessment and internal review by our Quality Improvement Team.

The practices and protocols used by our staff continue to lower the incidence of surgical site infections, blood stream infections and other complications that can occur as a result of surgery and hospitalization. To ensure that patients receive not only quality care, but attentive care, we've formed a patient experience team that works diligently to identify areas where

MILESTONES

This fall marks the one-year anniversary of the South County Health Cancer Center expansion. Our Cancer Center is staffed by board-certified physicians with expertise in oncology/hematology. Known and respected among their peers, Drs. Gerald Colvin, James Smythe and Tina Rizack each brings extensive knowledge to the diagnosis and treatment of a variety of cancers to South County Hospital, so that patients who live in Washington County can stay in Washington County to receive the same high level of care, compassion and treatment options offered at centers an hour or more away.

We understand that patients and their family caregivers have much to do in their daily lives. Our goal is to give them an opportunity to use the time otherwise spent driving, and turn it into time spent making memories with the people in their lives. For more information, visit southcountyhealth.org/cancer.

the overall patient experience can be improved.

Our recognitions have come from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, the Commission on Cancer, Women's Choice Awards for Obstetrics and Stroke Care, Blue Distinction from Blue Cross Blue Shield, *Consumer Reports*, *US News & World Report*, The Leapfrog Group's Straight A's for Hospital Safety, IAC accreditation for nuclear cardiology, and a host of others, including The Joint Commission – the nation's predominant standards-setting and accrediting body in healthcare.

We value organizations such as The Joint Commission who scrutinize our day-to-day operations, practices and protocols. From their feedback, we can make improvements. Their acknowledgment reinforces what the data shows: that South County Hospital is among the best hospitals in the country for hospital quality and patient experience.

Every day, South County Health's medical, professional and support staffs work tirelessly to help you remain healthy and active at every stage of life. As the title of this publication states, your health matters – to you, and to us.

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SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH NAMED HEALTHIEST EMPLOYER BY PBN

For the fifth consecutive year, South County Health was recognized as one of Rhode Island's Healthiest Employers in an annual award program of *Providence Business News*. The organization was selected as the number one healthiest employer among those with 500 – 1,999 employees.

The announcement was made on Wednesday, August 9, 2017, at a luncheon where the healthiest employers from each size category were recognized.



(l-r) Megan Keenan, Food Services Director; Marie Padilla; Christina Puppi, Human Resources Assistant; Maggie Thomas, Chief Human Resources Officer; and Joanne Soccio, Senior Benefits & HRIS Specialist.

In addition to the distinction that South County Health received, Marie Padilla, a member of the Community Health Team, was recognized for her individual success in weight loss, improved health and a more active lifestyle.

South County Health is featured in the *Providence Business News* special section, "2017 Healthiest Employers of RI." The organization was selected based on the success of their benefit-linked, employee incentive program called Well Beyond. South County Health realized an 86% participation rate in the various programs offered through Well Beyond. The industry average for employee participation is 55 to 75%.



Marie Padilla, a member of the Community Health Team, received individual recognition for her health success. Her efforts resulted in weight loss, improved health and a more active lifestyle.

SPECIALIZED DIABETES TEAM WORKING TO IMPROVE DIAGNOSIS AND CARE



South County Health's Diabetes Champion Team

Diabetes, in particular type-2, is increasingly prevalent nationwide. In Rhode Island, 11.5% of adults have diabetes and 36.4% have pre-diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. To combat this local health concern South County Hospital formed a "Diabetes Champion Team" with the goal of improving patients' and healthcare providers' knowledge and education about managing diabetes.

The Diabetes Champion Team is an inter-professional team comprised of nurses, physicians, diabetes educators, pharmacists, dietitians, case managers and other clinicians. They meet monthly to identify gaps and solutions in diabetes care, as well as to continue their own education on current diabetes best practices. This specialized team is working to develop protocols and polices to ensure proper diagnosis, treatment, and continuity of patient care from inpatient, to outpatient and home care.

"The Diabetes Champion Team offers a number of benefits including better communication between providers and patients, and can help decrease hospital readmission rates due to diabetes," said Certified Diabetes Educator Karen Zarlenga, RN. "Medical providers on the team, for example, will be able to improve the timing of blood glucose testing and insulin administration thanks to hands-on learning in diabetes workshops. Members of the Diabetes Champion Team then teach this new information to their staff and colleagues."

The ultimate goal: to improve quality of care and safety for diabetic patients. The team is dedicated to decreasing adverse reactions and complications that are associated with diabetes and to use their engagement and knowledge of best practices to better serve our patients.

For information on diabetes care and management, call 401-788-1696 or visit southcountyhealth.org.

THREE INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH— AND YOU CAN JOIN IN



Although known for its picturesque beaches, parks and rural farmlands, Washington County also has the highest suicide rate in the state and, in the last three years, has reported 147 opiate overdoses. The most recent statewide Community Health Assessment conducted through the RI Department of Health indicated that behavioral health is a significant concern among residents. Understanding that behavioral health issues can be a daunting problem to face, and even recognize, South County Health is making efforts to address this critical community need. In 2016, the South County Health Board of Trustees voted to make behavioral health the key focus for its Community Health Assessment Implementation plan. Below are a number of initiatives South County Health supports in which you can participate to help build a stronger, healthier community.

Fund-a-Need Initiative

Our Fund-a-Need program currently supports the efforts of South County Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds (SCHBHM), a vigorous, collaborative, long-term effort to transform community health in the South County area. Primarily funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, South County Health underwrites administration and staffing for the organization to help provide equal access to healthy living resources and lifestyles regardless of race, income, or gender.

Suicide Prevention Training

Ninety percent of those who commit suicide and half of all drug abusers show an underlying mental illness. SCHBHM conducts local youth mental health first aid trainings to help parents and adults who work with youth recognize early warning signs of mental health problems as well as how to intervene when a person experiences a mental health crisis.

This groundbreaking eight-hour training course takes the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health and substance abuse. The course gives you the tools needed to identify when someone might be struggling with a mental health or substance use problem and how to connect them with appropriate support and resources when necessary. To find a training course near you, visit www.bodiesminds.org.

8 for 80+ Program

SCHBHM is also launching “8 for 80+,” an innovative evidence-informed, public health intervention (in partnership with University of Rhode Island and Brown University Continuing Medical Education Office) to promote social-emotional competence in children ages zero to eight. The goal of the 8 for 80+ project is to promote lifelong mental health and well-being by ensuring that parents, caregivers, and practitioners have the training and resources to teach young children the eight important skills they need to reap lifelong benefits. There are few programs focusing on prevention. This is the only program available universally to all parents.

Find out more

South County shouldn't be leading in categories like suicide and drug abuse. The time is now to work together as a community and make a difference in the lives of children, adults and families in our area. To find out more about these initiatives or how you can give to ensure programs like these thrive, contact Lauren Goldenberg at 401-788-3893 or email lgoldenberg@southcountyhealth.org.



HELPING YOUNG MOMS AND MOMS-TO-BE GET CHILDREN OFF TO A HEALTHY START

First Connections is a free, voluntary program that provides confidential home visits to pregnant women and families with young children from birth to age three. Trained nurses, social workers, and community health workers meet with families in their homes to talk about their needs, answer questions they may have, and conduct comprehensive assessments.

The Rhode Island Department of Health began the First Connections program to help children at every stage of early childhood have the best chance at life-long health. South County Home Health (SCHH), part of South County Health, administers the First Connections program in South County. SCHH is one of only four organizations in the state offering the program.

National research has demonstrated that family home visiting programs like First Connections improve prenatal health, reduce childhood injuries, reduce unplanned pregnancies, improve school readiness, increase intervals between births, and increase employment. SCHH nurses help families:

- Prepare for the demands of parenthood
- Plan for a healthy delivery
- Get the home ready for baby
- Provide help with challenges of breastfeeding
- Learn the correct way to mix formula
- Connect mothers and their babies to health care providers

- Set healthy sleeping patterns
- React and respond positively to baby's crying
- Cope with depression
- Help babies grow and learn
- Find quality childcare
- Meet every day needs and reach parenting goals
- Connect families with long-term parenting supports



“South County Home Health is committed to our guiding values in fostering life-long, meaningful connections within our community,” said SCHH Assistant Vice President Marcia Werber Feldman, RN. “Through First Connections, families have seen improved outcomes in child health, maternal health, and physical and social-emotional development. We hope to continue that by making the program more economically self-sufficient.”

South County Health has applied for a \$10,000 grant from the Department of Health to assist in funding the First Connections program in our area. South County Home Health First Connections currently has 11 providers seeing 115 children. For more information on South County Health's visiting nurse services, visit www.southcountyhealth.org or call 401-782-0500.

WE VALUE YOUR OPINION

Overall, how would you rate *Your Health Matters* compared to other hospital wellness newsletters you receive?

EXCELLENT VERY GOOD GOOD FAIR POOR

What health topics would you like to read about in future issues?

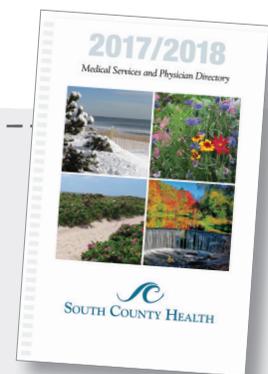
- Yes! Send me my FREE Medical Services & Physician Directory.
- Yes! Add me to your mailing list for health and wellness lectures.

Please print your name and address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____



WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE AN UNRESTRICTED ANNUAL FUND GIFT?

Since 1919, South County Health has depended on the generosity of our community to provide funding for vital services. Donor support has made recent significant initiatives possible including renovations to the Cancer Center and Women and Newborn Care Unit, the purchase of a new MRI machine, as well as previous enhancements such as the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center and countless other programs and services. *That is what your unrestricted gift does: it allows us to address needs wherever they are needed most. It allows us to save lives!*

Your gift supports a hospital that is one of only 19 in the country to receive the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid

Services' highest score of 5-Stars in two areas used to measure healthcare excellence – Overall Hospital Quality and Patient Experience. We are the only hospital in the Northeast to earn a 5-Star rating in the two categories.

People often ask, where would South County be without South County Health? A better question might be, where would South County Health be without our loyal donors?

As we come to the end of our fiscal year, please consider making an Annual Fund gift that will allow us to save lives. Donors may make a gift online, by phone, or by mail. Visit southcountyhealth.org and click on the Giving tab. We deeply appreciate your support!



“My wife Gerri and I, as well as family members and friends, know the value of South County Health from personal experience. We also know that in today’s challenging health care environment, high quality organizations like SCH require philanthropic support if they are to maintain their quality while also moving into much needed new areas of community care.

We’re very happy to support the Annual Fund each year. The unrestricted nature of these gifts gives SCH staff the opportunity to put resources where they can be most beneficial. Plus, national data shows that well run health care organizations offer an exceptional return from their philanthropy. For many reasons, supporting SCH is a very satisfying investment!” – Bob Beagle, member of the Board of Trustees

SCH NURSE PROVIDES HELP TO SENIORS THROUGH SRIV

Article reprinted courtesy of Phil Cozzolino and The Narragansett Times

More could always be done to assist the elderly according to one local resident. Deborah Owens, a registered nurse at South County Hospital, is hoping to inspire the community to volunteer its time more to help its aging population. Currently, 15 percent of South Kingstown residents are classified as senior citizens. Owens believes more could be done to assist these residents through the volunteer-based Southern Rhode Island Volunteers (SRIV)—its mission to provide local seniors with transportation for doctor’s visits, grocery shopping and other activities, through the organization’s senior transportation program and independent aging initiative.

“The need for transportation for seniors in our community is very strong,” she said in a phone interview. “If people with chronic illnesses aren’t getting to their appointments, they’re first bummed out because they don’t want to be a burden on anybody, they don’t

want to ask for help. And secondly, their health is declining.”

Owens, a 2001 graduate of the Community College of Rhode Island’s nursing program, and a nurse in South County Hospital’s medical and surgical departments since 2003, is now enrolled at the University of Rhode Island, working toward a bachelor’s of science degree in nursing (BSN). In the program, a class called “Community Health” required Owens to analyze a local health need. She thought she would focus on nutrition, however, in reaching out to an organization that works closely within the community, SRIV, headquartered in Ninigret Park in Charlestown, identified a more prominent problem.

“[SRIV executive director] Deb Tanner explained that by far, the SRIV has made community enrichment its official mission, with over 600 volunteers participating, contributing an average of 80,000 service hours annually, according to its website. The organization helps



Deborah Owens, RN, driving to help seniors.

continued on page 8

Q&A WITH... MARCIA WERBER FELDMAN, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTH COUNTY HOME HEALTH

Marcia Werber Feldman is keenly aware of the changes occurring in the healthcare industry. In her leadership role as assistant vice president of South County Home Health, she is looking forward to bridging the gap between inpatients and their return to good health, by providing the same level of high quality care that patients receive at South County Hospital, but in the home setting. Her career path has given her experience in service lines such as hematology-oncology, pediatrics, occupational health, home care and assisted living. Marcia's objectives for South County Home Health are to be strategic in planning for the future, and flexible to respond to unanticipated changes, all while providing exceptional patient care that is the hallmark of South County Health.

SCH: What drew you to this opportunity with South County Home Health?

MWF: Reputation. Very simple.

SCH: What makes you passionate about home care?

MWF: Home care provides the ability to be intimately involved with patients and watch their progress where it is most helpful, to aid families in dealing with an illness or injury, and incorporate them in the overall journey to some level of wellness.

SCH: Where do you see home care in the next five years?

MWF: In my opinion, the changing face of healthcare will push home care more into the forefront. Many more surgeries will be outpatient and home care will be needed to monitor those individuals. Inpatient stays will be shorter, making home care an integral piece in the journey to wellness. The next few years will be challenging with changing regulations. Many home care agencies will not be able to survive these changes,

while those that are flexible and strategic in their plans will be able to grow.

SCH: How do you plan to integrate home care into the continuum of care at South County Health?

MWF: With repetition, inclusion in hospital activities, education on the vast area of home care, helping the hospital see home care as a resource for the inpatients as well as home care patients, greater visibility within the hospital and the presence of human resources, we can build that bridge.

SCH: What would you say to nurses who are considering entering the home care/visiting nurse sector of health care, but are nervous to make the leap?

MWF: New nursing grads should spend a minimum of 18 months in an acute environment or in a skilled nursing facility where they can apply the theory they learned in school. There, they develop themselves as clinicians while others are available to mentor, guide, and assure them that their decision-making is sound and help them learn. New therapists can frequently be in

home care sooner, but ideally a year of background is preferred to solidify their skill set. Seasoned professionals should know how rewarding it is to be viewed as a positive influence in the family, and literally watching the difference you have made. Acute care patients are in the hospital for a short period of time so relationships are difficult to forge; however, home care allows for those relationships to form and to be worked for the benefit of the patient.

Visit www.southcountyhealth.org or call 401-782-0500 for more information on South County Home Health.



SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH Talks

Our community's healthcare interests are diverse, so you will find a wide range of events, lectures, classes, and groups to address a variety of concerns. Take a look at what's coming up:

Radon Gas	Medical & Wellness Center – Westerly	November 2, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Alzheimer's/Dementia	Medical & Wellness Center – Westerly	November 16, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Back Pain Q&A	Neighborhood Guild – Wakefield	December 5, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Register online at www.southcountyhealth.org

Your Health Matters is a free publication produced four times a year as a community service of South County Health. To be added to our mailing list, please call us at 401-788-1492.

This publication is for general information only and is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or other healthcare provider. Articles published in *Your Health Matters* reflect the views of those quoted and do not necessarily represent the opinions of all healthcare providers associated with South County Health.

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SCH NURSE PROVIDES HELP TO SENIORS THROUGH SRIV

Article reprinted courtesy of Phil Cozzolino and *The Narragansett Times*

continued from page 6

pair community events in need with individuals willing to volunteer, as well as assisting local towns with disaster preparedness and, of course, its independent aging program, which seeks to promote the health and wellness of the local senior population while upholding a standard of independence for the elderly. Part of this initiative includes volunteers needed to drive the vulnerable population to and from essential medical appointments.

SRIV also regularly collaborates with Rhode Island Meals on Wheels to help deliver food to seniors who are homebound. Owens first became involved with the organization due to this connection. "I started with them doing Meals on Wheels, and I looked up their website, and I realized all the other things SRIV was trying to do," she said. "In coming up with something the community would need for this project, I figured the people who work closely with the community would have a good idea."

As part of the project for the URI course, Owens began delivering food for Meals on Wheels and SRIV in April. Her route started in Kingston and went nearly to Narragansett, with seven stops along the way, which cemented the need for more volunteers in Owens' mind.

"I felt bad, because I saw the papers that they would give out to volunteers every week," Owens explained. "And every week, it said there was a need for more volunteers in all these different areas. There's always opportunities for volunteers." Therefore, Owens created a brochure to be distributed at local businesses and organizations in the hopes of driving up the volunteer pool. On the brochure is a speedometer and the question "can you drive?" and also the words "we need your help!" Contact information for SRIV was also included.

The idea was to appeal to a large base, as anyone with a valid Rhode Island driver's license and a background check can apply to be a volunteer with SRIV.

"I think one of the biggest things to stress is that as a community we often overlook the needs of our seniors, or assume that their needs are somehow met," said Owens. "Independence is a wonderful thing, however, literature supports that lack of transportation is a vital component to health outcomes. Seniors who lack transportation are more likely to feel isolated and/or depressed, thus increasing health deterioration. There is more to life than doctors appointments, however, missed appointments, delayed care, and missed or delayed medication use can be caused by a lack of transportation." South County Hospital currently has a transportation service; however, it requires 48 hours notification. The South Kingstown Senior Center has transportation, but does not do medical appointments.

Owens has one semester remaining before completing her BSN at URI. She hopes the continuing of her education will result in wider knowledge of patient and community needs in a town she loves. Owens has been a resident of South Kingstown for 16 years, originally hailing from Warwick.

"As a member of this wonderful community, I have seen how we pull together to help one another," she said. "I am confident that the more awareness that exists about the lack of accessible and convenient transportation for our senior population, we will rise to meet the need."

To learn more about SRIV, please visit southernrivol.org or call 401-552-7661.