

# INhealth



Minimally invasive treatment offers solution for nurse with DVT

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# *Holding* **HER OWN**

Marni Plaster, who rows in her spare time, underwent surgery for post-thrombotic syndrome, a common problem associated with deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

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WE NEED MORE SLEEP, DOC SAYS

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# FOLLOW THE LEADER

## Our Care Commitment

At Inova Alexandria Hospital, we are committed to bringing advanced healthcare and the latest research-based treatment options to our community. In this issue of *InHealth*, you'll see how our commitment directly benefits patients.

For example, our cover story highlights the stories of two women who found life-changing relief from the pain and dangerous complications of deep vein thrombosis, made possible by our participation in cutting-edge research.

Similarly, Inova Alexandria Hospital offers a new option for breast cancer care, adding to our wide array of options for patients with this disease. In this issue, we explain intraoperative radiation therapy, or IORT, a relatively new radiation therapy that benefits certain patients with the advantage of a single, targeted 30-minute treatment.

I'm also proud to report that Inova Alexandria Hospital was recently recognized by the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association for success in meeting high-quality standards in stroke care. We are pleased that we can bring you stories reflecting our superior care and treatments. You should expect nothing less here.



**SUSAN CARROLL**  
FACHE, MBA, MHA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Inova Alexandria Hospital



### STROKE |

# FAST-ACTING

## Inova Alexandria Hospital recognized for stroke treatment

Inova Alexandria Hospital has received a prestigious award related to its high caliber of stroke treatment. It recently was honored with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines-Target: Stroke Honor Roll-Elite Plus Quality Achievement Award.

To receive the Target: Stroke Honor Roll-Elite Plus award, hospitals must meet quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient's arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke.

"With a stroke, time lost is brain lost, and this award demonstrates our commitment to ensuring patients receive care based on nationally respected clinical guidelines," says Susan Carroll, FACHE, MBA, MHA, Chief Executive Officer, Inova Alexandria Hospital.

If given intravenously in the first three hours after the start of stroke symptoms, tPA has been shown to significantly reduce the effects of stroke and lessen the chance of permanent disability. Over



12 months, at least 75 percent of the hospital's ischemic stroke patients received tPA within 60 minutes of arriving; at least 50 percent of the hospital's ischemic stroke patients received tPA within 45 minutes of arriving at the hospital (known as door-to-needle time).

### STROKE SOURCE

Learn more about stroke and Inova Stroke and Cerebrovascular Program at [inova.org/stroke](http://inova.org/stroke).

## The F.A.S.T. Test

Stroke is a medical emergency. If you experience or see someone who might be experiencing a stroke, take the F.A.S.T. test:



### F = FACE

Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

### A = ARMS

Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

### S = SPEECH

Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is the speech slurred or strange?

### T = TIME

If you observe any of these signs, note the time and call 911 immediately.

# Skin-to-Skin

## New Melanoma and Skin Cancer Center opens

Inova has opened Inova Melanoma and Skin Cancer Center, the region's only multispecialty skin cancer program.

"Inova is a great place for my team and I to offer our specific training in the diagnosis and treatment of

all types of skin cancer," says Suraj Venna, MD, a board-certified dermatologist who specializes in skin cancer and is Director of the new center. Also staffing the center are Jennifer DeSimone, MD, and Sekwon Jang, MD. All three have specific expertise in

skin cancer, including advanced non-melanoma skin cancers, Merkel cell carcinoma

(MCC) and cutaneous T cell lymphoma (CTCL).

"My colleagues and I are particularly excited to establish our research here with Inova Translational Medicine Institute," says Dr. Venna. The center plans to conduct genomic research on melanoma, he adds.

The program, which is housed at 8505 Arlington

Blvd., Suite 100, provides screening, detection and treatment of melanoma, a kind of skin cancer, in its early and advanced stages. The team plans to establish a high-risk cancer screening clinic for organ transplant recipients. Among the programming at the center is a weekly skin cancer screening clinic called Mole Monday.



Suraj Venna, MD



Jennifer DeSimone, MD



Sekwon Jang, MD

### GET SOME SKIN IN THE GAME

Learn more about the new Melanoma and Skin Cancer Center at [inova.org/skin](http://inova.org/skin). Call the office to make an appointment at 703.970.6430.

## Don't Feel the BURN

Reduce sun exposure to lessen your risk of skin cancer

There are many factors that determine the likelihood that you will develop skin cancer, including your genetics and family history of the disease. However, one of the main risk factors — exposure to the sun's UV rays — can be mitigated if you take the proper preventive steps.

One of them is to use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and to apply it liberally to all of the exposed parts of your body. Putting it on your skin 30 minutes before heading outside will make a difference in how much protection you get. Reapply it every two to three hours, especially if you are active.

Beyond sunscreen, you can take other simple precautions to avoid too much exposure. Protective clothing like hats, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sunglasses will also block the sun and can keep you from getting burned. If you're particularly sun-sensitive, stay in the shade or out of the sun altogether during the sun's peak hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



### GET CHECKED

Inova Melanoma and Skin Cancer Center offers screening, detection and treatment of melanoma, a type of skin cancer, in early and advanced stages. Learn more about skin cancer at [inova.org/skin](http://inova.org/skin).

# PRECIOUS WINKS

Most people could use more sleep, Sleep Center doctor says

**W**hile sleep is something we all need, we don't always get as much of it as we should. While occasional nights with insufficient sleep are normal for most people, continued sleeping issues could be signs of a disorder. The Neurodiagnostic and Sleep Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital diagnoses and treats many problems associated with sleep.

One of the most common disorders that Lewis Eberly, MD, Director of the Neurodiagnostic Laboratory, and Director of Neuroscience and Stroke at Inova Alexandria Hospital, sees at the Sleep Center is sleep apnea. This disorder, which can be

aggravated by weight gain, occurs when muscles or other structures of the throat close while a person sleeps and block his or her ability to breathe.

Other issues Dr. Eberly sees at the Sleep Center include restless leg syndrome, REM movement disorder (which causes people to get up and move around while asleep), insomnia and narcolepsy. However, Dr. Eberly says the most common issue is simply insufficient sleep. In general, people should try and receive between seven and nine hours, depending on their personal biology.

"People are not getting enough sleep," says Dr. Eberly. "Before 1910, the average amount of sleep people got was nine hours. With the incandescent bulb, that went down to less than eight hours, and now in the U.S. we're generally getting less than seven hours. That's a very common problem."

If you think you might have a sleeping disorder (signs include continued tiredness day after day, dozing off during the day and waking up tired, among others), the Neurodiagnostic and Sleep Center can perform a sleep test on you to gather information about your sleep. This will help determine if you have an issue and what the appropriate treatment would be.

Treatments available for these types of disorders vary from disorder to disorder. For sleep apnea, a popular treatment is a CPAP device, which provides mild airway pressure to stop the patient's airway from being blocked during sleep. Other disorders, such as restless leg or REM movement disorder may be treated with medication.

## Sleep Hygiene

Being tired during the day not only decreases your alertness, but it is also dangerous. Studies have shown that drowsy driving can be linked to as many as one-third of traffic accidents. To avoid this danger, Lewis Eberly, MD, Director of the Neurodiagnostic Laboratory at Inova Alexandria Hospital, suggests you practice proper sleep hygiene. Whether you suffer from a sleep disorder such as insomnia, or you would just like to feel more awake, these tips will help you get a good night's sleep.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Don't exercise or eat more than a snack within three hours of going to bed.
- Make sure your bedroom is at a temperature you find comfortable.
- Wind down before you go to bed; try not to do things that will energize you, such as making phone calls or watching an exciting movie.
- If you do wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, get up and read for 15 minutes or until you feel tired again instead of tossing and turning in bed.

## GET YOUR REST

To learn more about sleep-disorder services, visit [inova.org/sleep](http://inova.org/sleep).

# BEATING

# BREAST CANCER

## New advanced treatment available

In keeping with efforts to provide the best individualized breast cancer treatment available, Inova Alexandria Hospital has recently begun offering intraoperative radiation therapy (IORT). The therapy is a relatively new radiation treatment for breast cancer that offers advantages over traditional radiation treatment for some patients.

One advantage is the short amount of time the treatment requires. The traditional external radiation treatment is done over a period of six to eight weeks, during which time the patient receives daily treatment. Other radiation treatments, such as accelerated partial breast irradiation (APBI), take less time but still involve multiple visits to the hospital. In contrast, IORT takes no more than 30 minutes and is done after a lumpectomy — the surgical procedure that removes a

cancerous tumor from a patient's breast. Under ideal conditions, no other radiation treatments are required.

"The benefit is that not only does it decrease the time spent, but [the radiation] is also directed at the area of highest recurrence," says Matthew Poggi, MD, Medical Director of the Joseph Viar Jr. and Bonnie Christ Cancer Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital.

While the treatment will not be applicable for every breast cancer patient —

for example, patients receiving IORT must conform to specific criteria — the most important effect of this new treatment is that it provides breast cancer patients with more treatment options.

"We work so diligently to find breast cancer at an early stage that it's great to have treatment options that are appropriate for small breast cancers," says breast surgeon David Weintritt, MD, FACS.

Adds Costanza Cocilovo, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Inova Breast Care Center, "This treatment is ideal for older patients with small, low-grade tumors, who are worried about having to drive for multiple radiation treatments. It is great to have one additional method of radiation delivery so we can offer patients more personalized care."

### BREAST IN CARE

Learn more about breast care services at [inova.org/breast](http://inova.org/breast).

## Hitting the TARGIT

Because intraoperative radiation therapy is a relatively new procedure, studies are still being performed on the treatment. Consenting patients who receive IORT at Inova Alexandria Hospital will be part of the TARGIT (TARGeted Intraoperative radioTherapy) study, so their results will help further scientific research on this technology.

"Because this is a newer type of therapy, we wanted to have our experience count toward official research," says Matthew Poggi, MD, Medical Director of the Joseph Viar Jr. and Bonnie Christ Cancer Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital. "So now we can collect this data going forward and contribute to the body of scientific knowledge about IORT."

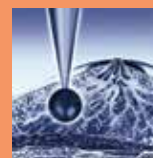
## TARGIT



Cancerous tumor



Tumor bed after removal



Targeting the tumor bed

TARGIT (TARGeted Intraoperative radioTherapy) is a technique of administering radiotherapy to the tissues surrounding a cancer (tumor bed) after the cancer's surgical removal.

As a result of this technique, radiotherapy can be delivered accurately at the time of surgery, does not delay adjuvant chemotherapy and could allow breast-conserving surgery when the five- or six-week course of postoperative radiotherapy is not desirable or practical, according to the TARGIT study.

# A CLEAR PATH

Minimally invasive treatment provides vein solution for two young mothers

**T**he formation of a blood clot in a vein deep in the body, known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT), can be debilitating and even life-threatening if left untreated. Up to 45 percent of patients with DVT develop post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS) in which a vein becomes scarred and blocked. The resulting limited blood flow can lead to chronic pain in the leg or pelvis, swelling, itching, heaviness, skin discoloration or leg ulcers.

Most patients with chronic DVT and PTS are treated with blood thinner medications to prevent new blood clots from forming. Unfortunately, blood thinners are ineffective at dissolving an existing blood clot, leaving the patient prone to worsened quality of life, painful symptoms, recurrent DVT and life-threatening pulmonary embolism, in which the clot breaks off and travels to the lungs.

The interventional radiology team at Inova Alexandria Hospital offers an advanced, minimally invasive treatment where it reopens these chronically occluded (or blocked) veins for patients who have been unable to find help through conventional therapies.

“To treat patients with chronic DVT and PTS, we can perform a catheter-based treatment with a specialized technique where we create a channel through the blocked vein, perform angioplasty (stretching the vein open with a balloon) and then utilize the EKOS EkoSonic® Endovascular System to deliver clot-buster medications,” says Keith Sterling, MD, Director of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology at Inova Alexandria Hospital. “We have seen tremendous success with this technique.”

## KEEPING THE FLOW

For Lauren Kuen, the procedure changed her life in ways she could not have imagined. When Kuen, 32, was in her late twenties and pregnant with her first child, she went into labor early. Her son was born prematurely and passed away shortly after birth.

Having been on bed rest for many weeks, Kuen developed DVT in a vein in her pelvis, causing swelling and heaviness in her left leg. The symptoms lasted for a year, and despite seeing numerous doctors, the problem lingered. Kuen and her husband yearned to start a family, but fearing complications from the DVT, they put their plans on hold. It wasn't until Kuen's hematologist referred her to Dr. Sterling that her dream became a reality.

To successfully restore blood flow to Kuen's vein, Dr. Sterling performed ultrasound-accelerated thrombolysis, which involved inserting a catheter through the left iliac vein in her pelvis into the DVT. The catheter emitted ultrasound energy to loosen the blood clot. The doctor then delivered a clot-busting medication called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) through the EKOS catheter to dissolve the clot. Using stents, he propped open the vein to permit normal blood flow. Placing the catheter into the clot allows the team to use a low dose of tPA, which more effectively and safely eliminates the clot, Dr. Sterling says.

The swelling in Kuen's leg resolved and her ability to exercise increased. Kuen now has a healthy baby boy who was born at Inova Alexandria Hospital. “I'll always think of [Dr. Sterling] when I look at my son and know that he was a part of the reason that we have him and that he's here and healthy and that I'm healthy.”



Lauren Kuen, shown here with her husband and young son, underwent thrombolysis for her deep vein thrombosis. She is grateful to Keith Sterling, MD, for helping her become a mother.

## CLINICAL TRIAL

The interventional radiologists at Inova Alexandria Hospital are offering the ACCESS PTS study to evaluate the safety and efficacy of ultrasound-accelerated thrombolysis in conjunction with balloon angioplasty and stents for patients with chronic DVT and PTS. To learn more about this clinical trial, visit [chronicdvtstudy.com](http://chronicdvtstudy.com).



## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

For 47-year-old nurse Marni Plaster, reopening her chronically occluded veins restored her life back to normal. More than a decade ago, Plaster developed extensive DVT involving her pelvis and her leg following childbirth. She was treated with blood thinners for several months, and while her condition improved at first, she spent the next 11 years suffering from chronic pelvic pain, and swelling and discomfort in her left leg.

“It was a continuous dull aching and then intermittent stabbing pain,” recalls Plaster. “It limited my physical activity and it was very fatiguing dealing with that all the time.”

At one point, Plaster was diagnosed with endometriosis and underwent a hysterectomy hoping the surgery would eliminate the non-stop pain in her pelvis. But the aching persisted.

“Nobody had looked at the blood vessels in my abdomen or thought those were the problem,” she says.

Things changed when Plaster met Dr. Sterling. Suspecting the problem was related to the veins in her pelvis, Dr. Sterling ordered a CT scan, which confirmed she had severe PTS. To promote normal blood flow, Dr. Sterling placed a catheter in the iliac vein in her left pelvis, administered a thrombolytic to dissolve the blood clot, then performed a balloon angioplasty and placed stents to keep the vein open. Within one week following the surgery, Plaster was back to work. She was also able to stop taking blood thinners after the procedure. “Dr. Sterling was great and so was the hospital,” says Plaster. “I’m able to be physically active and I exercise and I don’t have to worry about that anymore.”

Marni Plaster suffered for many years with pelvic pain. Following surgery, she was back at work and able to stop taking blood thinners.

## What Is Interventional Radiology?

Today, many conditions that once required surgery can be treated less invasively by interventional radiologists. Interventional radiology treatments offer less risk, less pain and less recovery time compared to open surgery.

The interventional radiologists at Inova Alexandria Hospital are board-certified physicians who specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments.

They offer the most in-depth knowledge of the least invasive treatments available coupled with diagnostic and clinical experience across all specialties. They use X-rays, MRI and other imaging to advance a catheter in the body, usually in an artery, to treat the source of the disease. Learn more at [inova.org/iahcvir](http://inova.org/iahcvir).

Here are the interventional radiologists of Inova Alexandria Hospital:

- Sandeep Bagla, MD
- James Cooper, MD
- Dimitrios Papadouris, MD
- Kenneth Rholl, MD
- Keith Sterling, MD
- Venu Vadlamudi, MD
- Arina Van Breda, MD

## Preventing DVT

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) can occur if you are inactive for a long period of time. Other factors include obesity, pregnancy, a disease such as cancer (and some of its treatments), heart disease and hereditary factors. To prevent DVT, experts recommend the following steps:

- **Get moving.** If you have been inactive for a long period of time, such as after an accident, an illness or surgery, get moving as soon as you can.
- **Stretch.** Need to sit for long periods? Move your legs and stretch your feet.
- **Stay active.** Exercise regularly. If traveling by car, stop every hour and walk. On a plane or bus, walk in the aisles.
- **Choose healthy habits.** Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

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, Inova Translational Medicine Institute on genomics, Inova Neuroscience 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](http://inova.org).

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# WELCOME, NEW PROVIDERS!

Here are new healthcare professionals who have joined the Inova Alexandria Hospital medical staff in recent months:

NAME	DEPT/SECTION
Ghazaleh Aram, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Kenneth Blais, DMD	Oral Surgery
Michael C. Brown, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Paul Clark, DO	Radiology
Daniel Conway, DO	Emergency Medicine
Kapil Gopal, MD	Vascular Surgery
Rabih Halabi, MD	Medicine/eICU
Clarissa C. Hammer, DO	Plastic Surgery
Jack Huang, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Mahadevappa Hunasikatti, MD	Medicine/Pulmonary Disease

NAME	DEPT/SECTION
Ayne Iafolla, MD	Pediatrics/Neonatology
Kenneth Josovitz, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Zeina Kiblawi, MD	Pediatrics/Neonatology
Alireza Maghsoudi, MD	Medicine/Cardiovascular Disease
Atul V. Marathe, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Soraia Refq, DPM	Surgery/Podiatry
Mark Schefkind, MD	Surgery/Ophthalmology
Anisha Thadani, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology
Joshua D. Washer, MD	Surgery
Benjamin Young, MD	Medicine/Gastroenterology



## Calling All Men FREE Prostate Screening in June

**Date:** Wednesday, June 10

**Time:** 5-7 p.m.

**Location:** Inova Alexandria Hospital, Atrium  
4320 Seminary Road  
Alexandria, Virginia

The FREE screening will include PSA (blood test screening) and DRE (digital rectal exam) performed by Inova Alexandria Hospital physicians. Appointments are required. Call **703.504.7025** to register. Note: This event has been moved up earlier in the year. There will not be an additional free prostate screening in September.

### Find a Physician

Looking for a doctor? Visit [inova.org/physicians](http://inova.org/physicians) or call our 24/7, bilingual physician-referral service at **1.855.My.Inova (1.855.694.6682)** to find one close to home or work.



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### Ask the Expert

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### Baby Time

Schedule a tour or complete online registration for your OB admission at [inova.org/baby](http://inova.org/baby).

