


Health



Expert Neurology
Care, Close to Home

Christy's Comeback:

Relief through
Robotic Surgery

Interventional
Radiology:
Precision Without
the Scalpel

Hope Through
Clinical Trials

Letter from the president.

Dear Neighbor,

Welcome to the summer issue of *Health* magazine. We share this publication with you to highlight some of the remarkable medical advancements and inspiring experiences happening right here in your community hospital.

In this issue, you will hear from patient Christy Esegbe, whose life was changed thanks to her surgeon's expertise in robotic gynecological procedures and commitment to compassionate, specialized care. You'll also read about some of the significant milestones that further strengthen the care we provide.

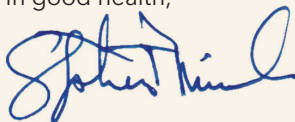
Our interventional cardiology team performed the first drug-coated balloon angioplasty in Southern Maryland, as well as the hospital's first rotational atherectomy, greatly expanding the already advanced capabilities in our cardiac catheterization lab. In addition, our clinical trials program now rivals those at major academic medical centers, giving patients access to groundbreaking treatments and novel devices across many conditions. We also welcomed two outstanding interventional radiologists to this growing

service, broadening our ability to offer even more advanced, minimally invasive procedures.

As you read through this issue, you will meet several of our clinicians in cardiology, oncology, primary care, and gastroenterology. These specialists not only offer expert diagnosis and treatments but are committed to ensuring patients feel seen, heard, and well cared for every step of their healthcare journey.

All of our initiatives, programs, and services have a common goal: to bring innovative, high-quality care closer to home, so you don't have to travel far to receive exceptional treatment. We are here to continue building a healthier, stronger community, together.

In good health,



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



MedStar Health

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
7503 Surratts Road, Clinton, MD 20735
301-868-8000 or TTY **301-877-4473**

Cheryl Richardson
Director, Marketing and Community Relations

Erin Glynn
Graphic Designer

Lisa Schwartz
Writer

Cheryl Richardson
Editor

Photo Credits:
GettyImages
Mike Morgan Photography

Health is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. It in no way seeks to diagnose or treat illness or serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Please see your physician if you have a health problem.



Tidbits

1



Nursing Scholarship Honors Local Nurse's Legacy



MedStar Health and the Powell Family have partnered to rename a nursing scholarship in honor of Marilyn Suggs, a Prince George's Community College (PGCC) alumna and longtime MedStar Health nurse. Now known as the MedStar Health-Marilyn Suggs Nursing Excellence Endowed Scholarship, the award creates a living legacy that actively supports aspiring nurses.

"This scholarship honors Marilyn's legacy and journey from a student to becoming a dedicated nurse. Her story is a powerful example of how education opens doors and creates opportunity," said Stephen Michaels, MD, president of MedStar

Southern Maryland Hospital Center. "The partnership with PGCC represents more than financial support; it's a long-term investment in building a strong, diverse nursing workforce prepared to meet the evolving priorities of our community."

By supporting aspiring nurses at the start of their careers, the scholarship helps address workforce needs and creates opportunities for the next generation of caregivers who will serve with excellence and compassion, like Marilyn Suggs.

2



Two "Firsts" in Interventional Cardiology

The interventional cardiology team marked two important procedural firsts: the region's first drug-coated balloon angioplasty and the hospital's first rotational atherectomy. Read more about these exceptional cardiac milestones on page 15.

3



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is #1 for Patient Safety

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has been named #1 in Maryland for patient safety by the Lown Hospitals Index for Social Responsibility. See why this is significant on page 16.

4



Silver Award for Stroke Education

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center was awarded Silver Status in the Maryland Stroke Smart Hospital Recognition Program as a result of the hospital's comprehensive stroke education efforts. Read more on page 16.



Robotic expertise and compassionate care restore a woman's life.



Christy Esegbe, 39, had always been a healthy woman. But last fall, things began to change as her belly began to swell, rapidly and mysteriously becoming distended. While she had previously been diagnosed with having a uterine fibroid, a benign (noncancerous) tumor that grows in the wall of the uterus that can interfere with pregnancy and quality of life, the dramatic swelling was new and very alarming.

"I looked like I was 40 weeks pregnant, but I knew I was not," Christy recalled. "I couldn't even wear my own clothes anymore. I was living in my husband's oversized T-shirts."

In need of immediate answers, Christy visited multiple doctors, only to leave these visits with few answers or solutions. "No one knew what to do for me," she said.

That changed when she was referred to Nahid Mazarei, MD, OB/GYN and gynecologic surgeon at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. After careful examination, Dr. Mazarei realized this was more than just a fibroid. A closer evaluation revealed a buildup of fluid in Christy's fallopian tube, and her uterus had grown to nearly 30 times its normal size within months.

"I have never been so scared in my life, and I don't scare easily," said Christy. "The first time I met Dr. Mazarei, she hugged me and said that she would take good care of me. And she did."

While other surgeons hesitated

to operate due to the size of Christy's abdomen, Dr. Mazarei took immediate action, knowing she could help her patient. As one of the foremost gynecologic and robotic surgeons in the region, Dr. Mazarei's expertise and extensive training in the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System have improved the lives of countless women.

MedStar Southern Maryland has continually invested in advanced robotic surgical technology for many years. In 2024, the hospital acquired its second and most advanced surgical robot—the da Vinci 5 Robotic Surgical System—demonstrating its deep commitment to bringing innovative, minimally invasive surgery and highly trained robotic surgeons to the Southern Maryland community.

Finally finding relief

Using the da Vinci 5 Robotic Surgical System, Dr. Mazarei performed a minimally invasive procedure to remove Christy's uterus, cervix, and fallopian tubes, sparing her ovaries to protect hormone function. Dr. Mazarei explained that with robotic techniques, very tiny incisions result in less blood loss and scarring, fewer post-surgical complications, and remarkably quick recoveries compared to traditional open surgery.

"The surgery was a huge success. By the next day, I was walking around," Christy said. "By day three, I felt completely fine, and my tummy was shrinking. At my two-week checkup, my belly was back to normal."

For Dr. Mazarei, offering such advanced care close to home is part of her mission. "Being able to perform these surgeries for women in our community is a privilege. It is beautiful to see how technology and compassionate care come together to help people," she said. "Few gynecologic surgeons are trained to use this kind of technology. But at MedStar Southern Maryland, we have made it accessible, and it is changing lives."

Christy wholeheartedly agreed. "Dr. Mazarei is truly a lifesaver. She gives her all to her patients. There is no one better."



Dr. Mazarei sees patients at:
7501 Surratts Road,
Suite 308
Clinton, MD 20735

To schedule an appointment,
please call **301-877-7200**.



For more information about robotic surgery and gynecologic care at MedStar Health, please visit **MedStarHealth.org/Robotics**.



Ankit Madan, MD
Medical Oncologist/
Hematologist



Clinical Trials:

Shaping the Future of Medicine at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

When it comes to advancing medicine and improving patient outcomes, clinical trials are essential. These carefully controlled research studies help determine whether new treatments, drugs, or devices are safe and effective.

"Clinical trials are how we make therapeutic advances," said Ankit Madan, MD, director of the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. "The treatments we use today exist because patients in the past participated in these trials. By enrolling in a trial, patients may get access to cutting-edge therapies before they are widely available, while also helping to shape the future of medicine."

Expanding Access in the Community

In just a few years, hospital leadership and medical staff have built a robust research infrastructure that rivals those at large academic medical centers. Currently, clinical trials in oncology, neurology, cardiology, and orthopedics are being offered at MedStar Southern Maryland.

Benefits of Clinical Trials

- **Access to New Treatments:** Clinical trials offer patients the opportunity to receive investigational therapies before

they receive FDA approval, helping more people access cutting-edge treatments not yet widely available.

- **Contributing to Medical Progress:** Participating in a clinical trial helps advance medicine and improve care for future patients.
- **Flexibility:** Enrollment is voluntary, and patients can opt out of a trial at any time.
- **Advanced Monitoring:** Patients work with a healthcare team that follows specific research protocols and carefully monitors their health.

Ensuring Safety and the Best Interest of Patients

Clinical trials operate under Good Clinical Practice (GCP) standards, which are strict ethical guidelines that ensure patient safety and rights are protected. Every principal investigator must be certified to conduct research, and trials undergo rigorous review processes before they can begin enrolling patients. Patients enrolled in a clinical trial are part of a large network with teams of research personnel focused on their safety and well-being.

The Future of Healthcare

Expanding clinical trials to community hospitals not only increases access to new

therapies but also represents a shift toward healthcare equity.

Dr. Madan added, "By bringing clinical trials to our community, our patients no longer need to travel far for hope. We are offering it right here, close to home."



Interested in learning more about clinical trials? Speak to your provider about finding a research trial that is right for you. Participation is always voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. For more information, visit [MedStarHealth.org/ClinicalTrials](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/ClinicalTrials).

Clinical Trials at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



Cancer:

- **B-64 (EXActDNA-003)** - Looks at a new blood test to help predict if early-stage breast cancer might come back after treatment.
- **Predict II** - Studies how a test called DCISionRT affects treatment decisions after breast-conserving surgery for early breast cancer.
- **OFFSET** - Tests whether adding chemotherapy to hormone treatment helps reduce the risk of breast cancer returning in younger women.
- **OptimICE-pCR** - Compares observation versus continued immunotherapy after neoadjuvant chemotherapy plus immunotherapy in people with triple-negative breast cancer who have achieved pathological complete remission.
- **SiSter** - Offers support programs to women being treated for endometrial cancer to improve well-being during and after treatment.

Cardiology:

- **SELUTION4DeNovo & PREVAIL DCB** - Tests a new type of drug-coated balloon to open small, blocked heart arteries in patients with angina.
- **ARTEMIS** - Studies a new drug (Ziltivekimab) to help patients recovering from a heart attack.
- **IMPROVE & HARP** - Use advanced heart imaging to better understand artery disease and how to treat complex heart conditions.
- **CMDR** - A registry to see how people are doing in their management of heart related symptoms after a comprehensive evaluation of the small blood vessels of the heart.

- **FORWARD CAD** - Tests a new catheter to treat difficult to cross calcified blockages in the arteries of the heart.
- **ACCLAIM** - Studies a new drug, Lepodisiran, hoping to lower elevated Lipoprotein(a) levels for patients at risk for a cardiovascular event.
- **CORCINCH-HF** - Tests the implantable device, the Accucinch Ventricular Restoration System, which is used in conjunction with guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT) to treat heart failure.
- **SIMPLAAFY, ADVENT PAS, & OPT-Rate** - Electrophysiology device studies

Neurology:

- **IGC-AD1** - Tests a treatment for agitation in people with Alzheimer's disease.
- **Xenon 301** - Studies a new medication for people with focal-onset (partial) seizures.
- **Xenon 303** - Tests the same medication in people with generalized full-body seizures.
- **Xenon 304** - An open-label study following patients with epilepsy using the new medication.

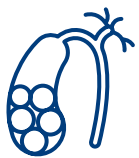
Orthopedics:

- **Nuvasive Study** - Evaluates a device used in upper spine surgeries for trauma, reconstruction, or tumor care.
- **OASIS Study** - Tests a new bone graft material used in single-level lower spine fusion surgery for back pain.



Gallbladder Stones: When a small organ causes a big pain

The gallbladder is a small but mighty digestive system organ. Located just beneath the liver, it stores and releases bile to aid in the digestion of fats. Gallbladder stones are one of the most common issues of the gallbladder. When these stones become large enough to cause symptoms, they make their presence known.



What are gallstones?

Gallstones form when substances in bile, especially excess cholesterol, harden. Interestingly, most gallstones are not caused by a person's diet but rather by genetics. According to Walid Chalhoub, MD, gastroenterologist, there is also a correlation between rapid weight loss and gallstone formation. "Excess cholesterol in the bile, often caused by rapid weight loss, can cause gallstone formation. Cholesterol stones are the most common, making up about 80% of cases in the U.S.," he said.

What do symptomatic gallstones feel like?

"Gallstones typically present as sudden, intense pain in the right upper abdomen, often after eating a fatty meal," Dr. Chalhoub explained. This intense pain can radiate to the back or right shoulder and may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, bloating, or indigestion. In some cases, however, small stones cause no symptoms and are referred to as 'silent stones.' Anyone experiencing symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Complications

While less common, problems arise when a gallstone becomes lodged in the narrow cystic duct, blocking the flow of bile and leading to inflammation and infection of the gallbladder. A gallstone that becomes stuck in the common bile duct, causing bile to back up into the liver, can lead to cholangitis, a life-threatening infection.

How are gallstones treated?

Cholecystectomy, surgical removal of the gallbladder, is the common treatment for

gallbladder stones, relieving symptoms and preventing future complications. You can live just fine without a gallbladder, and the surgery is typically performed laparoscopically, meaning only a few small incisions for a quicker recovery.

For stones that become lodged in the bile duct, Dr. Chalhoub has introduced a minimally invasive procedure to MedStar Southern Maryland called endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). ERCP entails passing a small scope equipped with a tiny camera down the esophagus into the small intestine to the gallbladder to remove the stone(s), effectively restoring the flow of bile.

Dr. Chalhoub, who also serves as the director of the Advanced Endoscopy Fellowship at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, stated, "We have a highly advanced endoscopic team at MedStar Southern Maryland, which allows us to perform this complex yet lifesaving procedure in the community hospital setting."



To learn more about issues of the gallbladder, visit **MedStarHealth.org/Gallbladder**.

Dr. Walid Chalhoub sees patients at:

7501 Surratts Road, Suite 206
Clinton, MD 20735

To schedule an appointment, please call **301-877-4599**.



Expert Neurology Care, Close to Home

Innovation and breakthroughs in neurological care are not just happening at large academic medical centers; MedStar Georgetown Neurology at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center brings clinical innovation, research, and advanced therapies to the community, ensuring patients receive multidisciplinary, comprehensive care for a wide spectrum of neurological disorders.

Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care Center

The hospital's designation as a Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Care Center by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society is one of the program's differentiators, marking it as the only such center in Prince George's County and Southern Maryland.

"The designation is a critical milestone for patients in Prince George's County, particularly because it marks the first time in over a decade that our community has access to a local MS specialist," said Jemima Akinsanya, DO, neurologist and director of the Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Center at MedStar Southern Maryland. "Our presence here means patients no longer need to travel far to receive expert care. The center brings equitable access to cutting-edge MS care and research, early diagnosis, and treatment options for all patients, particularly those who have historically faced barriers to care."

Accessible Clinical Trials

A key component of the neurology program is its commitment to research. As part of the MedStar Health Research Institute (MHRI) network, the MedStar Health Research Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland is bringing cutting-edge novel therapies to the region. Patients now have access to clinical trials for new medications for Alzheimer's disease, drug-refractory epilepsy, migraine, and MS.

Neurologist Tian Wang, MD, section chief of neurology at MedStar Southern Maryland, noted, "Our patients now have access to new therapies still in trials as well as FDA-approved therapies not available at other community neurology programs. This is very promising for our neurological patients in the region."

A Primary Stroke Center

In addition to specialized neurological programs and services, MedStar Southern Maryland is a designated primary stroke center by the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). MedStar Southern Maryland is one of the busiest stroke centers in the region, providing lifesaving stroke care 24/7. The neurology program works seamlessly with the comprehensive stroke services team, providing rapid response capabilities and advanced

interventional treatments such as clot-busting medications.

From the more common to the complex neurological issues, patients in Southern Maryland have a trusted neurological program to turn to for the most innovative and comprehensive care.



Jemima Akinsanya, DO
Neurologist



Tian Wang, MD
Neurologist



MedStar Georgetown Neurology at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is located at:

10401 Hospital Drive, Suite 102 Clinton, MD 20735



To schedule an appointment, please call **301-877-4540**.

Growth of Interventional Radiology Services Benefits More Patients in Southern Maryland

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has expanded its interventional radiology (IR) program with the addition of two skilled interventional radiologists and two advanced practice providers, enhancing the hospital's ability to provide advanced minimally invasive procedures, supported by an outpatient IR clinic.

What is interventional radiology?

Interventional radiology (IR) is a minimally invasive medical subspecialty that uses image-guided procedures to diagnose and treat conditions that traditionally require open surgery. IR procedures are performed through very small incisions, the size of a pinhole, and use advanced imaging capabilities such as X-ray, ultrasound, CT, and MRI scans to view anatomy in the body. Small incisions mean less pain and quicker recovery, and most patients go home the same day as their procedure.

"We essentially treat all parts of the body outside of the brain and heart," explained interventional radiologist Huasong Tang, MD. "One of the biggest benefits of the IR program's expansion is being able to perform higher complexity procedures in the inpatient and outpatient settings to provide advanced care to patients closer to home."

IR procedures performed at MedStar Southern Maryland include:

- Tumor ablation (destroying abnormal or cancerous tissue) locoregional cancer therapy in organs such as the liver, kidneys, and lungs
- Embolization procedures such as uterine fibroid and prostatic artery embolization. Embolization involves blocking blood flow to a vessel to stop bleeding or to shrink a tumor or abnormal tissue growth.
- Treatment of pulmonary artery thrombosis (blood

clot in the lungs) and deep vein thrombosis (blood clot in the leg)

- Musculoskeletal and pain interventions
- Placement of chemotherapy and dialysis ports and nephrostomy tubes
- Thyroid artery embolization and thyroid nodule ablation
- Diagnostic biopsies of various body parts (collecting tissue samples for testing)

Advanced treatment, local access

This expansion reflects MedStar Southern Maryland's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the community by offering a broader range of image-guided procedures. With enhanced staffing, an outpatient clinic, and the ability to perform higher complexity cases, the IR program is helping more patients receive timely, effective care—right where they live.




Meet the Interventional Radiologists

Huasong Tang, MD


Dr. Huasong Tang is a board-certified vascular interventional radiologist who specializes in minimally invasive, image-guided therapy for the treatment of a wide variety of conditions. Dr. Tang has served as an interventional radiology (IR) attending physician at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center since 2023 and is also an IR attending physician at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. He previously worked at MedStar Franklin Square after completing his IR training. In addition to performing conventional interventional procedures for conditions like BPH/enlarged prostate and uterine fibroids, Dr. Tang is among the first in the region to offer minimally invasive alternatives to surgery for select patients with symptomatic thyroid nodules and nodular goiter—including thyroid ablation and thyroid artery embolization.

Dr. Tang received his medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine and completed his residency in diagnostic and interventional radiology at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he served as chief resident.



 **Huasong Tang, MD**
Vascular
Interventional
Radiologist



 **Adam Fang, MD**
Diagnostic
and Vascular
Interventional
Radiologist

Adam Fang, MD

Dr. Adam Fang, is a dual board-certified diagnostic and vascular interventional radiologist with additional certification in vascular interpretation. Dr. Fang recently joined MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center after serving as an interventional radiologist at the University of Maryland Medical System for five years. His areas of focus include the treatment of pulmonary embolism (blood clots in the lung) and lower extremity deep vein thrombosis (blood clots in the deep veins of the leg), as well as prostatic artery embolization (PAE) for the treatment of BPH/enlarged prostate. He also specializes in procedures for osteoarthritis of the knees, fistulas, and minimally invasive organ-sparing techniques for gallbladder removal.

Dr. Fang received his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, followed by his residency at the University of Rochester. He completed his fellowship training in interventional radiology at Stanford University Hospital.



To learn more about interventional radiology at MedStar Health, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/InterventionalRadiology](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/InterventionalRadiology).



Breast Cancer in Younger Women—Supporting a New Generation of Patients



A growing incidence of breast cancer in women in their 30s and even late 20s is sounding an alarm among cancer specialists and women alike. The increasing number of younger women diagnosed with breast cancer requires different approaches to screening, treatment, and support services for a diverse patient population.

The genetic component and family history

While the reasons behind this increase in earlier breast cancer cases are complex, family history and genetic predisposition to breast cancer are particularly important in younger patients. "Patients with a mother, sister, maternal grandmother, or aunt who has had breast cancer often have genetic mutations such as the BRCA-1 or BRCA-2, and genetic testing is important," stated Rumaisa Hameed, MD, medical oncologist/hematologist at the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

BRCA gene mutations are associated with increased risks of breast and ovarian cancer

in women and are also linked to male breast, pancreatic, and prostate cancer as well as melanoma. "It is critical to seek genetic testing for families with a history of breast or other cancers," Dr. Hameed added.

Screening guidelines

Because young women are not the focus of screening programs, breast cancer in these patients tends to be diagnosed in more advanced stages. For patients deemed genetically high-risk, screening guidelines for early detection of breast cancer differ from standard recommendations. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines state:

- Women aged 40 and older at average risk of breast cancer should have a physical exam and a mammogram every year.
- For women at high risk (e.g., carriers of BRCA1/2 mutations, those with a strong family history, or prior chest radiation), the NCCN recommends annual breast MRI with contrast starting at age 25 to 30, with annual mammography added at age 30. Clinical breast exams

every 6–12 months are also advised starting at age 25. Breast MRI is preferred over mammography in women aged 25–29 due to higher sensitivity in dense breast tissue.

- Risk assessment tools like the Gail model can also help identify women who may benefit from enhanced screening and genetic testing.

Treating breast cancer in younger women

Dr. Hameed explained, "Younger patients are more likely to have more aggressive tumors, including a greater prevalence of triple-negative subtypes, more aggressive tumor biology, HER2 positivity, and increased proliferation (ki-67)." Treatment plans include surgery, chemo-immunotherapy, hormone therapy, and radiation therapy, either separately or in combination, based on cancer type.

Discussions about a lumpectomy (surgical removal of part of the breast with cancerous tissue) or a mastectomy (removal of the entire breast), as well as breast reconstruction, are important and take into consideration a

patient's age, genetic predisposition, and goals for the future. Fertility preservation is another consideration for women in their childbearing years as is psychosocial support.

"The rising incidence of breast cancer in young women, coupled with their distinct tumor biology and clinical needs, emphasizes the importance of prompt evaluation of breast symptoms, consideration of high-risk screening in selected individuals, and tailored management strategies," Dr. Hameed added.

Dr. Hameed stressed that while a diagnosis of cancer is daunting, especially at a young age, patients are not alone.

"At the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, you get a team that understands the physical and emotional challenges you are facing," she said. "We're here to support you at every step."



Rumaisa Hameed, MD,
Medical Oncologist/
Hematologist

The MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is located at:

7501 Surratts Rd., Ste. 101
Clinton, MD 20735
P: 301-877-4673

The MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center offers a one-stop shop for cancer services in Prince George's County

MedStar Southern Maryland has been delivering cancer care to the Prince George's County community for over 40 years. The opening of the MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center in 2020 brought together advanced treatments and comprehensive cancer services needed to navigate a challenging diagnosis into one convenient location, greatly benefiting residents of Southern Maryland, while offering hope for the future.

The state-of-the-art 25,000 sq. ft. cancer center includes:

- An infusion center with 13 treatment bays where patients receive lifesaving chemotherapy and immunotherapy.
- A women's imaging suite offering 3D mammography, breast ultrasound, DEXA bone scans, as well as stereotactic and ultrasound biopsy capabilities for early detection and diagnosis of breast cancer.

- A multi-collaborative breast team that includes breast surgery, led by Patricia Wehner, MD, breast reconstruction and plastic surgery, led by Samer Jabbour, MD, a lymphedema specialist, a nurse navigator, and a nurse practitioner.
- Advanced radiation oncology services include one-of-a-kind technologies like the Zap-X® Gyroscopic Radiosurgery System for the treatment of brain tumors, and Halcyon™, a type of radiotherapy offering faster, more accurate treatment for general radiation therapy.
- Support services including social work and counseling, dieticians, lymphedema specialists, and support groups
- Access to clinical trials through the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, offering increased access to breakthrough treatments closer to home.



The provider-patient relationship:

Why it matters more than ever



Visiting your doctor only when you are sick is part of yesterday's healthcare model. Today, well-care is more about focusing on personalized, proactive care that focuses on prevention, early detection, and management of chronic conditions. At the center of this model is your primary care provider (PCP).

Your partner in health - beyond sick visits

Many people are used to scheduling an annual physical out of habit. But for healthy young adults, a physical and bloodwork, for example, are not always necessary every year. What is essential is having a provider who knows your personal and family medical history and can offer guidance when something changes.

"The provider-patient relationship is not a cookie-cutter approach but rather personalized to each individual," said primary care physician Sijuwola Ajinwun, MD. "One patient's care will look different from another's based on their risk factors, age, underlying health issues, and family history."

Preventive care by decade

Dr. Ajinwun recommends this general approach:

- In your 20s, plan for a checkup every other year.

The focus is on prevention - wearing seatbelts, using sunscreen, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screenings, and mental health conversations.

- In your 30s and 40s, begin transitioning to annual visits, especially as new risk factors or health issues develop.
- In your 40s, 50s, and beyond, screen regularly for high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and cancers like colon, breast, or prostate. Annual visits become important to detect and manage health conditions that develop as you age.

Family history and chronic disease

For individuals with chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes, regular PCP visits are critical regardless of age. Similarly, patients with a family history of cancer or risk factors for heart disease may need earlier or more frequent screenings. A strong patient-provider partnership allows for consistent monitoring and helps fine-tune treatment and screening plans.

Dr. Ajinwun added, "Establishing a strong relationship with your primary care provider allows us to address concerns

and issues that are unique to you. Your PCP is focused on protecting one of your most valuable assets—your health."

Need a primary care provider? Use the MedStar Health Find a Doctor tool to locate a primary care provider near you. Visit [MedStarHealth.org/FindADoc](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/FindADoc).



Sijuwola Ajinwun, MD
Family Medicine

Dr. Sijuwola Ajinwun sees patients at MedStar Southern Maryland's Camp Springs location:

**5801 Allentown Road,
Suite 510
Camp Springs,
MD 20746**

To schedule an appointment, please call **301-899-0020**.



Tidbit

Two "Firsts" Demonstrate Advanced Capabilities in Interventional Cardiology

The interventional cardiology team at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center marked two important procedural firsts: the region's first drug-coated balloon angioplasty and the hospital's first rotational atherectomy. These milestones demonstrate the expanding capacity to deliver complex coronary interventions to the Southern Maryland region.

In late April, interventional cardiologist Sonia Samtani, MD, and an all-female team performed the region's first drug-coated balloon (DCB) angioplasty, a newly approved treatment for in-stent restenosis, the re-narrowing or blockage of a coronary artery that has been previously treated with a stent.

DCB delivers specialized medication directly to the artery wall via a drug-coated inflated balloon, preventing future tissue growth in the vessel without the need for an additional stent. The minimally invasive procedure is performed in the hospital's cardiac catheterization lab using a very thin catheter (tube) with a deflated balloon attached and threaded through an artery in the wrist or leg. Once the catheter reaches the artery, the drug-coated balloon is inflated, releasing the medication.

The FDA-approved procedure is also gaining traction in the treatment of small vessel disease, where stent placement is not possible. A clinical trial is underway at MedStar Southern

Maryland to investigate the efficacy of drug-coated balloon angioplasty in tiny coronary vessels.

"With the addition of the drug-coated balloon angioplasty, we can offer a solution that is both effective and repeatable without introducing more metal [stents] into the artery," explained Dr. Samtani. "The innovation that is happening in our cath lab has been truly exciting."

A Second "First"

The interventional cardiology team also recently performed the hospital's first rotational atherectomy. The procedure treats heavily calcified coronary arteries and lesions that are too hard for conventional stenting procedures. Using a high-speed, diamond-tipped burr the hard coronary plaque is removed, enabling subsequent stenting, blood vessel expansion, and restored blood flow.

This technique, traditionally reserved for hospitals with on-site surgical back-up, is now feasible in select community hospitals



like MedStar Southern Maryland due to advancements in safety, training, and equipment.

"Rotational atherectomy allows us to treat complex, high-risk coronary lesions that were previously referred out," said Brian Case, MD, director of interventional cardiology. "It demonstrates the high level of expertise and preparation within our team and allows us to treat more patients with coronary lesions close to home."



"With the addition of the drug-coated balloon angioplasty, we can offer a solution that is both effective and repeatable without introducing more metal [stents] into the artery," explained Dr. Samtani. "The innovation that is happening in our cath lab has been truly exciting."



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Named #1 in Maryland for Patient Safety by Lown Hospitals Index for Social Responsibility

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has been named #1 in Maryland for patient safety by the Lown Hospitals Index for Social Responsibility. The rankings are published annually by the Lown Institute, a nonpartisan healthcare think tank, which evaluates 53 metrics of Health Equity, Value of Care, and Patient Outcomes using publicly available data. The result is a comprehensive Social

Responsibility grade for over 3,600 hospitals and more than 300 health systems nationwide. In addition to earning the top ranking for patient safety, MedStar Southern Maryland also received "A" grades for social responsibility, patient outcomes, patient safety, community benefit, and cost efficiency. This recognition reflects the hospital's ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional

care while addressing health disparities and improving access to care for patients and families throughout Prince George's County. "I'm proud of our team's unwavering focus on safety, quality, and putting our patients first every day," said Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE, president, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

Tidbit MedStar Southern Maryland Earns Stroke Smart Silver Designation

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has been awarded Silver Status in the Maryland Stroke Smart Hospital Recognition Program as a result of the hospital's comprehensive stroke education efforts.

This recognition, endorsed by the Maryland Stroke Coordinators Consortium, demonstrates the hospital's commitment to educating clinical and non-clinical staff, first responders, and the community about the signs of stroke and the importance of seeking immediate medical attention. Maryland is a Stroke Smart state and Prince George's County is among the 16 counties that are a part of the program.

Education has long been a cornerstone of MedStar Southern Maryland's stroke program. Through partnerships with local organizations, participation in health fairs, the distribution of educational materials to staff, patients, and visitors, and active social media outreach, the hospital has reached thousands in the community.

As one of the region's busiest stroke centers—and a Primary Stroke Center designated by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS)—MedStar Southern Maryland provides lifesaving stroke care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "We are teaching everyone inside the hospital and out

in the community how to recognize the signs of stroke and respond quickly by calling 9-1-1," said Stroke Coordinator Amy Swoboda, BSN, RN, PCCN, SCRNP. "We want everyone to remember that time is brain. Early administration of a clot-busting treatment can prevent disability or death."



Heart & Soul

Helping you get to the heart of the matter.



Can You Stop Taking Blood Pressure Medication?

A Cardiologist Explains

Many people prescribed medication for hypertension (high blood pressure) wonder if the treatment is a lifelong one. According to cardiologist Rahul Malik, MD, the answer isn't always black and white.

"Blood pressure management is not only about medication," explained Dr. Malik, "For patients who ask if they will be on blood pressure medication for life, I tell them that it depends on several factors."

In some cases, Dr. Malik said, people can reduce or even stop their medication if they lose weight, eat healthier, exercise consistently, and reduce stress. To work toward lowering blood pressure naturally, he recommends:

- **Walking and regular exercise.** Get outside and walk every day, use the stairs, and park further away from a building to get in

extra steps. "Any activity is better than none. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week or 70 minutes of vigorous activity. Add strength training twice a week, and you will be on the right track," offered Dr. Malik.

- **Limit high sodium and processed foods.** Processed foods are often loaded with salt, which can raise blood pressure. Choose low- or no-sodium options that are less than 5% of your daily allowance of sodium. Add potassium- and magnesium-rich foods like bananas, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, broccoli, and leafy greens, which can help moderate blood pressure.
- **Limit alcohol consumption,** which can lead to weight gain.
- **Use herbal supplements with caution.** Dr. Malik explained that everybody

responds to herbal supplements differently. "They can be an addition, if your body tolerates these supplements, but they should never replace your blood pressure medication," he said, warning patients to never stop medication without consulting a healthcare provider first.

Even with these changes, not everyone can come off medication, especially those with a strong family history of high blood pressure or heart disease. Still, lifestyle changes can reduce the dosage of hypertensive medications or reduce the need for multiple medications.

The ultimate goal, Dr. Malik emphasized, isn't necessarily to stop medication, but to achieve better heart health through lifestyle modifications and working together with a cardiologist for optimal blood pressure management.



Dr. Malik sees patients at:

13950 Brandywine Road,
Suite 100
Brandywine, MD 20613
P: 301-782-2220

To find a cardiologist near you, use our online Find-a-Doctor tool. Visit [MedStarHealth.org/FindADoc](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/FindADoc).



High Cholesterol and Statins – What’s the Deal?



Hyperlipidemia, or high cholesterol, is a leading risk factor for heart disease. High blood cholesterol levels can build up as plaque in the coronary arteries over time, causing narrowing and restriction of blood flow to the heart. Sometimes a piece of plaque can break off and form a blood clot, leading to a heart attack or stroke.

Cardiologist Ida Suen, MD, answers common questions about hyperlipidemia and statins, a widely used medication to treat this condition.

Q: What is a statin?

A: Statins are medications used to lower cholesterol levels in the blood. They work by blocking an enzyme in the liver that produces cholesterol, reducing LDL (bad) cholesterol that contributes to plaque buildup in the arteries. Statins also help

stabilize existing plaque to prevent rupture and reduce inflammation in the artery walls.

Q: When is it time to start statin therapy?

A: It depends on several factors, starting with your cholesterol panel. We look at:

- Total cholesterol: Above 200 is considered high
- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad” cholesterol): Ideally should be kept under 100; over 180 usually means medication is needed
- Additionally, in the setting of diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and/or a history of myocardial infarction, statins are also indicated

In a standard lipid panel, different kinds of lipids are reported. Namely, the LDL, commonly known as the “bad cholesterol,” is important because it is associated with atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the coronary arteries). The higher the number, the higher the risk. We also consider other factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, and overall lifestyle when deciding on treatment.

Q: What are some of the common side effects of statins?

A: The most talked about side effects are muscle aches; however, they are not as common as reported in the media. If muscle aches are an issue, we can try a different statin or a lower dose while also ordering blood tests to check for muscle damage. For individuals who do not tolerate statins well, there are injectable medications given every two weeks or monthly that can help lower cholesterol effectively.

Q: Can patients stop taking cholesterol medication if their numbers improve?

A: Usually, no. High cholesterol often requires long-term treatment, especially in people with other heart risk factors. For patients with mildly elevated cholesterol and low risk, we can trial lifestyle changes like a healthy diet and regular exercise to see if medication can be avoided or delayed. Every patient is unique, so we work together to find the right course of treatment.

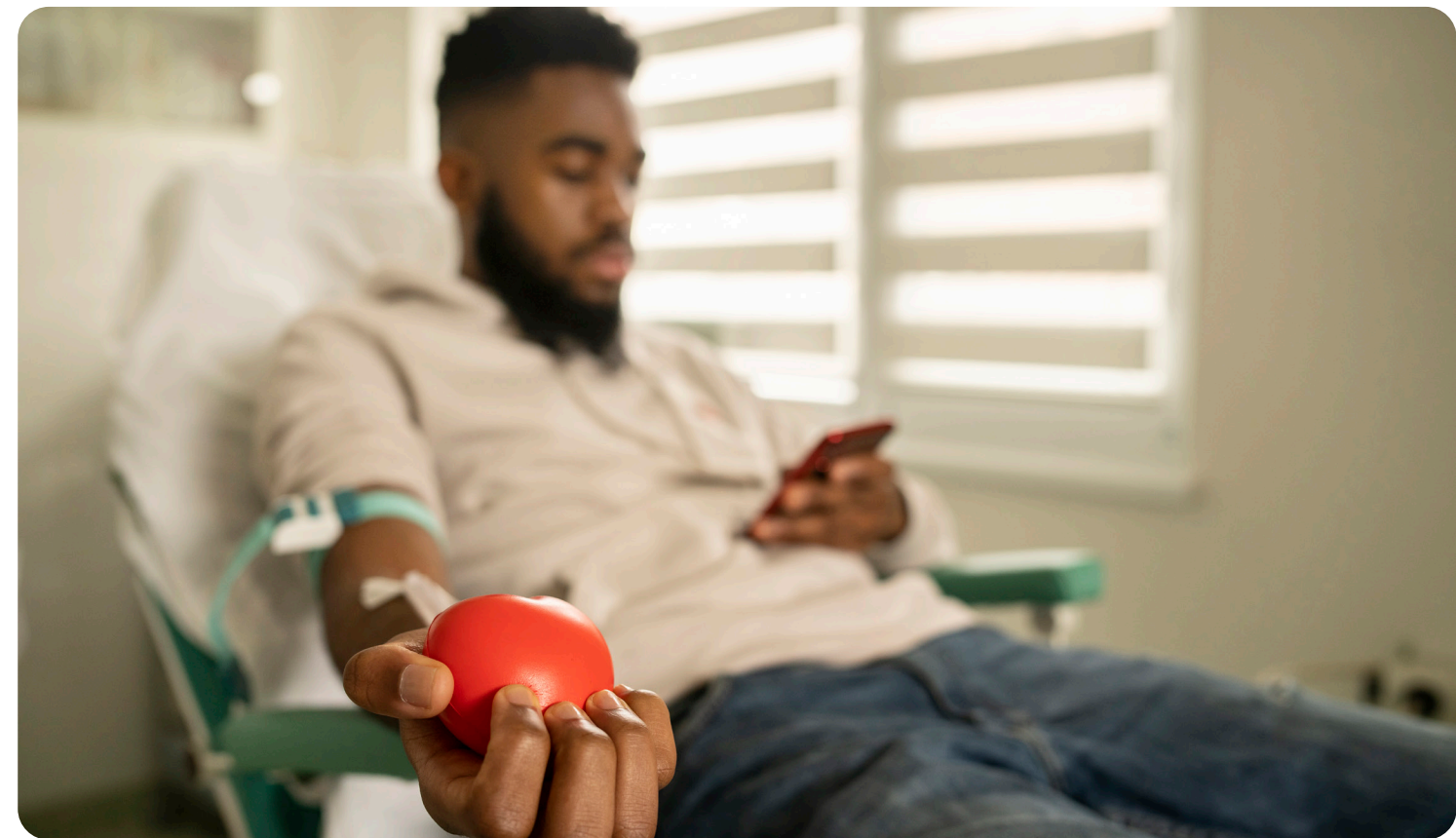


Ida Suen, MD



Dr. Suen sees patients at:
13590 Brandywine Road, Suite 100
Brandywine, MD 20613

To schedule an appointment with
Dr. Suen, please call **301-782-2220**.



Blood Drives at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

Helping Others in Great Need

Did you know? One blood donation helps three patients.

Blood drives are important to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and the community as they assist in meeting the need for the national blood shortage. Blood drives are held at the hospital once a month in the multipurpose room.

Who can donate blood?

- Any individual over the age of 18 who is not pregnant or breastfeeding and can pass a preliminary health screening
- Any individual under 18 can donate with parental consent
- All individuals must feel well and weigh at least 110 pounds



Become a blood donor today! Call **301-877-5633** to register.

Or, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdh3xk6u> to register for a blood drive.



MedStar Health

7503 Surratts Road
Clinton, MD 20735
**MedStar Southern Maryland
Hospital Center**



Get the care you need **anywhere, anytime.**

See a provider online **24/7** with MedStar eVisit.



Sign up at **MedStarHealth.org/eVisit**, so when you need care, you will be ready.