

# Personal BLESSING

OUR PATIENTS. THEIR STORIES.

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

## SEEING IS BELIEVING



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## COVID-19 care continues, so does building even better health care

By Maureen Kahn, RN, MHA, MSN, president/chief executive officer, Blessing Health System and Blessing Hospital

Published by the Marketing, Communications & Community Relations staff of Blessing Hospital, *Personal Blessing* provides general information on health-related topics. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, which should always be obtained from your physician.

### **The Blessing Health System Mission Statement:**

To improve the health of our communities

### **The Blessing Health System Vision Statement:**

We will be the region's health care partner

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As it did for you, COVID-19 shaped the past year for Blessing Health System. The way the Blessing team approached its duty was awe-inspiring. The registered nurses on the COVID-19 Hotline fielded tens of thousands of calls from often frightened area residents, the care teams at the Flu-Like Illness Screening Centers and the Emergency Center, donned in sometimes-stifling personal protective equipment for the safety of all involved, saw an equal number of visits from people concerned they were infected, and thousands of patients who were infected found care within the walls of the hospital from caregivers whose compassion for them carried them through difficult days.

Meanwhile, the Blessing team also delivered babies, performed life-saving surgical procedures and provided as much of the other needed and expected care as possible during the pandemic.

Our team grew stronger and more skilled as a result of the pandemic response.

### **New outpatient surgery center on schedule**

Some of what we learned during the pandemic is featured in the construction of the new outpatient surgery center going up on 11th street across from the main hospital. The center will provide the technology to sanitize the environment more thoroughly than ever before, and the space to do that without causing delays to patient care.

The new outpatient surgery center will be designated as a "stand-alone" facility by regulators, as opposed to a

hospital-based service. That will allow us to offer lower pricing to patients.

The center is on schedule to see its first patients by fall of this year.

### **Nationally recognized stroke care**

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability. In response, Blessing Hospital made itself a leader in stroke care. Blessing has retained its national Primary Stroke Center accreditation for another three years after an on-site survey by DNV-GL Healthcare. The survey ensures the hospital's stroke care meets or exceeds national standards. We do.

### **Safety is a daily duty**

One of the nation's leading health care quality and safety watchdog groups recently recognized Blessing Hospital for its patient safety outcomes. The Leapfrog Group gave the hospital a grade of "A" in its fall 2020 patient safety report. We are humbled by the recognition and know it is an honor that must be re-earned every day with every patient to whom we provide care.

Please read on to learn about more of the life-changing advances taking place within Blessing Health System. ■



# Investing in a healthier future

## New Keokuk hospital partnership brings resources and better access to essential care

Effective March 1, Blessing Health System has a new family member. Blessing has replaced Unity Point Health as the parent of the former Keokuk Area Hospital, which is now named Blessing Health Keokuk.

“With the new name comes a renewed focus on improving the health of southeast Iowa and providing more consistent access to primary and specialty care,” says Maureen Kahn, RN, MHA, MSN, president/chief executive officer. “As health care delivery changes, we’re excited to design better services with an eye on the future.”

### Sharing strength

As the largest integrated health system in the region, Blessing brings its strength, experience and the necessary resources to develop a sustainable, stronger network of care for Keokuk area residents.

Blessing Health Keokuk joins two award-winning hospitals already in the system: Blessing Hospital and Illini Community Hospital.

Blessing Hospital is the system’s flagship hospital with 327 beds, a Level II Trauma Center, an Advanced Primary Stroke Center, an accredited Chest Pain Center, an accredited Cancer Center, Level II specialty care nursery and a certified Pediatric Emergency Room.

The hospitals are supported by two physician groups: Blessing Physician Services and Hannibal Clinic. Combined, these groups include more than 250 high-quality, multi-specialty providers.

Blessing’s robust health system also includes an accredited college of nursing and health sciences, a network of medical specialty businesses and more than 30 locations for health care services throughout the region.

Currently, a new ambulatory surgery center is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021 on Blessing’s main campus for outpatient surgery, serving the entire region. In addition, Blessing brings the latest technology to the area with

advanced services in heart and vascular care, surgery, cancer care and orthopedics. Medical providers and hospital emergency departments across the region increasingly refer patients to Blessing as their trusted partner.



### Revitalizing health care in southeast Iowa

As Blessing grows, so do the resources the system can offer partners.

“We’re committed to investing in Keokuk’s health care infrastructure to revitalize the community and the region to benefit everyone,” Kahn says. “As more health care is provided on an outpatient basis, we’re focused on enhancing and expanding services so the hospital is better positioned to offer the essential care the community

needs. We’re the right partner at the right time for southeast Iowa residents—we will succeed together.”

Many rural hospitals such as Keokuk Area Hospital have struggled over the past several years. As part of Blessing’s plans to strengthen Blessing Health Keokuk, it will direct more resources to elevate the hospital’s emergency room capabilities and care.

Another significant step will be reopening the Keokuk Medical Clinic, which closed two years ago, and will be named Blessing Health Keokuk Clinic.

This outpatient clinic will give residents in the region access to primary care as well as specialty care. Specialty clinics will include cardiology, orthopedics, women’s care, behavioral health, occupational health and more. These expanded services will reduce the need for patients to travel out of town for certain types of care.

“Blessing looks forward to being an active, engaged partner in the Keokuk area to boost the region, spark progress and improve the health of the community long-term,” Kahn says. “Our well-matched partnership promises to reenergize Blessing Health Keokuk and make high-quality health care accessible for everyone in the southeast Iowa area now and into the future.” ■

# New heart procedure stops blood clots—and fear

**Talk with Jim Waterkotte for a while, and you know he is one of a kind.**

But not in every way.

Jim had taken a blood thinner for 10 years. So do as many as 3 million people each year in the United States. Jim took the blood thinner to control life-threatening clotting associated with his heart's abnormal rhythm, known as atrial fibrillation (Afib), not related to a valve problem.

Blood thinners reduce the risk of blood clot formation associated with Afib that can cause strokes and heart attacks. However, those same life-saving blood thinners can also contribute to life-threatening bleeding in accidental situations.

Aside from a hefty prescription cost, blood thinners didn't cause Jim any problems until January 2020, when he fell on some black ice and hit his head.

Months later, a blood clot formed on Jim's brain as a result of the fall. The pressure of the clot contributed to stroke-like symptoms.

"My speech was affected, and my whole right side was limp," he recalled.

Jim underwent brain surgery to remove the clot. Most of it was removed, eliminating speech and muscle problems. But some of the clot could not be removed due to its sensitive location on the brain. Jim had to stop taking blood thinners to reduce the risk that the blood clot would dislodge and cause a stroke.

Living without blood thinners, Jim developed a blood clot in his leg later in 2020. It was caught early, and no damage was done. But since he could

not take blood thinners anymore, he received a filter in his abdomen to stop the leg blood clot from going to his heart if it moved.

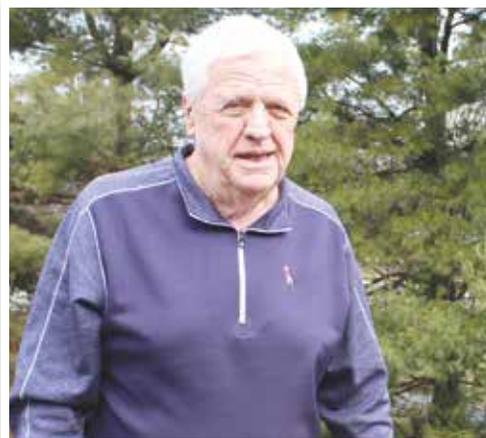
"The fear is there," Jim said as he thought about the risks of life with and without blood thinners. "It's what they call a Catch-22 situation."

Then, Jim learned he was a candidate for a new heart procedure called WATCHMAN, a minimally invasive procedure performed by John Hammock, MD, interventional cardiologist and electrophysiologist, Blessing Physician Services.

WATCHMAN is an implant that fits into the area of the heart where blood collects and forms clots in people with Afib. WATCHMAN keeps clots from

escaping permanently so patients no longer need to take blood thinners.

"It's a one-time, minimally invasive procedure that can permanently reduce the risks of stroke without the worries that come with the lifelong use of blood thinners," stated Dr. Hammock. *(Continued on page 12)*



John Hammock, MD



Diana Weatherford, RN

# AT BLESSING WE'RE ALL HEART, ALL THE TIME

Cardiovascular Unit | Cardiac Catheterization Lab | Cardiothoracic Surgery | Electrophysiology Lab | Non-Invasive Cardiology



**JOHN ARNOLD, MD**  
Blessing Hospital  
Cardiothoracic Surgery



**JEFFREY COOK, MD, FACC, FSCAI**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Interventional Cardiology



**RICHARD HA, MD, FACC, FACP**  
Hannibal Clinic  
Cardiology



**JOHN HAMMOCK, MD, FACC, FHRS**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Invasive Cardiology  
Electrophysiology



**FAROOQ JUNAID, DO**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Non-Invasive Cardiology



**STEVEN KRAUSE, DO, MHA, FACOI**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Interventional Cardiology



**SHANE LARUE, MD**  
Hannibal Clinic  
Cardiology



**ELIOT NISSENBAUM, DO, FACC, FCCP**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Invasive Cardiology



**IRVING SCHWARTZ, MD, FACC**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Invasive Cardiology



**DANA VALENCIA, MD, FACC, FSCAI**  
Hannibal Clinic  
Cardiology



**AMY BATES, APRN-AGACNP**  
Blessing Hospital  
Structural Heart Coordinator



**SHANNA DIERKER, APRN-FNP**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Cardiology



**RACHEL KILLAM, APRN-AGPCNP**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Cardiology



**ANDREA LEONE, APRN-FNP**  
Blessing Hospital  
Cardiothoracic Surgery



**STACY LOWARY, APRN-FNP**  
Blessing Physician Services  
Cardiology



**DIANA WEATHERFORD, RN**  
Blessing Hospital  
Structural Heart Navigator

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A member of Blessing Health System

[hannibalclinic.com](http://hannibalclinic.com)



[blessinghealth.org](http://blessinghealth.org)



*Personal* **BLESSING**

# FINDING DR. WRIGHT

“I don’t want any other neurosurgeon”

**D**octors and their office teams work hard to make wait times for patients as short as possible after arriving for an appointment.

For Mark Malloy, it’s not about the time spent in the waiting room to see Blessing Physician Services neurosurgeon, Dr. Neill Wright.

The drive time to get to the office, now that’s another story. Mark comes from his home in St. Louis to see Dr. Wright at the Blessing Health Center 4800 Maine in Quincy.

“I did a lot of research. That’s just how I am,” the 37-year-old said. “I will refer anyone with neck and back issues to Dr. Wright.”

## Finding Dr. Wright

Dr. Wright spent nearly 20 years at Washington University in St. Louis, where he was a professor and director of the Spine Fellowship. Dr. Wright holds patents related to cervical spine devices and treatments and developed a procedure to repair certain neck injuries that is known around the world as the “Wright technique.”

In the summer of 2020, Dr. Wright left the academic world to focus on clinical care of patients with spinal disorders. He found a new home with Blessing Health System.

Dr. Wright met Mark in St. Louis when Mark came to him with neck pain, and a bond of trust developed between the doctor and Mark.

When Mark began experiencing a new problem, he hit the road to find Dr. Wright.

“My whole frame of mind was, ‘How do I get there (to Quincy),’ Mark said. ‘I don’t want any other neurosurgeon.’”



*DESTINATION RECOVERY—Mark Malloy comes from St. Louis for the care provided by Blessing neurosurgeon Dr. Neill Wright*

## Finding relief

“I have not been at my best the last three years,” Mark admits.

Pain changed his life. The pain started in his back and burned down his right leg. The former All-American college soccer player had trouble walking and a hard time keeping up with family responsibilities—including his three young daughters and work.

“I was at the point where I could barely walk a couple of hundred yards without being miserable, constantly in pain,” Mark recalled. “I could not live like that anymore.”

During his college soccer career, Mark suffered a stress fracture in a bone in his lower spine. It is a common injury among young athletes. However, as they age, the fracture widens, making the spine unstable and allowing vertebrae to slip and pinch nerves.

“This is not something that heals on its own with conservative treatment,” Dr. Wright said of the injury known as pars defect.

“You can manage it for a period of time. You can try to slow down the progression,” he continued. “But once it starts causing pain, it tends to keep causing pain unless it is surgically fixed.”

Dr. Wright performed spinal fusion on Mark, using metal screws to bring the fractured bone back into alignment and securing it in place. A new surgical navigation and robotic assistance system at Blessing, known as Mazor X, reduced Mark's hospital stay and the amount of pain medication he needed, when compared to the way fusion surgery had been done in the past.

"It makes the surgery minimally disruptive," said Dr. Wright. "Instead of having to peel his muscle back to see the spine, Mazor X allowed me to work through the muscle. That makes the surgery less painful."

And coupled with Dr. Wright's skill, Mark said the surgery immediately ended years of crippling pain.

"From the moment I woke up, all the nerve pain was gone. I couldn't believe it," he said.

Dr. Wright stresses that it takes up to a year to recover fully from spinal fusion surgery.

"I coached my 8-year-old daughter's soccer game 11 days after surgery," Mark continued. "The kids were happy to see me. They were rooting for me."

"People from work asked me, 'How are you back already?' I owe it all to Dr. Wright," Mark concluded.

Mark is not the only one who goes the extra mile to find Dr. Wright. Patients from Cape Girardeau and Springfield, Missouri and Mt. Vernon, Illinois, have made hours-long trips to receive care from him.

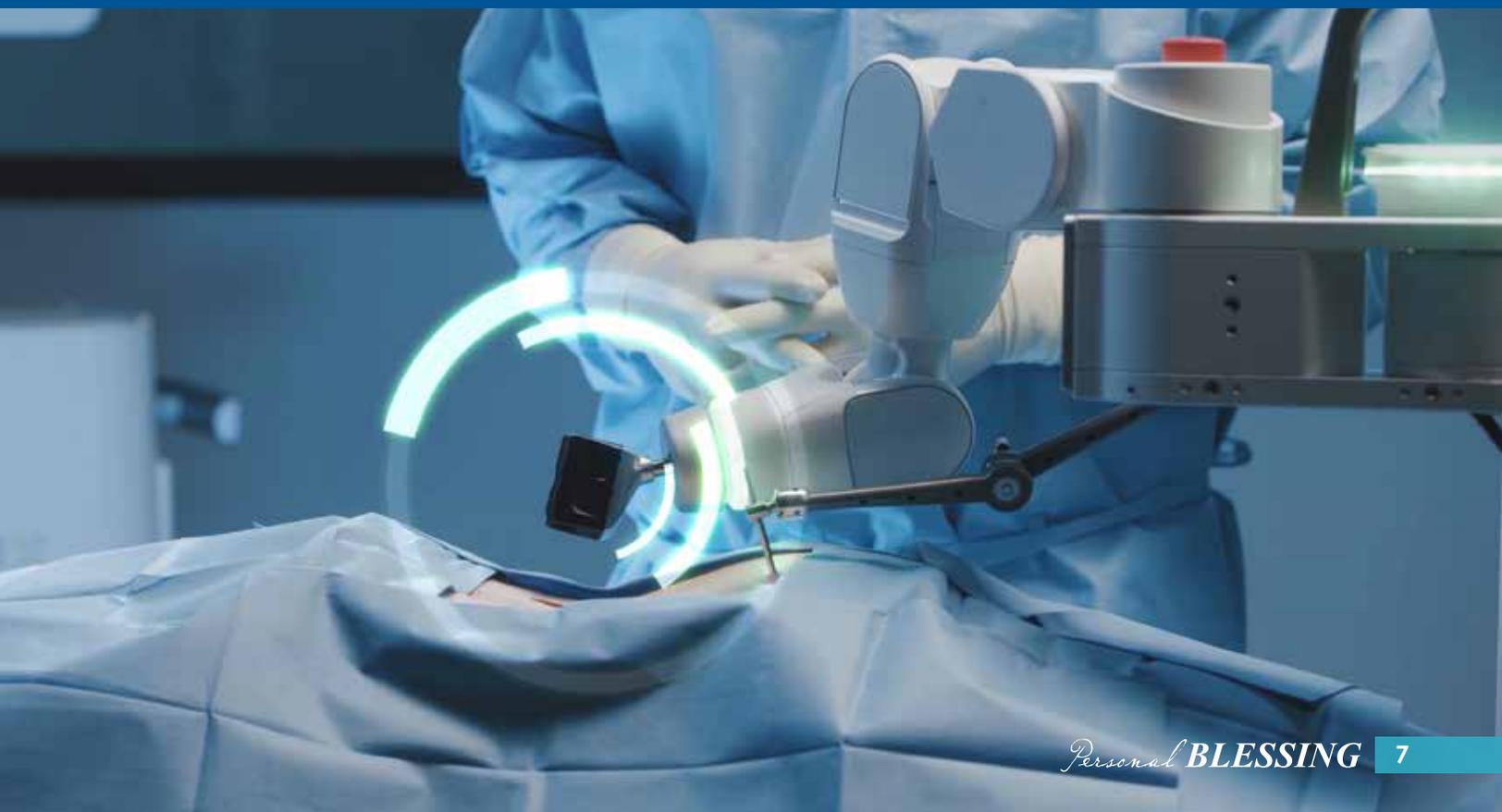
"My best source of referrals is satisfied patients. Patients are trying to find a surgeon with whom others have had a good experience," Dr. Wright observed. "I hope I can continue to provide the satisfaction for them to make the drive."

For more information on the care provided by Blessing Physician Services neurosurgeons, Drs. Wright and John Olson, go to [blessinghealth.org/neurosurgery](https://www.blessinghealth.org/neurosurgery). ■



Neill Wright, MD

The Mazor X™ © 2021 Medtronic



# VISION TROUBLE

## Sometimes it's more than meets the eye

**As is the case for other people, Stacey Mudd began having trouble with her vision when she reached the age of 57.**

"So, I went and had my eyes checked and got a pair of glasses," the pharmacist with the James Cary Cancer Center, Hannibal, MO, said.

That is where her similarities with most other people her age ended.

"After a few months, the glasses didn't help anymore," Stacey shared.

Over the next two-and-a-half years, she would have to buy five new pairs of glasses.

"My vision kept deteriorating," Stacey stated. "It was getting worse and worse and worse."

Stacey described seeing flashes of light, "wiggly" lines, floating dots, and, in the middle of her right eye when she looked at something, Stacey saw a dark circle.

As her search for answers to her vision problems continued, one day she stopped by a new optometry practice housed within Hannibal Clinic, Family EyeCare.

"They looked beyond selling me glasses," she exclaimed.

"The eye is the window to the body," said Jason Kvitle, OD, who performed Stacey's examination. "We look for systemic reasons for vision problems."

After a thorough eye exam, Dr. Kvitle found excess fluid at the back of Stacey's right eye, the area that contains the retina. The retina sends information to the brain through the optic nerve, enabling a person to see.

"Without advanced treatment, she is likely to have a scar form as a result of this situation and could permanently lose a significant portion of her vision," the doctor said.

He also found retinal tears.

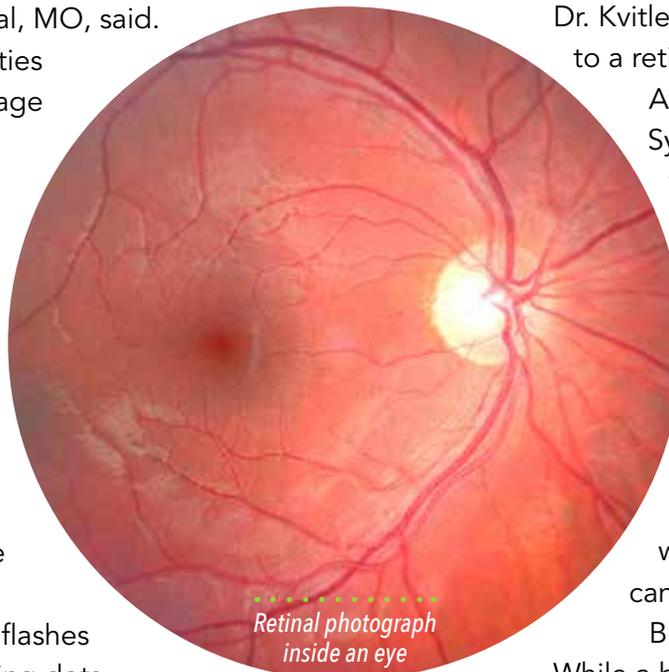
Dr. Kvitle immediately referred Stacey to a retinal specialist.

At the time, Blessing Health System had recruited the area's first retinal surgeon, Sean Hendricks, MD. Stacey became his patient.

Dr. Hendricks began by asking Stacey a series of questions to discover the reason behind the fluid leakage in her right eye. Among the facts uncovered was that Stacey was a kidney cancer survivor.

Bingo.

While a biopsy was not possible due to the danger it would pose to Stacey's eye, Dr. Hendricks uncovered what appeared to be a formerly cancerous tumor on the macula, a part of the retina, in Stacey's right eye. He believes it



Jason Kvitle, OD



Sean Hendricks, MD

came from cells that likely broke free from her kidney cancer, diagnosed in 2018, and settled in her eye.

While the tumor in the eye had died, apparently as a result of her kidney cancer treatment, it had done its damage.

"If the retina is damaged, it is essentially like having damaged film in a camera," Dr. Hendricks explained. "You can get all the focusing lenses you want (Stacey's glasses), but it won't help because the film (the retina) is damaged."

Now that he knew the source of the problem, Dr. Hendricks could fix it. He used a laser to repair the tears Dr. Kvitle had found in Stacey's retina and then, over the course of several weeks, Dr. Hendricks injected medication into Stacey's eye that helped drain the excess fluid that formed as a result of the lesion.

He also communicated his findings to Stacey's

oncologist, as part of her ongoing care.

"It's just a matter of being thorough," Dr. Hendricks stated. "I don't know that there is anything heroic here."

Stacey respectfully disagrees.

"I will be forever grateful for the gift of my vision being restored," she exclaimed.

"They changed my life," Stacey said of Drs. Kvitle and Hendricks. "I've had exceptional care. The caliber of excellence of both doctors is fantastic. They go above and beyond."

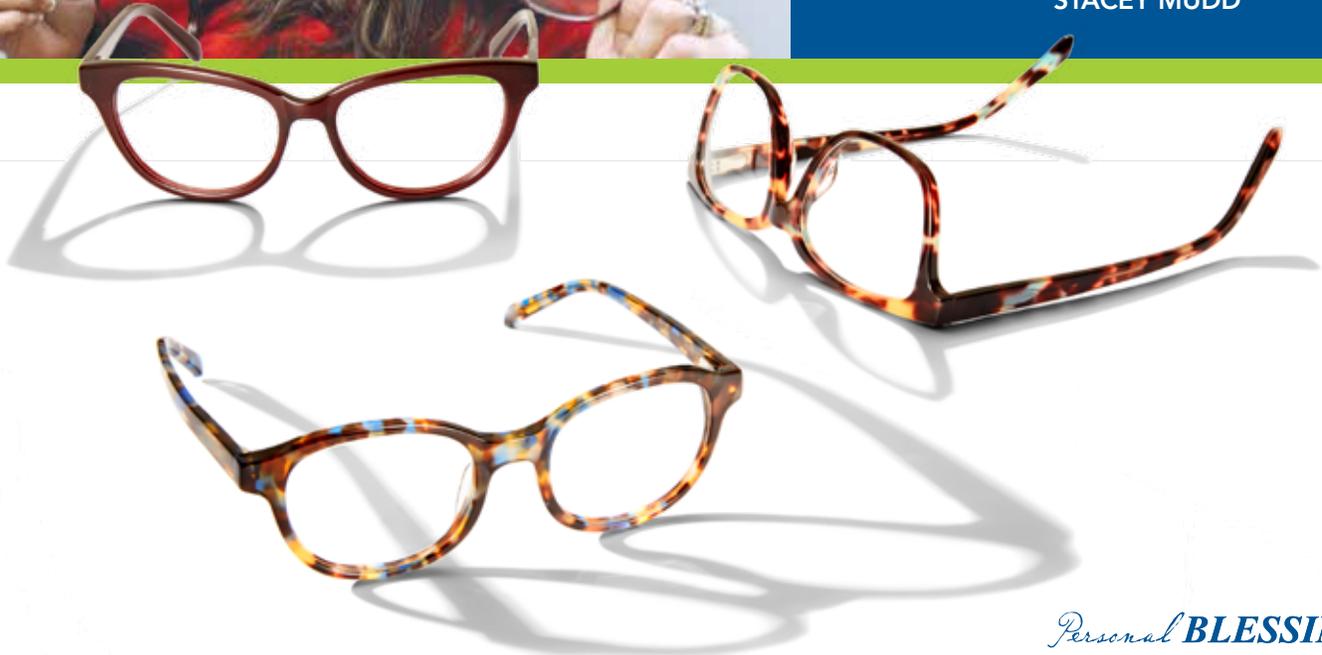
For more information on the care provided by Dr. Hendricks, go to [blessinghealth.org/retina](https://www.blessinghealth.org/retina). ■

*Stacey Mudd is an employee of Hannibal Clinic, a member of the Blessing Health System. Family EyeCare is affiliated with Blessing Health System.*



"I will be forever grateful for the gift of my vision being restored."

STACEY MUDD



# WELCOME BLESSING'S



**RAMI ABUMASMAH, MD**, has joined Blessing Physician Services, practicing medical oncology and hematology. He holds certification from the American Board of Medical Oncology and the American Board of Internal Medicine.

After earning his medical degree in Libya and completing a residency in Jordan, Dr. Abumasmah completed a fellowship in medical oncology at King Hussein Cancer Center-Jordan Medical Council, a fellowship in hematology and medical oncology at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center of Boston-Tufts University School of Medicine and a residency at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island-Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School.



**BENJAMIN BUKEY, DO**, has joined the Blessing Physician Services Family Medicine department.

Certified by the American Board of Family Medicine, Dr. Bukey earned his medical degree from Midwestern University and completed residency at the Southern Illinois University Center for Family Medicine.



**ALVIN DANDAN, MD**, has joined Blessing Hospital, practicing intensive care hospital medicine.

Dr. Dandan is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in critical care, pulmonology and internal medicine.

He completed a residency in internal medicine at Michigan State University and a pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine fellowship at St. Louis University after earning his medical degree in the Philippines.



**RAJESH ETHIRAJ, MD, MPH**, practices occupational medicine with Blessing Hospital.

Certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine, Dr. Ethiraj earned his medical degree in India, a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Illinois, Chicago and completed residency at John H. Stroger, Jr., Hospital of Cook County in Chicago.

Dr. Ethiraj is a Fellow of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.



**FAROOQ JUNAID, DO**, has joined the Blessing Physician Services Department of Cardiology.

Dr. Junaid is certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine and is affiliated with the American College of Physicians, American Osteopathic Association and American College of Cardiology.

After earning his medical degree from Midwestern University, Downers Grove, IL, he completed residency at St. James Hospital, Olympia Fields, IL, and a fellowship at Oklahoma State University Medical Center, Tulsa, OK.



**DAVID LEVINSOHN, MD**, practices orthopedic and sports medicine and orthopedic trauma surgery with Blessing Physician Services.

Dr. Levinsohn is certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery, by the same board in the specialty of Sports Medicine and by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgery.

After earning his medical degree in South Africa, Dr. Levinsohn completed a general surgery internship and an orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Washington.



**QUAZI MOSTUFA, MD**, has joined Blessing Hospital in the practice of hospital medicine.

Affiliated with the American College of Physicians, Dr. Mostufa completed residencies at Sylhet Women's Medical College Hospital in Bangladesh and at Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY, in internal medicine.

He earned his medical degree at Rangpur Medical College in Bangladesh.



**BRYAN PIMLOTT, MD**, practices orthopedic and sports medicine and orthopedic trauma surgery with Blessing Physician Services.

Certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery, Dr. Pimlott completed a residency at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and a foot and ankle fellowship at the Institute of Bone and Joint Disorders in Arizona.

He earned his medical degree from the University of Alberta, Canada.

# NEW DOCTORS



**JOEL PRIMUS, MD** has joined Blessing Hospital and practices hospital medicine. Affiliated with the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American College of Physicians, Dr. Primus completed an internal medicine residency at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School Trinitas Regional Medical Center after earning his medical degree at St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada.



**OSAMA QUBAIAH, MD**, has joined the Blessing Cancer Center where he practices medical oncology and hematology. Dr. Qubaiah is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in internal medicine, medical oncology and hematology.

He completed a fellowship at St. Louis University and a residency at St. Louis University Hospital. Dr. Qubaiah completed an internship and earned his medical degree in Jordan.



**KWEON STAMBAUGH, MD**, has joined the Ear, Nose and Throat Department of Blessing Physician Services. Dr. Stambaugh holds certifications from the American Academy of Otolaryngology, the

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, the American College of Surgeons and the American Society for Head and Neck Surgery.

After earning his medical degree at Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia, Dr. Stambaugh completed an internship and residency at Walter Reed Army Medicine Center in Maryland and a fellowship at the University of South Florida.



**KURTIS STEWART, MD**, surgeon, has joined Blessing Physician Services and the provider team of the Blessing Bariatric Institute.

Certified by the American Board of Surgery, Dr. Stewart earned his medical degree from and completed a general surgery residency at The University of Toledo College of Medicine, Toledo, OH. He then completed a fellowship in Advanced Minimally Invasive Bariatric Surgery/Flexible Endoscopy at the Minnesota Institute for Minimally Invasive Surgery, Crosby, MN.

Dr. Stewart holds affiliations with the Fraternity of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons.



**JOHN VU, MD**, has joined Blessing Hospital and practices hospital medicine.

He earned his medical degree from Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, GA, and completed his residency at the SIU Center for Family Medicine-Quincy.

For more information on Blessing Health System providers, please visit us online at [blessinghealth.org](http://blessinghealth.org)

## DIRECTOR NAMED TO NEW DEPARTMENT



**KILEY MCGLAUCHLEN, MS, CCRP** (Certified Clinical Research Professional), has been named Clinical Research Director of Blessing Health System's new research department.

McGlauchlen has 16 years of clinical research experience, including as Senior Research Patient Coordinator at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis.

She earned Master of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees in biology from Illinois State University.

Through its new research department, Blessing Health System will contribute to medical knowledge by involvement in various types of clinical research studies, including treatment involving medications; devices; psychotherapy; new approaches to radiation therapy, surgery or a combination of approaches; and diagnostic, prevention, quality of living, screening and genetic studies.

Continued from page 4

## New heart procedure stops blood clots—and fear

Even though he would be put back on a closely monitored dose of blood thinner for a short time as part of the WATCHMAN procedure, there was no question about Jim’s decision.

“Let’s plug it up. It takes away the fear,” he said.

“Ninety-six percent of patients are able to stop taking blood thinners 45 days after their WATCHMAN procedure with a reduced risk for stroke,” said Dr. Hammock.

“It is exciting to see patients’ faces when we tell them they can transition off their blood thinner, once an adequate seal has formed

over the WATCHMAN implant,” added Diana Weatherford, RN, Structural Heart Navigator, Blessing Physician Services.

“It is exciting to see patients’ faces when we tell them they can transition off their blood thinner, once an adequate seal has formed over the WATCHMAN implant.”



DIANA WEATHERFORD, RN

Jim looks forward to a full return to what he calls his activities of daily living.

“I consider myself, for my age, pretty active,” the 81-year-old said. “My hope is that the WATCHMAN allows me to return to the active lifestyle I had before—walking, golfing, and fishing.”

“WATCHMAN can take away the worry,” Dr. Hammock concluded.

For more information on WATCHMAN, go to [blessinghealth.org/watchman](https://blessinghealth.org/watchman). ■



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# Recognizing extraordinary care

*Since the last issue of Personal Blessing, the following Blessing Hospital registered nurses and departments have joined the ranks of international DAISY Award winners for delivering extraordinary care, based on nominations submitted by patients and their loved ones.*



**HILARY DAVIS**, One Day Surgery, was nominated by the daughter of an 88-year-old man to whom she provided care before and after his lung biopsy during a week when he underwent other medical tests and was exhausted: ***"I have seen many nurses while helping both my elderly parents through many years of tests and hospital stays. Hilary stood out to me in my dad's tough journey."***



**TAMMY RUTHS** answered calls from community members on Blessing Health System's COVID-19 Hotline. She helped a woman secure a rapid virus test so she could see her ailing mother in a nursing home before the woman passed away. Tammy's coworkers wrote: ***"Tammy called the very tearful and very grateful woman at 7:47 p.m., 15 minutes after taking the initial call, to inform her to head to the testing site for her rapid test."***



The departments of Nursing Professional Development and Organizational Development and select representatives of several other departments received the first-ever DAISY Team Award. The more than 40 individuals involved were recognized for their role in planning and conducting the cross-training of 477 employees over 5 weeks to meet the demands of Blessing's COVID-19 response.

## A NEW WAY TO JOIN THE TEAM

Blessing Hospital will pay people while they train for the skills needed to take the state Certified Nurse Assistant examination, if they meet basic employment requirements. For more information on the Blessing CNA Training Program, email [jonna.egan@blessinghealth.org](mailto:jonna.egan@blessinghealth.org).



Programs, services and new technology featured in this issue of *Personal Blessing* are made possible in part by donations to Blessing Hospital and the Blessing Foundation. The Giving Society is an honor roll of those showing love through charitable giving of \$100 and above. Gifts below were received for the following services: Pediatrics, Big Hearts TAPP, Blessed Beginnings, Blessing Employee Crisis Fund, Blessing Hospice—Hancock County, Blessing Hospice—Pike County, Blessing Hospice & Palliative Care, Blessing Nurses Alumni Association Scholarship, B-RCN General Endowment, B-RCN Health Sciences Schools Fund, B-RCN Unrestricted, Breast Services, Cancer Center & Radiation Services, Caring Club Fund, Community Spirit Fund (COVID-19), Diabetes Patient Care Fund, Emergency Center, Heart & Vascular Center, Home Care, Hospice Music Therapy, Hospice/Palliative Care HOPE Project, Illini—Oncology Department, Illini—Unrestricted, Intensive Care Unit, Merrick Family Medical Crisis Fund, Psych Services, Quincy Hospitality House, Quincy Hospitality House Building Fund, Skilled Nursing Unit, Ten Year Plus Club, and Foundation Unrestricted.

We thank the following donors for their support of quality health care. For information on giving opportunities through The Blessing Foundation, go to [blessinghealth.org/blessingfoundation](http://blessinghealth.org/blessingfoundation) or call (217) 223-8400, ext. 4800.

## Donor Recognition Levels

July 1, 2020 through  
December 31, 2020

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MARCH IS  
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According to the American Cancer Society, Colorectal Cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer among men and women in the U.S.

Of the **149,000+** Americans estimated to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer this year, only about 40% will be diagnosed with localized stage disease, where survival rates are 90%.