

INhealth

HEALTH AND WELLNESS MADE PERSONAL

Fall 2018

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital performs its **FIRST ANKLE REPLACEMENT SURGERY** **7**

STICK TO IT

Physical therapy app helps patients stay compliant **12**

*ready
for
the big day*

Thanks to rehab, neurology patient attains precious goal **8**

Chuck and Nancy Gagnon walk daughter Megan down the aisle on her wedding day.





More to Explore

I am pleased to share with you the first issue of the newly redesigned

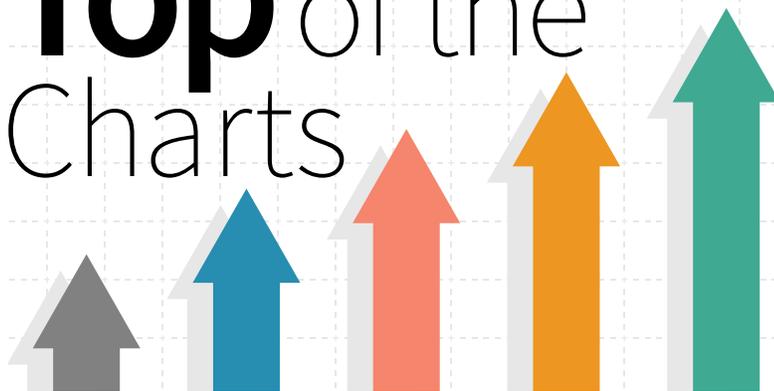
INhealth! In addition to important information about Inova Mount Vernon Hospital (IMVH), this magazine now offers news from across the Inova system.

At IMVH, new and exciting things are happening all the time. In the cover story, you will read about how our rehab team literally helped put a father back on his feet. And our Inova Joint Replacement Center is now performing total ankle replacement, a procedure rarely found anywhere.

We have extraordinary people doing work that makes a difference in the communities we serve every day; it is a privilege to serve you.

DON BRIDEAU, MD
Chief Executive Officer
Inova Mount Vernon Hospital

Top of the Charts



Hospital receives its highest-ever U.S. News rankings

In August, Inova Mount Vernon Hospital (IMVH) learned that it has moved up even further in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* “Best Hospitals” rankings, achieving the strongest results in hospital history.

For 2018–19, IMVH has been ranked the No. 7 Best Hospital in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area (out of 57 hospitals), and No. 14 across the state of Virginia (out of 123 hospitals). In addition, IMVH earned “High Performing” recognition in orthopedics, hip replacement and knee replacement.

This latest recognition adds to a recent string of quality and patient safety accolades from outside agencies and accrediting bodies. Earlier this year, IMVH was awarded a 5-Star (top) ranking by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — one of about 7 percent of hospitals nationally to receive this ranking. And IMVH has now received seven consecutive “Grade A” Patient Safety rankings from The Leapfrog Group, the nation’s largest private patient safety advocacy organization.

“These achievements are a reflection of the hard work and commitment of so many people at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital,” says Don Brideau, MD, IMVH Chief Executive Officer. “Our continued pursuit of high quality and high reliability translates into safe, effective and high-quality care.”

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MORE ONLINE

Interested in learning more from *INhealth* magazine?

Visit inovanewsroom.org to read additional stories, as well as view videos and podcasts pertaining to hospital news, programs, treatments and cutting-edge research.

Seeing Pain Clearly

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital uses virtual reality to assist with patient anxiety

As part of Inova Mount Vernon Hospital's (IMVH's) commitment to finding new and effective non-pharmacological ways to reduce patient anxiety, its Emergency Department (ED) has begun to use virtual reality (VR) to assist with anxiety and pain management. The IMVH ED is among the first in the Washington, DC, region to employ this technology to enhance patient care and the patient experience.

VR technology offers patients a fully immersive distraction from certain short-duration ED procedures that can cause a patient to feel nervous or apprehensive, or cause momentary pain. Such procedures include needle sticking, changing the dressing on a wound or placing a cast on a broken limb.

When VR was first introduced several months ago, ED physicians and nurses noticed that the new therapy was not only highly effective, but it also equally benefited older and younger patients alike. "Any ED visit can be stressful, especially for children. And pain — or even the thought of pain — is often one of the chief concerns of any patient," says Rett Embrey, Chairman of the ED, IMVH.

"Pain and anxiety are also known to have a negative effect on the patient experience and health outcomes in any hospital setting," he adds. "If we can effectively manage these issues



Rett Embrey, MD, Chairman of the Emergency Department at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, has spearheaded the use of virtual reality to ease anxiety in some patients.

without resorting to long-working medications — which introduce new risks — just to solve a very short-term need, the value of that treatment option speaks for itself."

All patients are carefully screened to evaluate whether VR might be an appropriate supplement to their ED care. Hospital ED Nursing Director Courtney Elliott, RN, adds that not every patient is a good candidate. "Virtual reality is a valuable new tool we now have available to aide in patient care, and it's another way we empower our patients in their care," she says. [@](#)

The Power of Prevention

Mammography detects breast cancer, saves lives

After skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among American women. An estimated 246,660 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women this year.

In recent years, incidences of breast cancer have been stable in white women but have increased slightly in African-American women. Fortunately, however, death rates from breast cancer continue to fall. These decreases are

believed to be the result of finding breast cancer earlier through screening and increased awareness, and better treatments.

Early Detection

Regular mammograms are the key to finding breast cancer at an early stage. Mammography uses low-dose X-ray to capture images of breast tissue. It can detect changes in breasts up to two years before they can be felt, and it alerts your doctor if a biopsy or other diagnostic tests are needed.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women at average risk get annual mammograms starting at age 40, and those at higher risk start screening mammograms 10 years before the age her relative was diagnosed. Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam about every three years. Women also should perform regular breast self-exams and report any changes to their healthcare provider right away. [@](#)

THE STATS

1 in 8
WOMEN
IN THE
U.S. WILL
DEVELOP
BREAST
CANCER
IN HER
LIFETIME

Get Screened: Digital 3D mammography services are available at both Inova Mount Vernon Hospital and at the Inova HealthPlex – Lorton. To learn more, call the location nearest to you:

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital: **703.664.7439** or Inova HealthPlex – Lorton: **703.982.8400**

Maternal Biome Study

FDA allows Inova to proceed with trial on C-section babies

Babies born by Caesarean section, or C-section, have an increased risk of childhood obesity, asthma and allergies. Suchitra Hourigan, MD, pediatric gastroenterologist and Director of Microbiome Research, hypothesizes that health risks

associated with C-section may be because the procedure does not allow for the mother-to-newborn transfer of beneficial vaginal microbes. The Food and Drug Administration recently allowed an Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI) team to proceed with a first-of-its-kind, randomized controlled trial on vaginal seeding, a process that may present a way to safely decrease these health risks.

Vaginal microbiome seeding, done to restore the exposure to microbes, is a simple process that involves swabbing the baby's face and body after C-section delivery with the mother's vaginal flora. "If vaginal seeding decreases risk of childhood health problems in babies born by C-section, this would change the practice of obstetrics as we know it," says Dr. Hourigan.

Notes Ruth Sangra, an Inova nurse and study participant: "As a nurse and, more importantly, as a mom, I feel that this is an easy way I can help my child and other children to better their health."

To gather long-term data, ITMI's five-year study will include 800 mothers and babies. Investigators will monitor each baby's health and microbiome development for three years after birth to examine whether vaginal seeding decreases the risk of obesity, asthma and allergies. [@](#)



Clinical Lead Varsha Deopujari swabs the first newborn involved in Inova's vaginal seeding research.

MORE INFORMATION

If you're interested in participating in Inova's vaginal seeding research or would like to learn more, contact Suchi Hourigan, MD, at **703.776.8199**.

Smart Sips

Inova to eliminate most plastic drinking straws

For well over a decade, Inova has been a leading presence enacting sustainability efforts in the healthcare sector. When J. Stephen Jones, MD, took on the role of President and CEO last April, he considered the downstream impact of materials used throughout the system and advocated for Inova's sustainability efforts. Plastic use is one area of concern.

According to Seema Wadhwa, Inova's Assistant Vice President for Sustainability and Wellness, curtailing the use of plastic drinking straws is a new initiative that will be launched in the fall. "We can have a meaningful impact by cutting back on the use of this material," she says. "Inova

recognizes that plastic straws are not readily recyclable and can find their way to waterways, where they can cause harm to wildlife."

As the first health system on the East Coast to institute the change, Inova will eliminate plastic straws in a phased approach, first by pulling them from retail spaces, such as cafeterias and lounges. Patient care areas will then be reviewed to determine if plastic straw reduction or elimination is possible.

Of course, visitors and patients who have clinical or medical needs for straws will get them. "We have investigated plastic straw alternatives, including paper straws and bio-based straws," says Wadhwa, "and the replacements



Inova's initiative to phase out the use of plastic straws is starting this fall.

have been thoroughly vetted and meet our requirements for usability and cleanliness."

The plastic straw initiative is just one of the efforts in Inova's JustOne Campaign, through which the system is asking everyone to take one small action to foster a healthy environment. [@](#)

Nov. 15 is America Recycles Day and will mark the kickoff of Inova's straw reduction initiative. Learn how you and members of your community can participate. Visit inova.org/JustOne2018.

The Greater Good

Giving to Inova Blood Donor Services helps save lives

Medical emergencies happen every day, and one critical need is blood. Inova Blood Donor Services provides blood to approximately 20 hospitals in the Northern Virginia and Washington, DC, metropolitan area, including Inova's five hospitals.

"Our goal is to collect 200 units [of blood] per day to support the hospitals we serve," explains Nicholas Lilly, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs Manager at Inova Blood Donor Services. "Each organization has a different use level and emergencies happen at all times; sometimes those 200 units could be used within minutes."

Because of this need, Inova Blood Donor Services collects blood on a daily basis, seven days a week, 363 days a year (except on Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, unless there is a special blood drive). Giving blood provides a critical resource for the community while also saving lives.

Note: If you're considering giving blood, visit inovablood.org for more information about eligibility. You may be eligible and not even realize it. Here are some common misconceptions people have about giving blood:

They don't need my blood, there must be a substitute.

False. When it is needed, there is no medical substitute for donated blood.

I can't donate because I have diabetes.

While true for people with type 1 diabetes, as long as diabetes is controlled, people with type 2 diabetes can donate blood.

I don't want to risk getting a bloodborne disease.

There is no danger of contracting a disease from donating blood.



There is no medical substitute for blood, which is why new donors are in demand.

Needles used are sterilized and single-use, meaning a new needle is used for every donation.

Donating blood hurts.

Most donors describe it as nothing more than a pinch.

I've been turned away from donating before, so I shouldn't try again.

Regulations can change and new tests come out that might change your eligibility. Call **1.866.256.6372** to find out if you're eligible. [M](#)



Peripheral nerve injuries include carpal tunnel syndrome and nerve compressions.

What conditions does the Peripheral Nerve Center treat?

John Barbour, MD, FACS, is the Medical Director of the Peripheral Nerve Center at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.

The peripheral nervous system is the system of nerves outside of our brain and spinal cord, the nerves that help our brain communicate with the rest of our body. While we specialize in treating the most complex

peripheral nerve conditions and hand injuries, we often treat more common conditions as well. We frequently treat chronic peripheral nerve injuries, including carpal tunnel syndrome, nerve compressions, thoracic outlet syndrome (neurogenic), brachial plexus injuries and neuromas. We also treat conditions of the hand, including trigger fingers, fractures, tendon injuries, scleroderma and Raynaud's phenomenon.

You should consider seeking treatment if you have been diagnosed with any of the above conditions; have tried several treatments for your nerve or hand pain with no relief; if you have chronic pain, numbness or burning following a surgery or trauma; or if your primary or specialist physician has

recommended you see a peripheral nerve or hand specialist. [M](#)



To make an appointment with Dr. Barbour, call **703.972.6655**.

Inova Blood Donor services is always looking for new donors. For more information, visit inovablood.org or call **1.866.256.6372**.

Just for *Women*

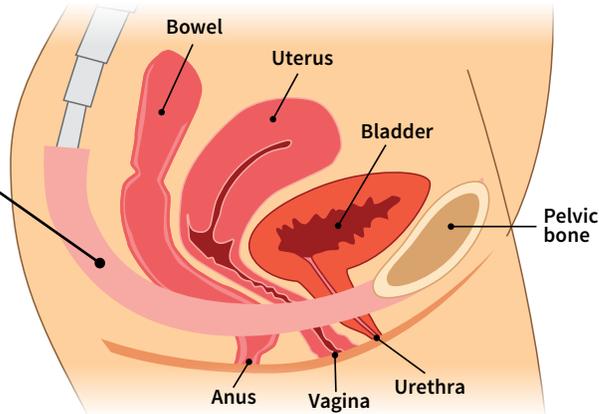
 **CONDITION:**

Women’s Pelvic Floor Disorder: A group of conditions affecting the structure and function of the muscles and organs in the pelvis. The disorder relates to an inability to control the muscles of the pelvic floor.

Pelvic Floor Muscles

The most common conditions fall into three categories:

1. Urinary incontinence
2. Fecal incontinence
3. Pelvic organ prolapse



 **SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS:**

Loss of control of urine or stool and protrusion of tissue from the vagina.

Less common symptoms include:

- Constipation or straining pain with bowel movements
- Painful urination, or a frequent or urgent need to urinate
- Lower back pain
- Ongoing pain in pelvic region, genitals or rectum
- Spasms in pelvic muscles

GET ANSWERS

Pelvic floor disorders can be tricky to pinpoint and there may be other causes for some symptoms. Specialists in the pelvic floor can help you determine the problem. To find out if you have this condition and learn what you can do about it, call **571.762.4161**.

Power the Pelvic Floor

This exercise helps you have better control over your pelvic floor muscles. Talk to your doctor before performing it to see whether it could help you.

KEGELS

What: This practice of contracting and relaxing the pelvic floor muscles helps to strengthen them.

How: Contract these muscles and hold them for five seconds. Then release for five seconds. Repeat this 10 times, three times a day.



Good Catch

First patient undergoes total ankle replacement surgery at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital

Charles Fedorko, 63, a vehicle mechanic from Dale City, Virginia, had been experiencing ankle and foot pain for as long as he can remember. “I had bad swelling, and it just got worse and worse,” he says. “I could barely walk on it.”

He decided to make an appointment with Oliver Schipper, MD, an orthopedic foot and ankle specialist at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital (IMVH). Dr. Schipper discovered that Charles had severe ankle arthritis, as well as a significant high arch foot deformity that caused his foot and ankle to turn inward while walking.

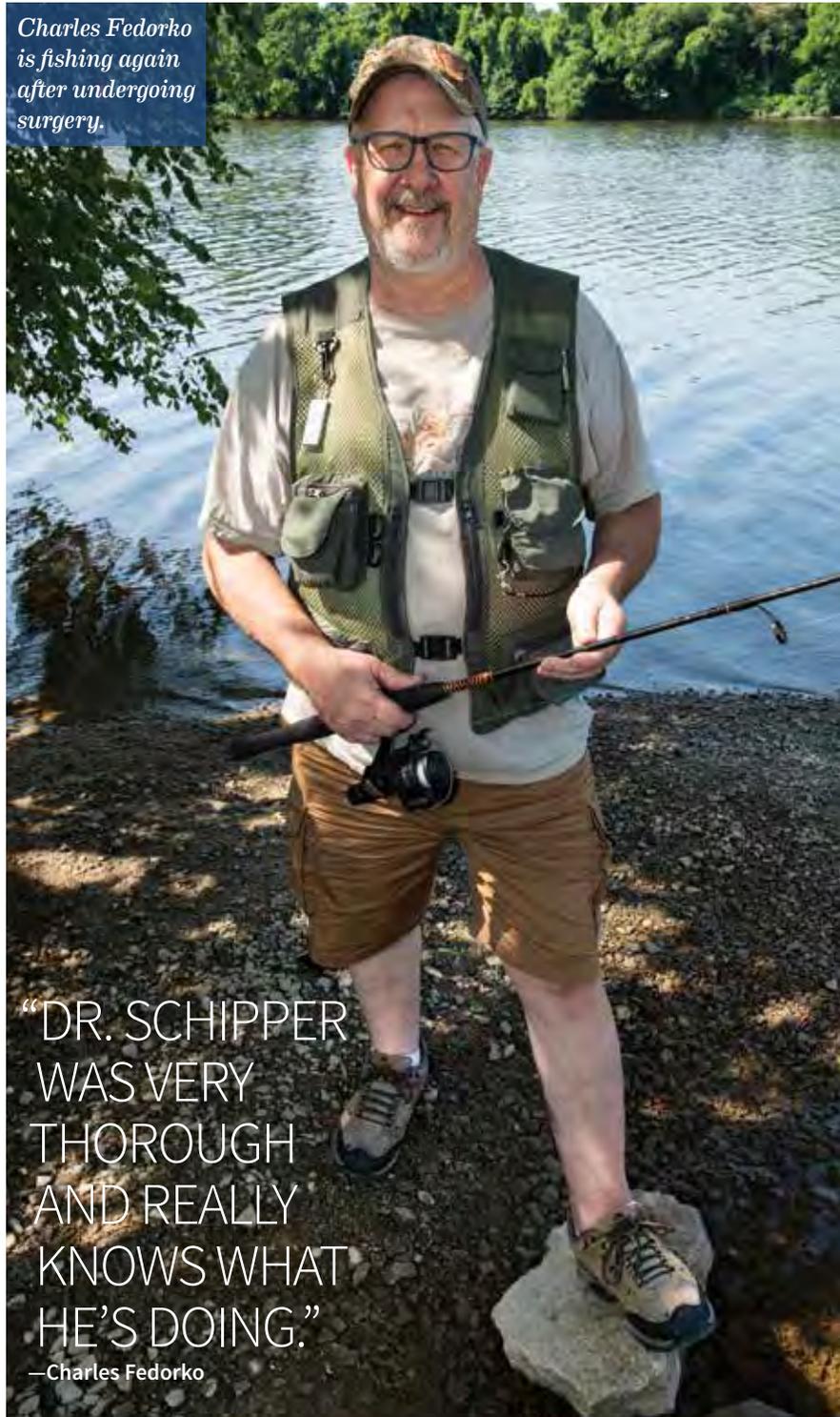
Dr. Schipper says he tried everything short of surgery to help Charles, from shots to ankle braces. But nothing solved the problem. After discussing the risks and benefits of surgery, Charles decided to proceed with ankle replacement surgery.

Charles underwent the IMVH Total Ankle Replacement Program’s first ankle replacement surgery on April 6, 2018. Due to the complexity of Charles’ foot deformity, Dr. Schipper says the procedure required both an ankle replacement and extensive foot reconstruction. Dr. Schipper says ankle replacement surgery has a steep learning curve, which is why he is one of the only doctors in the area who performs it.

“[Charles] did great,” Dr. Schipper says. “He stayed in the hospital overnight and went home the next day. He’s been walking on the ankle replacement for the past few months and is back to regular activities.”

Charles, who has already had both knees replaced, says his recovery from ankle replacement surgery has been very smooth, and he’s grateful he had the surgery done. “There’s no other hospital I’d rather go to if I had the choice,” he says. 

Charles Fedorko is fishing again after undergoing surgery.



“DR. SCHIPPER
WAS VERY
THOROUGH
AND REALLY
KNOWS WHAT
HE’S DOING.”

—Charles Fedorko

JOINT SPECIALISTS

To make an appointment with the Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Joint Replacement Center, call **703.664.7493**.

Dance of a *Lifetime*

Thanks to rehab, neurology patient attains precious goal

THE STATS

INOVA
REHAB
CENTER
TREATS
2,400
PEOPLE
EACH
YEAR IN
NORTHERN
VIRGINIA.

It started small for Chuck Gagnon — a couple of bad days marked by a sort of physical clumsiness combined with trouble thinking straight. “I felt like I had lead feet and my thoughts were a bit confused,” says Chuck, 66, a retired business consultant and colonel in the Air Force. “At the time, I wrote it off as part of ‘just getting older;’ it was even a bit of a joke at first.” But what he was experiencing in 2016 was no laughing matter. As his symptoms worsened and after a series of visits to physicians and specialists, Chuck was diagnosed with normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH), a serious medical condition characterized by an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid, causing ventricles in the brain to become enlarged.

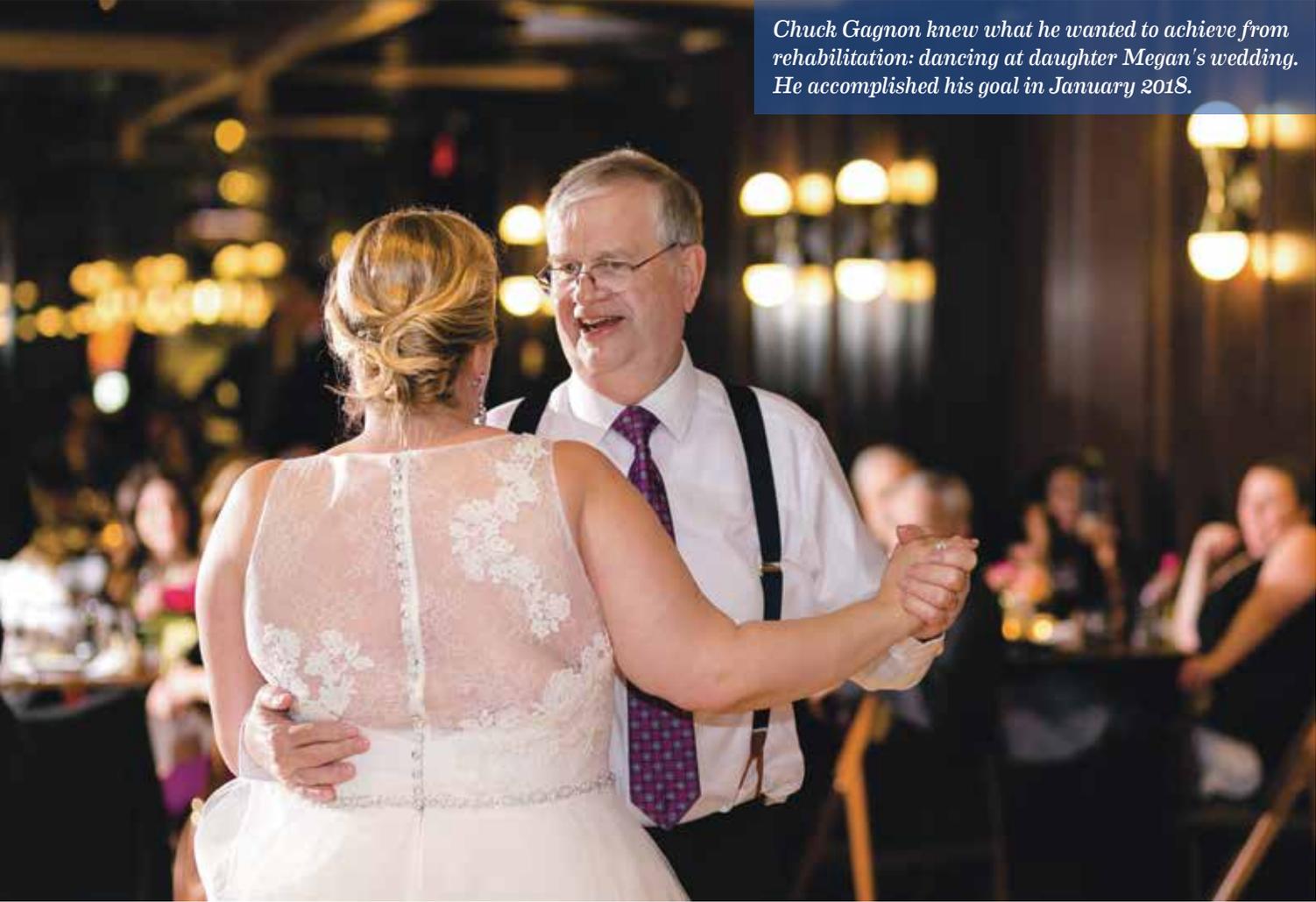
By now he was suffering debilitating headaches and was nearly immobile. Then, in 2017, he developed a subdural hematoma, a severe complication sometimes associated with NPH.



Seeking Answers

Chuck was rushed into emergency surgery to remove the clot. A shunt was inserted to relieve pressure on his brain. But even after a great deal of rehab and recovery, Chuck’s condition did not improve. He now also suffered from chest pains and hypertension.

The core problem remained: There was continuing fluid buildup in his brain. In a second surgery, his condition was stabilized. At his insistence, Chuck was transferred to Inova Mount Vernon Hospital (IMVH) to work with the Inova Rehabilitation Center team. “My wife and I had done our research and knew we wanted to come to Inova Mount Vernon Hospital,” he says, “because they offer the best in neuro rehab.” He made great progress at first, but then his condition plateaued.

A photograph of an older man, Chuck Gagnon, dancing with a young woman, Megan, at her wedding. Chuck is wearing a white shirt, a purple patterned tie, and suspenders. Megan is wearing a white lace wedding dress. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a dimly lit wedding reception with warm, bokeh lights.

Chuck Gagnon knew what he wanted to achieve from rehabilitation: dancing at daughter Megan's wedding. He accomplished his goal in January 2018.

There was still a problem with the shunt; it just wasn't doing its job right. He began to lose ground again, also losing 40 pounds in the process. Finally, a third surgery correctly adjusted the shunt and started Chuck on his true road to recovery. "Based on my earlier great experience with the team, I knew my rehab journey should continue at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital," he says.

Main Objective

He returned to the hospital in September 2017 to begin his therapy. On his first day, his therapist Erica Kramer asked him about his goals. Chuck mentioned that he had one goal above all else: to dance at his daughter's wedding in January 2018. "This was not only my motivation, it became my team's motivation," he says. Along the way, Chuck's treatment plan was individualized to not only effectively treat his condition, but also

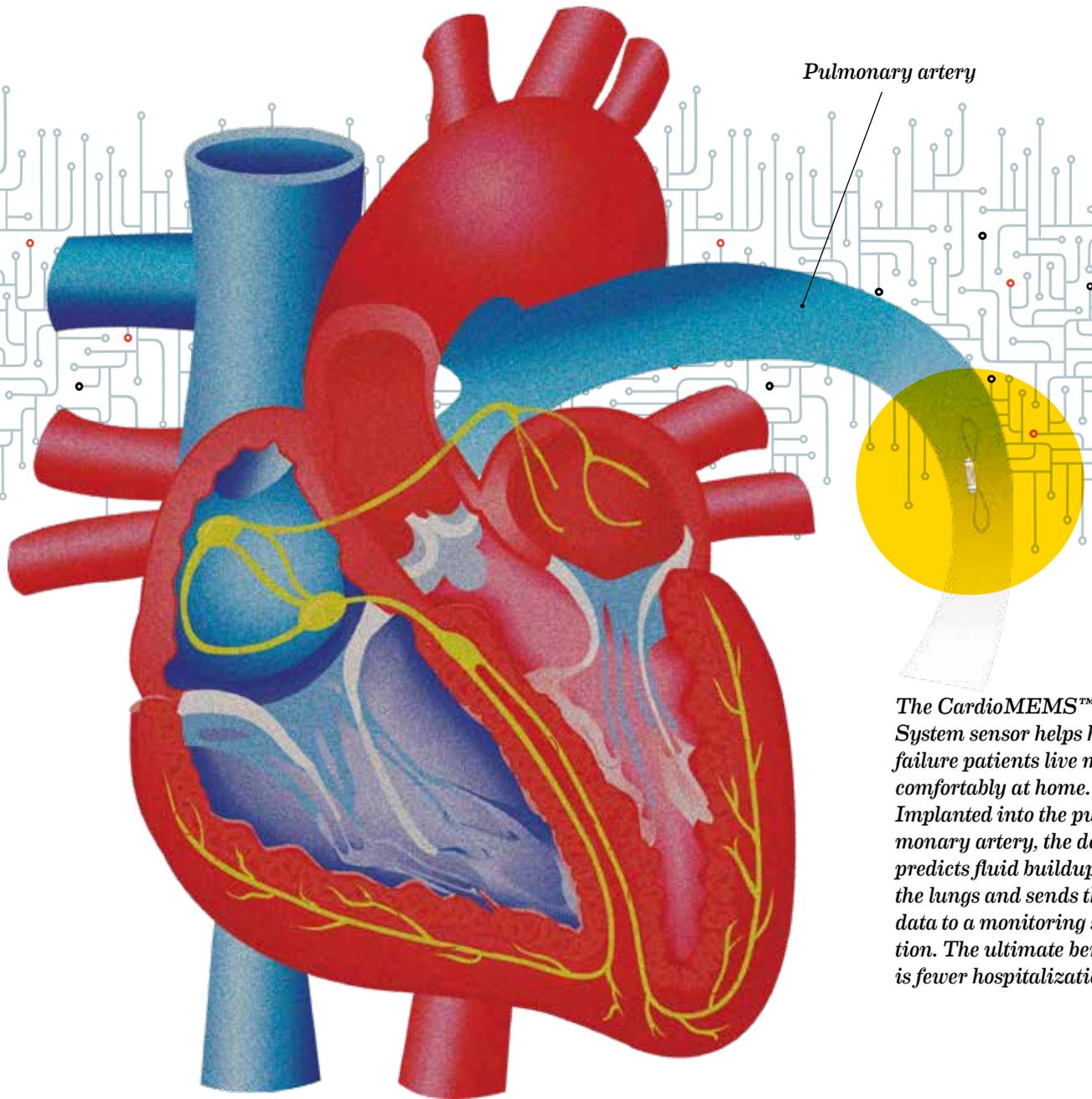
to specifically prepare him for that first dance and to be able to make a toast on that special day.

"The Inova Rehabilitation Center team and I were true partners every step of the way," he notes. "It was never a cookie-cutter approach. Every day I knew they were there for me. They pushed me and encouraged me and motivated me. It was about healing me and getting me whatever I needed to succeed."

Because of his own tenaciousness and through the rehab team's expertise, Chuck was fully able to enjoy one of the most important days in any father's life: his daughter's wedding day. 

REHAB WORKS

Learn more about the rehab program at Inova at inova.org/rehab.



The CardioMEMS™ HF System sensor helps heart failure patients live more comfortably at home. Implanted into the pulmonary artery, the device predicts fluid buildup in the lungs and sends this data to a monitoring station. The ultimate benefit is fewer hospitalizations.

Home Is Where the *Heart* Is

Remote monitoring device provides proactive, personalized care for heart failure patients

Walter Williams, now 80, and his wife, Jeannette, rest a little easier these days, thanks to a unique, implantable, remote monitoring device that helps manage Walter's heart failure.

But it was a bumpy road for a while.

Walter was first diagnosed with heart failure in 1991, a condition whereby the heart muscle is damaged and cannot effectively pump blood throughout the body. This can lead to frequent and life-threatening fluid buildup in the lungs and surrounding body tissues as well as kidney failure.

The husband and wife team were vigilant about watching Walter's diet and fluid intake, but by 2016, Walter's condi-

tion had worsened. The Gaithersburg, MD, resident was nearing monthly visits to Inova Fairfax Medical Campus (IFMC) for emergency care, and with each hospitalization, his kidneys grew weaker, which made dialysis a looming possibility. "Every day was so stressful," Jeannette recalls. "We were always adjusting Walter's medication but never sure what, if anything, was working."

regarded implantable, battery-free sensor that essentially predicts fluid buildup in the lungs. Inova is believed to be the first hospital in the Washington, DC, area to implant this tiny, state-of-the-art monitoring sensor into a patient diagnosed with heart failure. One compelling reason to use the device? The chance to reduce hospital readmissions. "We know that hospitalization is a significant marker for heart failure severity. But more doctors, nurses and drugs weren't bending the curve on hospital readmissions. Neither were daily weigh-ins and strict diets with limited salt intake," notes Dr. Desai. "Then we found the CardioMEMS system. This was highly personalized, precision healthcare, which is always Inova's goal. So we were very early proponents."

Did Inova's hunch pan out? The evidence points to yes. Since Walter had the device implanted, his ER visits have dropped to only once in the past 14 months. "My quality of life is much better now — more normal," he says.

Adds Jeanette, "The stress level has been significantly reduced. We are so thankful

to have Dr. Desai and his team."

Walter isn't the only patient benefiting from the CardioMEMS system. A 2014 clinical trial found that the device:

- Reduced hospital admissions for heart failure by 37 percent
- Reduced hospital re-admissions within 30 days by 78 percent
- Was free of complications for 98.6 percent of patients

Staying Ahead of the Curve

For Walter, the path to better health began with Dr. Desai implanting the monitoring sensor — about the size of a paper clip — into the patient's pulmonary artery (the vessel that carries blood from

the heart to the lungs).

The minimally invasive, outpatient procedure took about 30 minutes. After a brief recovery period, the patient was discharged and at home.

Now, every day, Walter lies on a pillow and presses a button on a small home monitoring electronics unit. The system then measures the pressure inside Walter's artery, which forecasts fluid buildup in his lungs, and automatically sends this data to a monitoring station that is closely tracked by Amanda Millheim, RN, Heart Failure Nurse Specialist.

If Walter's pressure is higher than it should be, it's a sign that fluid might be backing up into his lungs. That's when Millheim alerts Dr. Desai, who can immediately adjust Walter's medications.

Because the CardioMEMS system senses increasing pressure up to two weeks before trauma strikes, it's a proactive system rather than a reactive system, giving doctors and nurses time to stay ahead of the curve and hopefully prevent hospitalization, or worse.

What sets Inova's system apart is the tight bond between Millheim and her Inova patients being remotely monitored. "Amanda is like a mother hen watching over our heart failure patients," Dr. Desai says. "They know she's tracking their data, preparing their weekly reports and ready to answer any question at any time."

"The CardioMEMS system is a tool that allows us to create a highly personalized approach to heart failure care," he adds. "It's a system that's brought some amazing results for so many of our patients." 



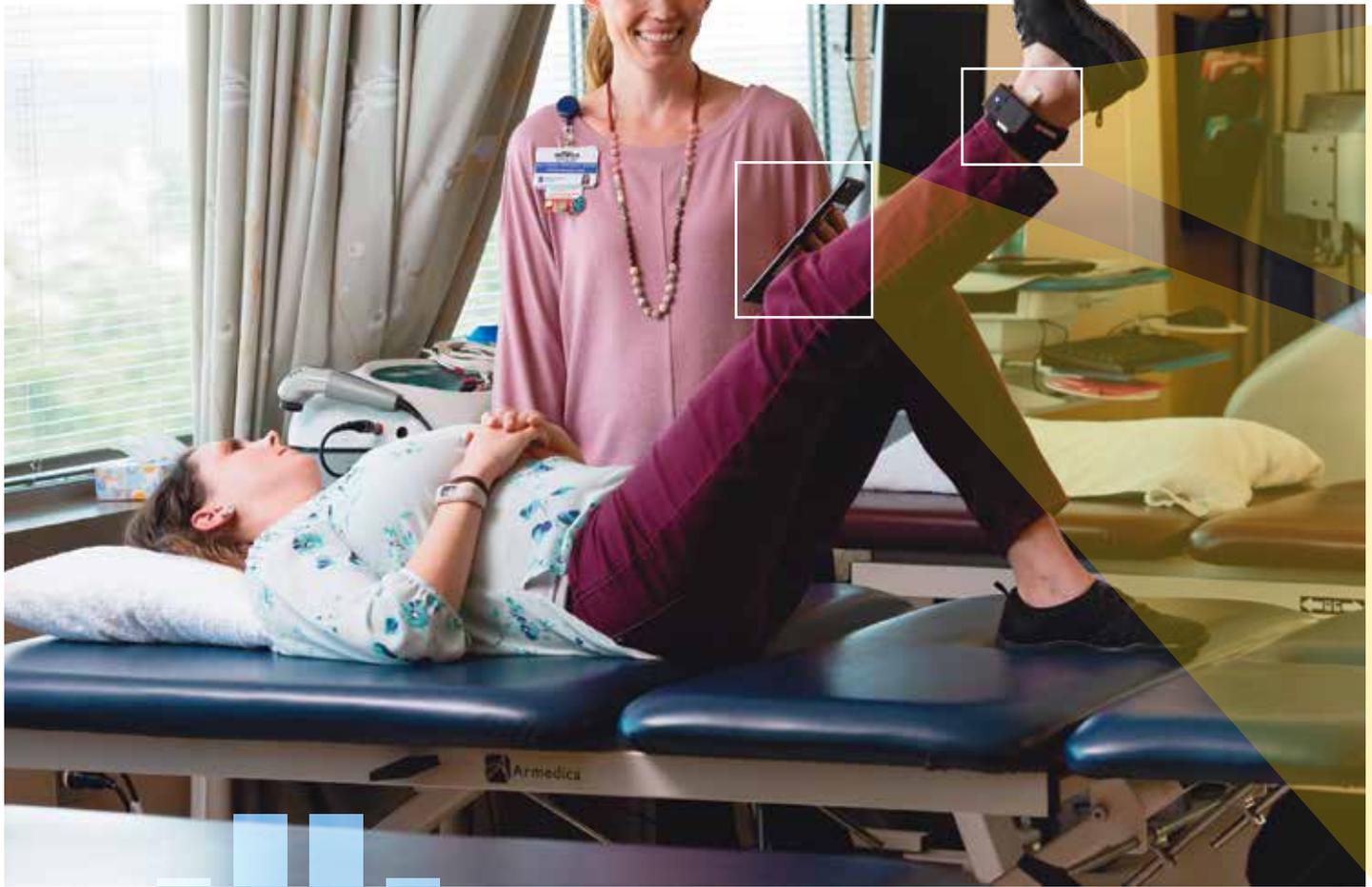
The CardioMEMS™ HF System sensor is about the size of a large paper clip and transmits data on the pressure within the pulmonary artery to a remote sensing device (above right).

A New Approach

That's when Walter's doctor, Shashank Desai, MD, Medical Director of the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Program at IFMC, suggested the CardioMEMS™ HF System, a new and highly

THE HEART OF IT

Learn more about the groundbreaking CardioMEMS HF System and other treatments for heart failure at inovaheart.org/heart-failure/treatments.



Photos: Robert Rathe

Driven by *Data*

Inova partners with tech company to improve physical therapy results

Imagine you had knee surgery. Everything went well and you're back home. Of course, your physical therapist (PT) recommended a therapy treatment plan — which includes exercises at home as well as with your therapist at a physical therapy clinic. In an ideal world, you follow your PT's directions, and you're headed for a remarkable recovery.

“Following your PT's instructions isn't always easy,” emphasizes Mike Thomas, Co-Director of the Inova Personalized Health Accelerator (IPHA), a program looking to invest capital in companies with early-stage technologies that are of strategic interest to Inova.

Enter KinometriX. To work around noncompliance, Thomas and the IPHA team recently partnered with this Maryland-based company and developer of a platform to track patients' physical therapy

Above, Monika Stolze, Program Manager for Adult Therapy Services at Inova Loudoun Hospital's Outpatient Specialty Rehabilitation Center, tests out the KinometriX sensor on athletic trainer Janna Ward.



The KinometriX sensor can be worn on the ankle, wrist or arm, and tracks relevant rehabilitation factors, including range of motion, torque and repetitions. Patient activity is tracked via a mobile app (below) and is reported back to the caregiver team.

progress and hopefully keep them engaged in their rehabilitation process. “Life gets busy, and physical therapy sessions get canceled. Some patients stop exercising because progress is often so gradual they don’t even realize they’re improving,” Thomas says.

Accelerating the Goal

How does KinometriX work? Simply put, the patient finds a convenient time to put a small sensor over their injured joint — similar to positioning a wireless-enabled wearable activity tracker. Next the patient performs their exercise treatment plan,

such as kicking the leg up and down as fast as possible 10 times. The sensors, powered by artificial intelligence algorithms, collect motion data, which are uploaded to KinometriX’s cloud platform. There the data are analyzed for key metrics, including range of motion, speed of motion, fatigue and neuromuscular control.

Tapping into the KinometriX app, patients as well as their physical therapist and healthcare provider can review real-time data and measure improvements. Specific to the patient, this data can help predict treatment progress or point to a need for plan adjustments.

A Promising Test Drive

Currently, Inova Loudoun Hospital is working with KinometriX. “Everything is in the early research and development phase,” Thomas says. “We’re refining the system’s existing algorithms and collecting clinician



A Strong Union

KinometriX is an ideal example of an Inova Personalized Health Accelerator (IPHA) candidate, with the KinometriX team working with IPHA as well as Inova leaders to further develop and refine this innovative technology. If successful, this new technology

should provide better outcomes to Inova patients.

By offering access to Inova, IPHA plans to attract leading healthcare entrepreneurs, investors and researchers, Mike Thomas, Director of IPHA, says. These unions will ultimately bring unique expertise to Inova’s ever-progressing quest to better evaluate, develop and implement technology solutions that add value to Inova’s operations, improve outcomes and keep Inova at the vanguard of healthcare innovation.

feedback, which will help us perfect the platform. We’re already excited about the potential here.”

As Program Manager for Adult Therapy Services at Inova Loudoun Hospital’s Outpatient Specialty Rehabilitation Center, Monika Stolze, DPT, sees positive patient reactions to the KinometriX platform. “Putting user-friendly data at our patient’s fingertips keeps them involved in their rehabilitation. They’re part of the process — instead of being passive recipients of care. We think this will increase compliance.”

With patients able to collect data at home, when it’s convenient, Thomas suspects that this, too, may inspire maximum patient follow-through with a clinician therapy plan. “It’s our hope that having access to objective, real-time data — without needing to schedule quite so many clinic appointments — will encourage patients to stick to their rehabilitation therapy,” he says.

Also, the KinometriX platform, based on artificial intelligence that presents immediate data, represents the next generation in healthcare. “We currently have the means to assess everything KinometriX measures, but it has to be done in the clinic,” Stolze says. “This platform represents the future, and what clinicians as well as patients expect.”

AN EYE ON AI

Learn more about the Inova Personalized Health Accelerator at inovapha.org.

You're Approved

New software system streamlines authorizations to speed patient care

In the hopes of having better medical outcomes, more physicians and patients are asking for genetic and molecular diagnostic tests, creating more personalized treatments for patients.

Unfortunately, it is also time-consuming and expensive. Many times, undergoing genetic testing requires prior authorization by a doctor, which is followed by a complicated matrix of requirements that involve multiple stakeholders. Then, even after a prior authorization has been obtained, a lab will still need to verify the authorization, which can create a back-and-forth dialogue that can delay the process and even negate reimbursement if an insurer refuses to pay.

Which is why the Inova Personalized Health Accelerator (IPHA) is rolling out CoverMyTest, a software system designed to streamline and automate the workflow for prior authorizations. The infrastructure will help expedite patient care and allow labs and physicians to efficiently conduct patient eligibility checks, deliver electronic prior authorizations and collect insurance verification.

In 2019, Lesley Anderson, Director of Business Development, Inova Genomics Laboratory, anticipates that more than 3,000 of about 10,000 patients receiving genetic testing at Inova will need preauthorization.

"Physicians care about this because they want to know when the lab results are in, and the lab cares about where we are in that process of getting everything authorized," says Rick Gordon, Co-Director of IPHA. "This gives everybody visibility, making sure patients can get the tests they need." 

CARE TAILORED TO YOU

Learn more about genomics and the Inova Center for Personalized Health at inova.org/icph.

IN my own words

Inova's experts speak out

The Bar Is Set

Loring Flint, MD, Chief Physician Executive and High Reliability Officer, seeks consistency in healthcare

As the Chief Physician Executive and High Reliability Officer, Loring Flint, MD, is tasked with setting top priorities and ensuring quality, safety and effective results create a positive patient experience. In 2018, his role shifted from Chief Medical Officer to Chief Physician Executive to help coordinate physician partnerships, drive the strategic direction of Inova and maintain operating responsibility for several departments.



Photo: Robert Rathe

“[ZERO HARM] STARTS WITH THE SIMPLEST THING: 100 PERCENT HAND WASHING.”

What are you hoping to accomplish in your new role?

We are trying to create excellence in everything we do and have a zero-harm goal for all of our organizations. The latter is an aspirational goal because we are dealing with humans; the biology is different in each person, and how each handles medications, procedures and fighting disease is different. A key focus is eliminating and preventing any infections obtained in a hospital.

How are you trying to make this goal a reality?

It starts with the simplest thing: 100 percent hand washing — washing hands when going in and out of a room, and after touching a patient or various pieces of equipment in the room. It's making sure you have sterile barriers when you're inserting a catheter or IV and cleaning the line every day and removing the catheters as soon as they are no longer needed. We are standardizing our processes to be sure we are doing everything possible to not inadvertently transmit an infection to a patient.

What success have you seen so far?

Over the past two years, using a commonly accepted measure of harm, we have decreased harm by over 57 percent. We have a number of units, such as our pediatric oncology team, that have gone over 12 months without having an infection with a central line. Several units have had three to six months with no harm.

What question should physicians be asking patients more readily?

Ask a patient at the end of the visit, “Is there anything else I can answer or do for you today?” It opens the door for the quiet issue that is lurking in the background. If a patient is coming in for a blood pressure check, you might learn they are really concerned about depression. It's important to make sure you're really being open and partnering with your patients. 🗣️

Visit inova.org/physicians to find the right doctor for you.



Crucial Help

Philanthropy drives pivotal program at Inova

When a person has been a victim of physical and sexual assault, they are at their most vulnerable. They may struggle with being able to inform others or share details of their story, much less offer forensic evidence of the crime.

Thankfully, the Inova Ewing Forensic Assessment and Consultation Team (FACT) program — the only one of its kind in Northern Virginia — provides compassionate, skilled care that addresses victims' emotional trauma from abuse, and also supports the collection of DNA evidence and documents injuries to assist the criminal justice process.

As crucial as this program is, it would not exist in its current form without a foundation of philanthropy, says FACT Director Mary Hale. In 2002, Betty and the late Charles Ewing and their family established dedicated funding for FACT services at Inova Fairfax Medical Campus, and in 2012 they supported the expansion of the department. The commitment of the Ewing family has allowed FACT to become one of the most comprehensive forensic programs in Northern Virginia. Growing from a staff of only on-call nurses, FACT now has six full-time and four part-time forensic nurses as well as a dedicated on-call staff. This ensures no victim has to wait for care.

In another generous gesture, the Ewing family also has expanded services to Inova Loudoun Hospital to improve access to care. Accessibility to services means more victims will reach out for help, Hale says. “To reduce the number and extent of these crimes, we need this program, as well as community education and resources,” she says. “This program makes a huge difference in the community, but we can't do it alone. Through generous philanthropy and the incredible FACT team, we're making an important impact every day for the most vulnerable among us.” 🗣️

EMPOWERING VICTIMS

Learn more about the FACT program at Inova Fairfax Medical Campus and Inova Loudoun Hospital at inova.org/FACT.

Inova is a not-for-profit healthcare system located in Northern Virginia in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, serving over 2 million people with over 1,700 licensed beds. It consists of five hospitals including the area's only Level 1 Trauma Center and Level 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Inova encompasses many health services including the internationally recognized Inova Heart and Vascular Institute (IHVI), Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI), Inova Neuroscience Institute, Inova Schar Cancer Institute and Inova Children's Hospital. Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. More information about Inova is at inova.org.

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ask THE EXPERT



Knees, Hips, Shoulders and Other Joints

Treatment Options for Hip and Knee Arthritis

Michael Anvari, MD
Wednesday, Oct. 24, 6 p.m.
Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
*Physicians Conference Center
3300 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA
*or join via webinar

Nigel Azer, MD
Wednesday, Nov. 28, 6 p.m.
Inova Alexandria Hospital
Boardroom
4320 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA

Treatment Options for Shoulder Pain and Arthritis

Adam Lorenzetti, MD
Wednesday, Oct. 24, 6 p.m.
Inova Loudoun Hospital
44055 Riverside Parkway
Suite 110
Leesburg, VA

Osteoarthritis and the Latest Advances in Joint Replacement

Michael Anvari, MD
Wednesday, Nov. 14, 6 p.m.
Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
*Physicians Conference Center
3300 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA
*or join via webinar

Heart and Vascular

Preventing Heart Disease

Stuart Sheifer, MD, FACC
Monday, Nov. 5, 6 p.m.
Inova Fair Oaks Medical Campus
Building 3580, Auditorium
3580 Joseph Siewick Drive
Fairfax, VA

Minimally Invasive Techniques to Treat Valvular Heart Disease

Matthew Sherwood, MD
Wednesday, Nov. 7, 6 p.m.
Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
*Physicians Conference Center
3300 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA
*or join via webinar

Atrial Fibrillation

Haroon Rashid, MD
Wednesday, Dec. 12, 6 p.m.
Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
*Physicians Conference Center
3300 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA
*or join via webinar

Spine

Advanced Treatment for Neck Pain

Corey Wallach, MD
Tuesday, Nov. 27, 6 p.m.
Inova Alexandria Hospital
Boardroom
4320 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA

Special Events

80th Annual Ladies Board Rummage Sale

Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 20 and 21
Morven Park Equestrian Center
41580 Sunday Morning Lane
Leesburg, VA

Learn more at ladiesboard.org/rummage-sale.

Brain Injury Services: The Journey Conference

Thursday, Nov. 1
Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
Physicians Conference Center
3300 Gallows Road
Falls Church, VA

Register at inova.org/thejourneyconference.

Inova Medical Spa Open House

Presented by Inova Medical Spa & Life With Cancer
Tuesday, Nov. 13, 6 p.m.
Inova Medical Spa
21785 Filigree Court
Ashburn, VA

2nd Annual Holiday Open House

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 6 p.m.
Inova HealthPlex Ashburn
22505 Landmark Court
Ashburn, VA

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