

# Advancing Medicine.

## *Touching Lives.*

RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL

SPECIAL EDITION • 2024





**20,000 employees. One promise.**

**COVER:** Exterior signage at Rhode Island Hospital reflects new name and closer alignment with its academic partner.

**ABOVE:** Shady Reyes, Clinical Manager, PICU, and Dean Roye, MD, SVP, Chief Medical Officer, celebrate new name at recent rebranding event.

# Message from Leadership

This past June saw two major milestones for Rhode Island Hospital and for our health system as a whole. First, we announced the expansion of our long-standing affiliation with Brown University and our plans to rebrand Lifespan as Brown University Health, reflecting our closer alignment with our academic partner. That same month, we also welcomed Sarah Frost as Chief of Hospital Operations and President of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's.

After months of preparation and planning, we officially became Brown University Health on October 15. We're confident this change will enhance our ability to provide top-quality patient care, medical education, and biomedical research in Rhode Island—enabling us to contribute to a healthier, more vibrant state and region. It is also a critical step toward raising our national profile, helping us recruit and retain world-class physicians and attracting patients from around the country in search of our high-quality services.

With the recent acquisition of Saint Anne's and Morton hospitals in Massachusetts, we are already on the way to growing our regional footprint, caring for more patients and positively impacting additional communities. It's a lot of change, but it's all part of a long-term strategic investment in our organization and our people, which will carry us into the future.

Sarah Frost has hit the ground running to create that future as well, working to streamline operations, enhance patient care, and create cohesive teams. Learn more about Sarah and her vision for Rhode Island Hospital and the Brown University Health system on page 8.

We hope you'll join us in spreading the word that while our name has changed, our promise has not: we are here to deliver exceptional care, to educate the next generation of healers, and to create tomorrow's treatments today through constant medical innovation.

Healthcare is an ever-evolving industry that requires us to stay informed and adapt to its changes. Thankfully, our valued donor community remains steadfast. Philanthropy is a powerful driver of what sets us apart from others and we are grateful for your continued generosity and support as we transform the future of medicine together.

With appreciation,



**LAWRENCE A. AUBIN, SR.**

Chairman,  
Brown University Health  
Board of Directors  
Chairman, Rhode Island Hospital  
Board of Trustees



**JOHN FERNANDEZ**

President and  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Brown University Health



# John and Tricia Ferreira Lobby Nears Completion

*Donor-funded project reimagines hospital's entrance*



Last year, thanks to the generosity of donors, Rhode Island Hospital was able to embark on a much-needed lobby renovation project. Longtime supporters John and Tricia Ferreira spearheaded the fundraising with their incredible \$2.5 million leadership gift. “This is our opportunity to give back to Rhode Island Hospital for being there 24/7 for our family and our community,” explains John, whose support of the hospital dates back almost four decades.

“This project would not be possible without the extraordinary support of the Ferreriras and other caring donors,” says Sarah Frost, Chief of Hospital Operations at Brown University Health and President of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children’s. “They saw the vision and value in this undertaking and understood that their investment in our lobby was truly an investment in the health and well-being of our community.”

The soon-to-be-completed project is successfully modernizing one of the hospital's most visible and heavily-used areas, promising to bring improved services, better amenities, and an enhanced experience to everyone who comes through the door.

## Leveling up

“It’s very rewarding to undertake a project this important,” says Keith Giacin, Facilities Project Manager. “I’ve been involved in many projects, but this is different because the lobby is our front door. It’s often what people see first and can leave them with a lasting impression of Rhode Island Hospital. It really does say a lot about who we are.”

Moreover, Rhode Island Hospital is the primary teaching hospital for The Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. As part of a world-class academic medical center, its facilities need to be reflective of the position and importance the hospital and health system hold in the region. Leveling up the lobby aligns with this sentiment, helps with the recruitment of the best and brightest, and ensures the space aptly complements the excellence within the hospital.

Keith says the work, which was tackled in phases, included, among other things: building a new guest services lounge as well as conference rooms, administrative offices, and restrooms; relocating the information desk; renovating the attending physicians’ lounge and executive suites; installing enhanced lighting throughout; adding climate comfort systems; and creating additional seating areas in multiple locations.

## Listening to feedback

Getting feedback from the community, staff, and patients was a key component of decision-making throughout the planning and implementation stages of the project. For example, the hospital's patient family advisory council weighed in on the lobby plans and did a walk-through early on.

"They thought we didn't have enough space for the volume of wheelchairs coming through and also said we needed additional places for folks to stop and sit for a minute," explains Service Excellence Specialist Michol Levine, who works in the hospital's Patient and Guest Services (PGS) Department. "So, the plans were changed to mitigate these pain points and accommodate their recommendations."

PGS is a "frontline" department charged with listening to and resolving or sharing the thousands of concerns and compliments they receive each year from patients, families and visitors.

## Putting patients and guests first

To maximize its visibility and effectiveness, PGS moved from its former space down the hall to a centralized location in the lobby proper.

"Being right in the front lobby with a new lighted office sign gives patients and families better, quicker access to the services they need, and strengthens our partnership with the nearby information desk," explains Kelsey Martin, Manager of Patient Experience. Kelsey adds that the reimagined lobby has created a "calm, caring, and inviting professional environment" from which staff can deliver a "more personalized and streamlined experience."

Overall, the powered-by-philanthropy updates bring about a more thoughtful lobby design and layout that not only improves visitor flow and staff efficiency but also enhances patient and guest comfort, satisfaction, privacy, navigation, and technology enablement.

As President Frost concludes, "optimizing patient experience and improving outcomes is at the heart of everything we do, and the lobby improvements help advance those efforts in direct and meaningful ways."



# Lobby Project Champion Donors Share 'Why I Give' Reflections

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has,” said American cultural anthropologist, Margaret Mead.

This powerful quote perfectly underscores how change, no matter how widespread, usually begins with a few key individuals. Similarly, it was a small group of supporters, using the power of philanthropy, who spearheaded the project that brought sweeping, transformative changes to Rhode Island Hospital’s main lobby. Here, these champion donors share their “Why I Give” reflections.



“Supporting and seeing this renovation become a reality is a dream come true. To completely transform the lobby into a warm and inviting space for patients to have their first interactions with Rhode Island Hospital is so important to the overall experience we want everyone to have at Brown University Health. I’m grateful for all the donors who contributed to this special project, especially my dear friends John and Tricia Ferreira. It’s a powerful example of the impact of philanthropy.”

**Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr.**

*Chairman, Brown University Health Board of Directors  
Chairman, Rhode Island Hospital Board of Trustees*

“Why I give is second nature to both my husband and me. I grew up with parents who always paid it forward and would not think twice to give to others before themselves. So, you could say it is in my DNA. Of course, I would marry someone with the same beliefs and together it is our mission. Why Hasbro Children’s? Well, my parents contributed to the hospital when it was under construction and continued yearly, until they passed. It is up to us to carry on their legacy.”

**Sandra Delli Carpini**

*Chief Marketing Officer, Colbea Enterprises,  
Seasons Corner Market  
Trustee, Rhode Island Hospital Foundation*



“Nearly 30 years ago, my wife and our then five-year-old son were in a car accident. My son sustained injuries to his hand and was in danger of losing fingers. Hospital staff worked on him all that night, and when they came out to tell us ‘We saved his fingers’ we were overwhelmed with thankfulness. That was our first ‘Why’ and we donated at that time so that caregivers could help other trauma patients as well. Ever since—whether I’m in foundation board meetings and learning about all the lifesaving work that’s being done here or just driving on 95 and see the hospital sign from the highway—I’m reminded that there are miracles happening in that hospital . . . every day. So, that’s my ‘Why’ for continuing to support them.”

**Anthony Calandrelli**

*Owner, American Ring Company  
Trustee, Rhode Island Hospital Foundation*



“Candidly, my primary motivation for supporting the lobby is Dr. Gokaslan. In 2020, I had incredible lower back pain that greatly diminished my quality of life. I didn’t really know Dr. Gokaslan at the time, but he changed his Thanksgiving plans—he was going to go to Canada to spend the holiday with his daughter—so that he could perform spinal surgery on me. He stepped up and I’ll never forget that. Being pain-free is life-changing. You can’t put a value on that. So, when I was approached to support with this project, it was a no-brainer. Doctors, nurses, and support staff make sacrifices every day for the benefit of patients. How do you not support Rhode Island Hospital, if you can, after hearing those stories?”

**Tony Thomas**

*Principal/Partner at The Foundry Associates  
Trustee, Rhode Island Hospital Foundation*

“Rhode Island Medical Imaging supported the lobby project in honor of John J. Cronan, MD, for whom the new physician’s lounge is named. Dr. Cronan’s impact on the generations of medical students, residents, and junior physicians who first walked through the doors of Rhode Island Hospital as unproven and uncertain neophytes only to leave through that same lobby as confident and mature physicians cannot be overstated. Many of those same physicians now lead their own departments or are nationally and internationally known. Still many more of us have chosen to remain within the department that Dr. Cronan founded as living testaments to his legacy.”

**John A. Pezzullo, MD**

*President, Rhode Island Medical Imaging and  
Vice Chair of Radiology, Brown University Health*



# Get to Know Sarah Frost

*President of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's  
Chief of Hospital Operations for Brown University Health*



Sarah Frost

## Welcome, Sarah! What initially drew you to join Rhode Island Hospital, and what excites you most about your new role?

Thank you! I am originally from New England, so this was a great chance to return to my roots. I came for the opportunity, the people, and the sense of community.

As Chief of Hospital Operations for Brown University Health, I am excited to lead our hospitals through the healthcare challenges being felt nationwide, but especially here in Rhode Island. These include the need to improve reimbursement, rejuvenate our campuses by investing in infrastructure, and expand services and access to meet the needs of our communities so they can receive state-of-the-art care close to home.

The team here is amazing, and I am proud to join in these efforts.

## Tell us about your vision and approach as Chief of Hospital Operations and President of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's.

I hope to foster a “one-system, one-team” approach, which I believe is vital to our success now and into the future. It is about ensuring that no matter which Brown University Health hospital a patient enters, they receive the same exceptional standard of care. Across the system, we are streamlining operations and leveraging strengths. By breaking down silos and creating cohesive teams, we can focus on delivering consistent, high-quality care across all departments. This approach will allow us to be more efficient and effective with the goal of continuing to improve patient outcomes.

## What are some of the key initiatives you are excited to implement in the coming year?

We are investing heavily in infrastructure. There are more than 20 projects in the works on the Rhode Island Hospital campus that will enhance the patient experience. And perhaps the most-anticipated recent project—fully funded by philanthropy—will be the opening of the renovated Rhode Island Hospital lobby.

Additionally, we are focusing on advancing our clinical programs, improving access to care in our emergency departments and inpatient settings, expanding our telehealth capabilities, and strengthening our workforce to ensure that our teams have the tools and resources they need to provide the best care possible.

## Can you tell us about the role philanthropy plays in shaping the future of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's?

Philanthropy has always played a transformative role in shaping the future of our hospitals, and its importance will only grow as we set goals to change the future of healthcare. Philanthropy allows us to invest in innovative technology, research, and patient care initiatives that go beyond what traditional funding can support. It not only helps us meet today's challenges but also ensures that we can continue to innovate and provide the highest level of care for generations to come.

The generosity of our community directly impacts the level of care we can provide, and I am incredibly grateful to have such supportive donors at our side.



# Ted Fischer Earns Civic Leader Award



Ted Fischer and Edward Iannuccilli, MD

On April 15, 2024, Ted Fischer crossed the finish line of the 2024 Boston Marathon, marking the completion of his ninth Boston Marathon as part of the Golf Fights Cancer team. Ted has repeatedly embraced the incredible challenge of the famous 26.2 miles from Hopkinton to Boston, to raise money for the Richard A. Browning Cancer Research Fund. The fund was established at Rhode Island Hospital in honor of Ted's dear friend, Richard Browning, MD, and to date, Ted has raised an impressive \$363,200. It's Ted's leadership, relentless drive, and unwavering commitment to both honor a beloved friend and highlight an important cause that earned him the 2024 Edward A. Iannuccilli, MD Civic Leader of the Year Award.

Ted received the annual award given by the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees in front of family and friends, hospital leadership including Sarah Frost, President of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's, Howard Safran, MD, Chief of Hematology/Oncology at the Brown University Health Cancer Institute, as well as the award's namesake, Edward Iannuccilli, MD.

"I was honored to be in attendance to hear Ted accept the award with integrity, compassion, and boundless energy," states Dr. Iannuccilli. "His commitment to the community is exemplary, and for that, I am most proud."

Dr. Richard Browning was Chief of Anesthesia at Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's for over two decades, when in November 2012, he lost a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Ted says, "His legacy inspires me every day and running marathons in his honor feels like nothing compared to what he did for so many."

## New Program is Revolutionizing Addiction Treatment in Rhode Island

The crisis of addiction has reached unprecedented levels, both locally and nationally. Fortunately, a new Brown University Health program addresses this daunting public health issue in an innovative way.

"We wanted to create a place where people can access the highest quality addiction care when they need it," explains Cecilia Fix, MD, Rhode Island Hospital's Director of the Division of Addiction Medicine. "Too often, people seek treatment only to find themselves on long waitlists. We want to change that."

This vision became reality with the launch of the Addiction Care Today (ACT) program at Rhode Island Hospital in May 2024, which provides immediate and accessible treatment for those struggling with drug or alcohol use disorders. ACT offers same-day, walk-in appointments, ensuring individuals can receive help when they are ready—without long waits or barriers. Whether someone's goal is to stop using entirely, reduce use, or use more safely, ACT provides individualized care. The clinic uses a harm reduction approach for those who may not be ready to quit, offering tools like Narcan for overdose reversal and fentanyl test strips to ensure safer drug use.

ACT operates 20 hours per week, thanks to startup funding from the Rhode Island state opioid settlement fund. Additional funding would expand capacity and increase provider availability to meet growing demand.

"We're revolutionizing the way addiction care is delivered," concludes Dr. Fix. "By meeting patients where they are, we're providing not just treatment, but hope."

# Andrew's Odyssey

*A grateful patient's journey from helplessness to healing*



***“It was really frightening to go through this journey . . . I was blessed to find the support I needed through the humanity and care of the people at Rhode Island Hospital . . . ”***

—Andrew Rosenberg

**F**or nearly two years, Andrew Rosenberg experienced physical discomfort that was difficult to describe and even harder to diagnose. “I had an increasing sense of tingling and numbness in my left hand and fingers, and over time, my left arm began to feel very heavy when I would raise it,” he recounts. “I would also occasionally lose my balance and feel less steady on my feet. But no one could pinpoint what was wrong with me.”

The 56-year-old from Washington, D.C., underwent physical therapy and treatment for what his doctors thought might be a pinched nerve or carpal tunnel syndrome. Andrew was even tested for Parkinson's disease. Still, his conditions persisted.

Last year, however, while undergoing an MRI to probe the source of shoulder pain he was enduring, Andrew had an epiphany. “I thought to myself ‘Why am I not getting images of my spine taken, too?’ It seemed like a logical thing to do.”

When his shoulder MRI revealed nothing concerning, Andrew's doctor agreed to have his spine checked out at a well-regarded hospital in Washington, D.C. There, he was tested and diagnosed with Chiari malformation, a condition, usually present from birth, which occurs

when part of the skull is abnormally small or misshapen, putting pressure on the cerebellum, brain stem, and spinal cord. Throughout his life, that pressure had increased and was starting to block the flow of critical fluid, which cushions and surrounds the brain and spinal cord. Without surgery, Andrew's condition would lead to a gradual paralysis of his arms and legs.

But this wasn't all he faced.

In addition to the Chiari malformation, Andrew also had basilar invagination; a rare condition that occurs when the top of one's spine presses into the base of the skull. In severe cases, like Andrew's, the top of the spine compresses the brain stem and can cause neurological problems with a potentially fatal outcome.

Neurologists at Andrew's Washington, D.C. hospital recommended that he undergo a brain decompression in addition to a total spinal fusion surgery to stabilize his spine permanently by fusing his skull and neck down to the L7 vertebra in his back; a procedure that would leave Andrew essentially unable to move his head.

A dad to two young kids, Andrew was hesitant to accept that option because of how it might negatively impact his quality of life. So, he continued to seek alternative

options and found his way to Johns Hopkins. There, he consulted with a world-renowned expert on spinal column biomechanics and surgical outcomes.

“The specialist at Johns Hopkins told me, that in his opinion, there were only two surgeons in the country with the expertise and creativity to do my surgery and potentially preserve my mobility,” Andrew remembers. “One was a former colleague of his who was practicing at Rhode Island Hospital, and he recommended that I see him as soon as possible.”

That colleague was Ziya Gokaslan, MD, Chief of Neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital, who was hyper-responsive to Andrew’s urgent situation; reviewing his images the day he received them and scheduling surgery within a week.

During the delicate, eight-hour surgery, Dr. Gokaslan removed a small section of bone in the back of Andrew’s skull, opening the covering of his brain, and sewed a patch in place to provide more room and help relieve the pressure. He also performed a fusion to align and stabilize his cervical spine to correct instability at the junction of his spine and skull, using screws, plates, and rods to bolster the compromised area.



Before and after (right) surgery imaging

“We limited the extent of Andrew’s fusion to preserve mobility,” Dr. Gokaslan explains, “and addressed his life-threatening condition. His outlook is excellent and he’s very likely to make a full recovery.”

The founder and CEO of a successful digital health tech company and a government relations firm, Andrew was so moved by his care experience that he pledged \$100,000 to Rhode Island Hospital to support Dr. Gokaslan’s life-saving work; his father contributed \$25,000, too.

Reflecting on his experience, Andrew now says, “It was really frightening to go through this journey, and the recovery has been no joke. But I was blessed to find the support I needed through the humanity and care of the people at Rhode Island Hospital, from top to bottom. I never felt like I was just a number, there was always someone looking out for me with compassion—and Dr. Gokaslan’s unique medical genius and the health outcomes he achieved for me were extraordinary. He truly saved my life and preserved my quality of life in a way I didn’t think possible.”

WITH  
*Gratitude*

Feeling Grateful?  
Tell Us All About It.

If you or someone you know has had a meaningful experience at Rhode Island Hospital and are grateful for the care received, please let us know. Doing so will help us spread an important message, which growing evidence supports: Being grateful may not only bring good feelings, but it could also lead to better health.

To share your story or show your support, please visit: [giving.brownhealth.org/RIH/gratitude](https://giving.brownhealth.org/RIH/gratitude)



# Lorna's Lasting Legacy



Bill and Lorna Wayland

In February of 2024, Lorna Wayland, a trailblazing business executive, lost her courageous battle with cancer. She was 79.

A woman ahead of her time, Lorna achieved many firsts throughout her stellar career. For example, she was the first female Senior Vice President at Wang Laboratories and the first female Executive Vice President at Citizens Financial Group. She was also the first woman to Chair Rhode Island Hospital's Board of Trustees when she assumed the role in 1998.

"Lorna set the bar high with her ability to listen, understand the issues, and bring people to a consensus," remembers Ed Iannuccilli, MD, a retired gastroenterologist and accomplished author, who succeeded Lorna as Board Chair.

But with all her firsts, it's her lasting impact that really stands out.

"Everybody loved Lorna," says Bill Wayland, her husband. "She was a kind, selfless, and inspiring woman who lit up every room she entered and found joy by helping others."

Bill and Lorna met 40 years ago. At the time, the pair were both highly regarded human resources executives working on opposite sides of a corporate acquisition; the company Bill worked for, Textron, was acquiring the company Lorna worked for, Avco.

From the long hours working side by side a great fondness formed. The rest, as they say, is history.

"Looking back, it really was a love at first sight thing for me," Bill remembers. "She was wonderful, and we had a great life and family together. I miss her dearly and a lot of others do as well. Lorna was special."

One of the many things that made Lorna so special was her dedication to the community and willingness to give back. Contributing her talent and treasure to help worthwhile nonprofits was in her DNA—and Rhode Island Hospital benefited greatly from her giving spirit. In addition to her skillful leadership helming the Board of Trustees, the Waylands are longtime donors and supporters of Rhode Island Hospital, and Lorna played an active role on several fundraising and event steering committees. "Being on the Pappas Center for Breast Imaging Campaign Committee, in particular, meant a lot to Lorna," Bill says.

***"Through her board work and other involvement, Lorna had an opportunity to see for herself just how important a role Rhode Island Hospital plays in ensuring the health and well-being of the community it serves . . ."***

—Bill Wayland

Even in passing, Lorna is continuing her good works and support of Rhode Island Hospital. Most recently, Bill facilitated a \$50,000 gift to the hospital as part of her estate plan. "Through her board work and other involvement, Lorna had an opportunity to see for herself just how important a role Rhode Island Hospital plays in ensuring the health and well-being of the community it serves," Bill explains. "So, she was more than happy to help an organization that helps so many."

*To learn more about how you can include Rhode Island Hospital in your estate plans, please contact Chris Josephson, Senior Philanthropy Officer, at 401-444-6412 or [chris.josephson@brownhealth.org](mailto:chris.josephson@brownhealth.org).*

# Funding Tomorrow's Breakthroughs Today

*Renowned physician receives \$1.4 million to advance brain tumor care*

Earlier this year, the Norman Prince Neurosciences Institute at Rhode Island Hospital and Brown University Health welcomed Clark Chen, MD, PhD, as Director of the Brain Tumor Program. An internationally recognized neurosurgeon and researcher, Dr. Chen is a leader in the study of glioblastoma, the most common form of brain tumor in adults, and has dedicated research interests in advancing treatment for this cancer.

Bringing a high-tech but patient-focused approach to clinical care, Dr. Chen believes his new position affords him an opportunity to help elevate the standards of patient care and research within his discipline. “I see my responsibilities as three-pronged,” he explains. “First, to ensure our patients receive the best quality of care—care that is personalized and leverages the latest technologies; second, to foster a culture where clinical care and academic research are inseparable and engage the remarkable density of intellectual talents at Brown University and Brown University Health; and finally, to teach and cultivate the next generation of leaders in clinical medicine and biomedical research.”



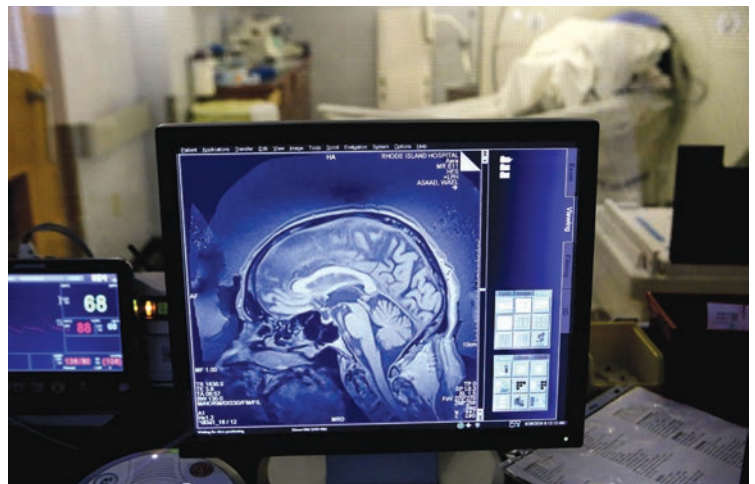
Clark Chen, MD, PhD

Dr. Chen’s groundbreaking work on surgically based therapies caught the attention of Texas-based Rainwater Charitable Foundation (RCF). RCF believes so strongly in Dr. Chen’s vision that they are making \$1.4 million available to him to continue his studies at Rhode Island Hospital, including high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) and other surgically implanted therapies. Dr. Chen has demonstrated that HIFU treatment results in the recruitment of immune cells that attack and destroy brain tumor cells, and he is working toward a first-in-human study to test this new therapy.

“Dr. Chen’s work is potentially game-changing, and we are proud to continue our support of it at Brown University Health,” says Amy Rommel, PhD, Scientific Program Director at Rainwater. “Glioblastoma remains an almost always fatal disease, and Dr. Chen’s search for breakthrough discoveries is simply too important to interrupt.”

Importantly, Brown University Health and Brown University host expertise and resources that are synergistic with Dr. Chen’s research, including a dome-like focused ultrasound delivery device, which has been used successfully at Brown University Health to treat patients with essential tremor and Parkinson’s Disease. Dr. Chen aims to repurpose this device for the treatment of brain tumor patients as well as develop new surgically implantable devices to deliver therapeutic focused ultrasound.

“I am deeply grateful for the support from the Rainwater Charitable Foundation,” Dr. Chen explains. “There is a well-known chasm between scientific discovery and treatments that help our patients. Without Rainwater’s support, we could not be able to cross this chasm. With this support and working within this extraordinary environment, I am optimistic that, within my lifetime, there will be transformative changes for our brain tumor patients.”



Focused ultrasound in use at Rhode Island Hospital

# Gift Helps Advance Epilepsy and Neurocritical Care at Rhode Island Hospital



Thanujaa Subramaniam, MD and Andrew S. Blum, MD, PhD

**T**hanks to the generosity of a grateful, anonymous donor couple—who made a \$500,000 gift in honor of the outstanding care a family member received—the Neurology Department at Rhode Island Hospital was able to acquire several pieces of advanced equipment and expand the size and scope of its Epilepsy Monitoring Unit (EMU).

“You don’t really appreciate the healthcare system until you need it,” explains the giving couple. “Then, you see the incredible skill, commitment, and sacrifice of caregivers and support staff. But you also see the needs and gaps—and you want to help with those, if you can.”

And that is what they did.

The upgrades they funded elevate the already exceptional level of care delivered through the hospital’s nationally recognized program, and are helping to enhance patient experience, expand access, and improve outcomes; most notably, in the areas of epilepsy and neurocritical medicine.

## Making the best better

The Comprehensive Epilepsy Program (CEP) at Rhode Island Hospital is designated as a Level 4 Center by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers. This designation, the highest awarded, is earned by centers that provide the most comprehensive forms of intensive neurodiagnostic monitoring; most extensive medical, neuropsychological, and psychosocial treatments; and the complete range of surgical procedures for epilepsy.

Rhode Island Hospital’s multidisciplinary team treats patients using the latest diagnostic and therapeutic methods—and their efforts are being bolstered by these latest philanthropy-enabled acquisitions.

“I feel like we’re in a new era of how we do epilepsy monitoring and care for patients, and this timely donation will help us keep pace and maintain our high standards,” says Andrew S. Blum, MD, PhD, Director, Adult Epilepsy, EEG Laboratory, and CEP at Rhode Island Hospital.

## What's new and why it matters

A portion of the donated funds was used to expand, equip, and relocate the hospital's EMU; the unit moved from its prior location on 7B at the hospital to more spacious rooms on 7A. A third room was added and equipped in the new space—there were only two in its previous iteration and there was often a wait list. An adjacent remote monitoring room with a communications system was also added, so that staff can keep an eye on patients and ensure their safety in a less labor-intensive, more cost-efficient way.

Two types of specialized electroencephalogram (EEG) devices were also procured, thanks to the donors' generosity: a portable low-bandwidth, non-invasive scalp EEG machine for surface-level recording of brain activity, and a high-bandwidth intracranial EEG amplifier to enable recording from specific deep target areas within the brain to permit the CEP team to pinpoint where seizures begin. This advanced technology is essential for state-of-the-art surgical care of patients with medically refractory epilepsy.

Yet another key element was the addition of an ultrasound machine for the Neuro Critical Care Unit (NCCU). "Patients often have multiple staff trying to draw blood for labs or inserting IV lines in them," says Thanujaa Subramaniam, MD, the NCCU's Director of Quality and Safety. "This can be a very discomforting experience. Utilizing ultrasound-guided technology is more accurate and less painful."

Ancillary equipment and funding a Neuro Quality Improvement Care Fund, were also supported by the gift.

## It takes a village...of caregivers and supporters

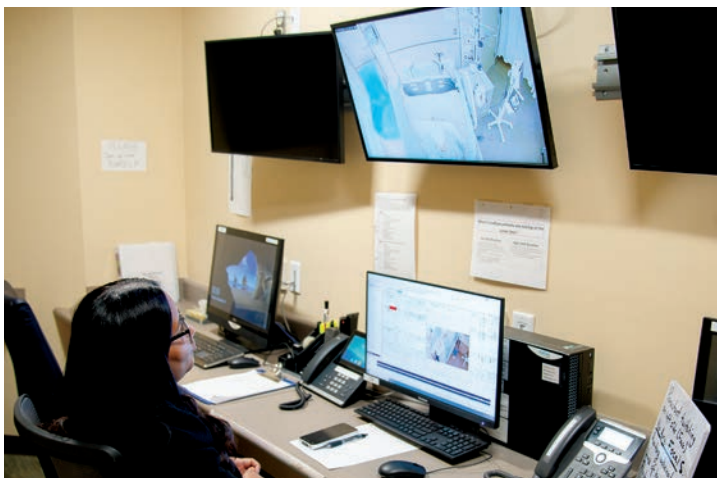
Drs. Blum and Subramaniam both say it's impossible to overstate the importance of collaboration among neuro care providers.

"It takes a village," Dr. Blum points out. "You need the kinds of expertise that exist here at Rhode Island Hospital, which includes specialists in epilepsy care, neuroimmunology, advanced neuro critical care, and allied disciplines, as well as support staff. Those are the ingredients that need to work together, and we're fortunate to have those things in place on behalf of our patients and the community we serve."

Of course, philanthropy plays a significant role in making this lifesaving work possible.

"It requires a lot of resources for us to care for people with complex disorders and critical care illnesses," Dr. Subramaniam explains, "and the support we received from these donors was desperately needed and is making a huge difference. For example, getting access to sophisticated technologies can be game-changing for our patients, because they help us identify and treat abnormalities more quickly."

More candidly, when asked if Rhode Island Hospital would have been able to add the same equipment and make the same changes to the EMU without these donors' support, Dr. Blum flatly replies, "No. Philanthropy really is that important."



Remote monitoring room for EMU



Dr. Andrew Blum and Dr. Julie Roth reviewing an EEG tracing just completed on an inpatient at RIH.



## Day of Giving tops \$450,000 for Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's hospitals

The power of philanthropy was on full display during this year's Day of Giving. Inspired by stories of courage, strength, and hope, our community rallied together to raise \$456,392 for Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's.

Held on April 11, 2024, in partnership with WJAR NBC-10 and Cumulus Media Providence, the daylong fundraiser spotlighted the world-renowned physicians who deliver cutting-edge cancer care in the Ocean State.

"We offer some of the most advanced cancer treatments that you will find anywhere, right here, close to home for our patients and their families, and philanthropy plays an enormous role in that," said John Fernandez, Brown University Health President and CEO. "It's impossible to put into words the gratitude I have for the incredible generosity of our amazing donor community for what they help to make possible." Throughout Day of Giving—over the airwaves and on televisions across the state—people tuned in to hear emotional stories from adult and pediatric patients in the face of devastating cancer and blood disorder diagnoses.

Among them, they met four-year-old Brock, who just six weeks prior completed treatment for a rare form of brain cancer and had recently enjoyed his first days of preschool.

And there was Lora Fox Gamble. Diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer in her late 40s, Lora had few treatment options until being identified as a candidate for a radical application of chemotherapy offered locally only at Rhode Island Hospital. She's now been cancer-free for three years.

Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit cancer programs and care at Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's, as well as the Malloy Strong Fund at Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Fund.

Day of Giving would not be possible without the generosity of its many sponsors, many of whom offered dollar-for-dollar matching gift challenges and volunteered their time to take calls and accept donations over the phone.



RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL • HASBRO CHILDREN'S

# DAY OF GIVING

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SAVE THE DATE | SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

# Malloy Strong Golf Invitational Raises \$103,800



Dean Royce, MD; Nicholas Rodrigues (Event Co-Chair); Brendan Malone; Nate Davis

RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL & BROWN UNIVERSITY HEALTH CANCER INSTITUTE

## MALLOY STRONG / GOLF INVITATIONAL

More than 100 golfers took to the links on Monday, September 9, 2024, for the second annual Malloy Strong Golf Invitational. Held at Alpine Country Club in Cranston, the tournament raised an impressive \$103,800 in support of the Brown University Health Cancer Institute at Rhode Island Hospital.

The event, which was co-chaired by Julie Abilheira, Senior Vice President, Clinical Services, and Nick Rodrigues, Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Trustee, included lunch, golf, an evening reception, and dinner.

### A good time for a great cause

Sponsorship proceeds from the event support the Rhode Island Hospital Fund for Excellence, which enables program improvements that directly benefit patients and their families. These generous contributions help enhance the hospital's already exceptional patient experience and advance leading-edge research and medical education.

Player proceeds, which included "betting hole" raffles and a silent auction, benefit *The Malloy Strong Fund at Rhode Island Hospital*. A general support fund, the money

raised via golfers and guests provides financial, physical, and emotional assistance to patients undergoing oncology treatments.

Noting that Rhode Island Hospital could not offer its services and programs without the support of their loyal donor family and partners, event organizers thanked sponsors and attendees for believing in their mission.

### Honoring Ed's legacy

Last year, the hospital renamed its annual golf outing the Malloy Strong Golf Invitational in honor of Providence Police Sergeant Ed Malloy. Ed lost his courageous battle with cancer in 2019, but not before raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Cancer Institute through an annual 5K charity run. Now, Ed's namesake fund memorializes his commitment to fighting the good fight against this devastating disease while helping those in need.

Heartfelt appreciation was extended to Ed and the entire Malloy family by many at the event, and his two children played as part of a foursome sponsored by The Providence Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #3.

# Paddle for Progress RI Raises More than \$63,000



The second annual Paddle for Progress Rhode Island was held on September 22, 2024, at Wickford Harbor in North Kingstown. More than 100 kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders participated in the two-mile event, which raised more than \$63,000 to support breast cancer research in the Ocean State.

Event organizers Deb Shapiro and Daryl West are a mother-daughter team of sea kayakers who are fighting breast cancer and winning. They were both diagnosed in early 2022, each receiving a diagnosis of a different type of breast cancer within 100 days of the other. Fortunately, thanks to

the successful treatment they received at the Breast Cancer Multidisciplinary Clinic, part of the Brown University Health Cancer Institute, they are in good health and giving back through a great cause.

Mom Deb explains, “What we found through our journey is that you don’t have to go to Boston or New Haven for exceptional breast oncology care; there is precision breast cancer care being delivered right here in Rhode Island—and it needs to be supported. So, our goals in launching this event were to bring visibility to the amazing doctors and medicine being practiced locally at the multidisciplinary breast cancer clinic, raise funds for breast cancer research in Rhode Island, and create a sense of community among cancer patients and supporters by engaging in an outdoor sport we all truly love.”

The 2024 event website, <https://paddleforprogressri.org>, will be available for additional donations through the end of the year, and 100 percent of every dollar raised goes to support breast cancer research in Rhode Island. Centreville Bank, Brown Surgical Associates, The Kayak Centre, and Hologic were sponsors. The September 2025 event date will be announced soon. Deb and Daryl have a goal of raising \$1 million in their lifetime to support this cause.



## Tour de Rhody is the Wheel Deal

*Annual bike ride raises more than \$105,000 for cancer research*

The sixth annual Tour de Rhody bicycle ride took place September 22, 2024, at Salisbury Farm in Johnston. About 250 participants took to the road and gravel routes to have a good time for a great cause. In total, more than \$105,000 was raised to support cutting-edge cancer trials designed by the Brown University Oncology Research Group. The ride is hosted by the Brown University Health Cancer Institute.

“We are making such amazing advances against cancer in Rhode Island, and Tour de Rhody is a way to propel these advances by providing support for the research being done right here by the clinicians and scientists treating cancer,” explains Thomas Ollila, MD, a hematologist/oncologist at the Brown University Health Cancer Institute and Tour de Rhody founder.

Dr. Ollila is an avid bicyclist who witnesses firsthand what clinical trials can do for patients. He also understands the communal and healing nature of such an event. “The ride also gives our cancer survivors and the families of those we have lost a chance to join the effort. I’m proud of this event, and I’m incredibly honored to see the patients and families we know from the cancer center at the ride.”

To date, Tour de Rhody has raised a total of \$558,000 in support of this noble cause.



# Center Breathes Life into Complex Lung Care

“Just to breathe is a luxury,” Amy reflects. “I couldn’t even walk across the room without gasping for air.”

At nearly six months pregnant with her fourth child, Amy was unexpectedly diagnosed with pulmonary arterial hypertension—a rare and potentially life-threatening condition that causes high blood pressure in the lungs and puts extra strain on the right side of the heart. Fortunately, she was quickly transferred to Rhode Island Hospital where she met internationally recognized pulmonary hypertension expert Corey E. Ventetuolo, MD, MS, FAHA. After explaining that Amy was in heart failure at 30 years old, Dr. Ventetuolo assembled the specialized care needed to stabilize Amy’s condition and allow her to safely carry her pregnancy to thirty-two and a half weeks, when she delivered her son, Teddy.

Dr. Ventetuolo has long envisioned uniting the many specialists needed to treat complex cases like Amy’s, a vision that recently became a reality with the opening of the Center for Advanced Lung Care (CALC). This new program offers comprehensive care for patients with advanced lung and heart-lung diseases and unexplained difficulty breathing, including pulmonary hypertension, chronic thromboembolic pulmonary, interstitial lung diseases, severe asthma, pregnancy-related breathing disorders, advanced lung nodule diagnostics, follow-up care for intensive care unit survivors, and more. The CALC’s multidisciplinary team, which includes pulmonologists, cardiologists, surgeons, radiologists, behavioral health specialists and advanced practice providers, offers an integrated approach to treating advanced lung diseases—everything from diagnostic testing to advanced treatments and psychological support, ensuring patients receive seamless care without needing to navigate fragmented appointments.

Amy’s story underscores the CALC’s commitment to personalized, holistic care that goes beyond medical treatment, including emotional and psychological support from psychologists and guidance from a dedicated patient navigator, to address the emotional and psychological challenges of complicated conditions.

“Dr. Ventetuolo and her team, including nurse practitioner Mary Whittenhall, always treated me as a person, and as a woman and a mother, and not just a patient or a diagnosis,” says Amy.

This blend of medical expertise and compassionate care ensures that patients like Amy receive support in every aspect of their journey.



Amy and Teddy

The CALC’s approach extends to complex heart-lung surgeries and interventions to treat chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension including pulmonary endarterectomies and balloon pulmonary angioplasties—offered at only a handful of centers nationwide, now available in Rhode Island. The team also offers opportunities to participate in innovative research including clinical trials to provide patients with access to breakthrough treatments not yet widely available.

“This is a major milestone in the level of care that’s now accessible to the pulmonary community in Rhode Island and beyond,” says Dr. Ventetuolo. “And this is just the beginning.”

Today, Amy continues to manage her condition with ongoing care, thanks to the expert team at the Center for Advanced Lung Care. She shares, “Without them, I wouldn’t be here, and neither would Teddy.”



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