

The Miriam Hospital Traditions

For our friends and supporters.

2020

Postoperative Senior Care That's "Second to None"

There's no such thing as "risk-free" surgery. But for seniors, it's often the period after surgery that brings about the most risk. Consider this: Postoperative morbidity and mortality rates for elderly patients—those age 65 and up—are double those of younger patients, and studies show that one in five seniors will experience complications during the 30-day period following their surgery.

These can include confusion and delirium, nutritional deficiencies, respiratory and cardiac complications, and cognitive decline. "One complication is often the trigger to others," says Sevdnur Cizginer, MD, MPH, Director, Geriatrics Care of Surgical Patients. "Without appropriate postoperative care management, senior patients can go downhill quickly and wind up losing their independence."

But an innovative program championed by Dr. Cizginer aims to minimize these risks. Since 2014, the Optimum Senior Care and Recovery (OSCAR) program at The Miriam has provided exceptional care to seniors who've undergone colorectal, vascular, and general surgery. The OSCAR program provides multidisciplinary care that brings surgery and geriatrics teams hand in hand to improve care in this vulnerable patient population.

Joseph Deangelis is but one example. In May of 2019, Joe underwent an ileostomy at The Miriam to repair a gastrointestinal perforation, also known as ruptured bowel. After successful surgery, he was engaged by the OSCAR program under the care of Dr. Cizginer—or "Dr. C" as he affectionately refers to her.



Dr. Cizginer with patient

"The care I received through the OSCAR program was second to none," Joe reports, and he knows a thing or two about what it takes to deliver an outstanding patient experience. The 78-year-old is a retired Air Force hospital commander who served more than 30 years in the Medical Services Corps. "Dr. C and the staff there make patients feel at home. They talk with you and listen to your responses to help bring about the best outcome."

(continued on page 2)



The Miriam Hospital
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Bringing about the best outcome is always job #1 at The Miriam, which is why caring for the whole patient is such a thoughtful, team effort. Surgeon Adam A. Klipfel, MD, who performed Joe’s operation, explains. “Our collaboration with Dr. Cizginer and the geriatric medicine team via the OSCAR program ensures that we’re all doing our best to return patients, like Joe, to full functionality and a quality of life they deserve.”

While the success of the program is rooted in compassionate care, Dr. Cizginer says it’s shaped by data gleaned from a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) of the patient, usually conducted within 24 to 36 hours of surgery. The CGA is a multidisciplinary diagnostic and treatment process that identifies a senior patient’s medical, psychosocial, and functional capabilities.

“Our CGAs are highly detailed and include additional categories outside of the standard health evaluations,” Dr. Cizginer explains, taking things like the patient’s mood, social support, living arrangements, and pharmacological considerations into account. The results enable Dr. Cizginer, in collaboration with the surgery team, to create an individualized management plan for the patient. Shared care is then continued through discharge, with Dr. Cizginer typically conducting daily hospital visits with the patient.



As a geriatrician, Dr. Cizginer also serves as a bridge for the patient—not only between them and their surgeons and subspecialists, but also between the patient and their family members, health care providers, pharmacies, and nursing homes. “The goal is to prevent the patient from getting lost between all those relationships and to maintain the patient’s care in a way that’s cohesive,” says Dr. Cizginer.

And it’s working.

“Dr. C” and the staff there make patients feel at home. They talk with you and listen to your responses to help bring about the best outcome.”

— Joe Deangelis, patient

Research demonstrates that seniors who participated in The Miriam’s OSCAR program had significantly fewer postoperative complications than non-participating senior patients—for example, postoperative confusion/delirium was nine times less likely to happen, cardiac arrhythmia were four times less likely to happen, and length of hospital stay was two days shorter.

But for the patients themselves, it was The Miriam’s mission in action—Delivering health with care—that really made the difference.

Rosemary Machado, 71, had perforated diverticulitis and underwent bowel resection with colostomy surgery at The Miriam. She credits the OSCAR program with helping her steer clear of complications and get back to her life.

“Sure, I would have left the hospital after my surgery,” she says, “but I might not have had such a good attitude or been in such good health if it weren’t for Dr. Cizginer and the postoperative care I received. Dr. Cizginer checked in on me multiple times a day and even sought alternative, less invasive testing and interventions with great results for me on two occasions. Things like that endear her and The Miriam to me.”

Q&A with Nationally Recognized Urology Institute

Renowned as a center of excellence, the Minimally Invasive Urology Institute (MIUI) at The Miriam Hospital offers state-of-the-art care for a spectrum of urologic conditions including prostate, bladder and ureter cancers. We spoke with its director, Dragan Golijanin, MD.

Last fall, The Miriam received its first national ranking from *U.S. News & World Report*, recognizing its urology services among the best in the country. What does this mean for patients and to your team?



This is a very big deal and incredible recognition of our work. Among nearly 1,500 programs nationwide, we placed 27 – we’re the first southern New England specialty to ever rank this high. We are in the top two percent in the country. For our patients, it means they don’t have to go anywhere else to receive complex, quality care. The very best is right here – a literal treasure in Providence – that brings patients from across the globe.

The Miriam recently installed a second da Vinci Xi Surgical Robot System. How does this upgraded technology impact your work?

Compared to its predecessor, the Xi has greater range of motion of its instruments during surgery, better precision, and improved visibility. And it’s an easier system to operate thanks to upgraded alignment capabilities. When you add these together, you have a machine that both supports best outcomes and leads to shorter procedure and recovery times for patients.

You’ve recruited Sammy Elsamra, MD to join MIUI. How does his addition enhance your program?

This is a homecoming for Dr. Elsamra; I trained him at The Miriam and he was my chief resident. Dr. Elsamra specializes in complex robotic surgery. His addition allows us to shorten the length of time of very technically difficult procedures because the two of us can perform more major cases together. He is also part of my FDA



Surgeons operate using the new da Vinci Xi

study examining acidic properties of cancer cells, which are a hallmark of malignant cells. The results of this study, done at The Miriam, are highly anticipated by some of the country’s largest cancer centers.

What do you see on the horizon as the next big thing in urology at The Miriam?

To be designated one of the top centers in the country, we need more PhDs and researchers and to ultimately bring everyone together under one roof to develop a statewide bladder and kidney tumor registry, studying the impact of these highly prevalent cancers in our state. Down the road, I’d like to see the hospital acquire a single port robotics system that allows for all surgeries to be done through one point of entry into the body. The Miriam has amazing donors who support our work and I’m optimistic they would get behind this vision for the future.



The Miriam Hospital was ranked the top hospital in Rhode Island by U.S. News & World Report in its annual Best Hospitals report for 2019-20

Families Raise Funds in Loved Ones' Memory

Emilia Lima, her friends and volunteers recently turned St. Anthony's Church in Pawtucket into a dough boy shop to raise money in memory of Emilia's late husband Joseph, who passed away in 2017 of pancreatic cancer. And Joseph's cousin, Natalie Rosa, honored the memory of her daughter, also with a fundraiser. The women split the \$3,200 raised between Hasbro Children's Hospital and oncology research at The Miriam Hospital.

Both Hasbro Children's and The Miriam are grateful to Emilia, Natalie, and all their friends and volunteers for their generosity.



SAVE THE DATE

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For more information about tickets, sponsorship opportunities, or auction items, please call (401) 793-2062 or visit giving.lifespan.org/The-Miriam/Gala.

Slow Cooker Salsa Chicken



Serves: 8

Serving size: 1 cup

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup petite, diced, canned low-sodium tomatoes
- 1 cup onions, diced
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup celery, diced
- 1/2 cup carrots, shredded
- 2 tbsp. taco seasoning
- 3 tbsp. reduced fat sour cream

Directions:

Time: 6 to 8 hours (total)

Place both of the chicken breasts in a slow cooker. In layers, add in the taco seasoning, vegetables, and salsa on top of the meat. Pour 1/2 cup water over top. Set slow cooker on low for six to eight hours.

The dish will be cooked when it shreds apart easily or reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. To shred chicken, pull apart using two forks. Stir in sour cream.

Traditions, a publication of The Miriam Hospital Foundation, is published for the friends and supporters of The Miriam Hospital. For more information, please contact the Development Office at 401-793-2004.

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