



INOVA FAIRFAX MEDICAL CAMPUS

# INhealth

## *Against* **ALL ODDS**

Inova heart  
transplant patients  
find enduring love

**PAGE 6**



Taylor Givens and Collin Kobelja both received heart transplants the same day — and fell for each other exactly five years later.

**INSIDE:** A PRESSURE SITUATION **2**

THE GIFT OF GIVING BLOOD **4**

STARTING FITNESS SEASON RIGHT **5**



**A Perfect Score**

Welcome to the spring/summer edition of *InHealth*. Through these stories it is evident that, at Inova, it's about making sure we provide excellent service and care to each person we serve.

We are very proud to announce that Inova Fairfax Medical Campus recently received a perfect score, five out of five stars, from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, on a comprehensive assessment of 57 quality measures including seven key measures of Patient Safety, Effectiveness of Care and Patient Experience (see page 3). This high rating would not have been achieved if it weren't for our staff's efforts to ensure that we meet our key goals of Exceptional Patient Experience and a Great Place to Work.

With our eye on extraordinary care and collaboration, we have the privilege to witness heart-warming stories such as Taylor Givens and Collin Kobelja's (page 6). These stories remind us that our responsibility goes beyond completing checklists of processes and procedures; they inspire us to continue to work hard so we can see miracles again and again. It's not about just making sure that a heart gets transplanted safely without complications; it's about the human receiving the heart being able to live life fully again.



**PATRICK CHRISTIANSEN, PhD**  
CEO, Inova Fairfax Medical Campus  
Executive Vice President, Inova

WELLNESS |

**A NEW Normal**

Updated blood pressure guidelines encourage earlier **intervention to decrease heart risks**

The American College of Cardiologists (ACC) and the American Heart Association (AHA) recently redefined high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. The first comprehensive update since 2003, these new guidelines introduce a category of hypertension called elevated blood pressure, 120 to 129/<80, which indicates cause for concern. High blood pressure is now defined as 130/80 or higher, with the previous definition at 140/90 or higher. The new normal is less than 120/80.

According to the AHA, a lower definition of high blood pressure is expected to promote earlier preventive care and intervention, such as lifestyle changes

or medication. This should help prevent further increases in blood pressure as well as complications related to hypertension, including heart disease, vascular disease and stroke.

As a result of the new guideline's emphasis on earlier intervention, only a small increase in the number of adults requiring anti-hypertensive medication was expected. However, following the release of the guidelines, the number of U.S. adults diagnosed with hypertension grew from 32 percent to 46 percent. In addition, guideline authors anticipate the prevalence of high blood pressure to triple among men under age 45 and double among women under 45.

**Here's how the new ACC/AHA guidelines break down:**

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic (Upper) mm Hg		Diastolic (Lower) mm Hg
<b>Normal</b>	<b>Less than 120</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>less than 80</b>
<b>Elevated</b>	<b>120-129</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>less than 80</b>
<b>Stage 1 hypertension</b>	<b>130-139</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>between 80-90</b>
<b>Stage 2 hypertension</b>	<b>140 or higher</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>at least 90</b>
<b>Hypertensive crisis*</b>	<b>Higher than 180</b>	<b>and/or</b>	<b>over 120</b>

**\*Patients need prompt changes in medication if there are no other indications of problems, or immediate hospitalization if there are signs of organ damage.**

**A HEART-TO-HEART**

Listen to Henry An Tran, MD, and Christopher deFilippi, MD, discuss blood pressure risk factors and prevention at [inovaheart.org/bp](http://inovaheart.org/bp).

# Spring Into

Learn the signs of stroke

Spring is in full bloom. Why not celebrate life by honoring National Stroke Awareness Month this May?

Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death in the United States, with one stroke-related death occurring about every four minutes. Stroke is also a leading cause of severe disability. Thankfully, it is preventable and largely treatable. But treatment effectiveness often depends on how fast the stroke victim receives medical attention.

“Time is brain,” points out Laura Buhler, RN, facilitator of Inova’s stroke support group, a free monthly program. More brain cells die with every minute you delay treatment, which increases a person’s risk for permanent brain damage, disability or even death.

When an ischemic stroke — the most common type of stroke — occurs, blood clots may block arteries that supply blood to the brain. The gold standard for treating blood clots is tissue plasminogen activator (tPA), which dissolves the blockage and improves blood flow to the brain. In other cases, the procedure of choice is a mechanical thrombectomy, which involves endo-

# ACTION



## FACE

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



## ARMS

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



## SPEECH

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



## TIME

If you observe any of these signs, call 911 immediately.

vascular removal of the blockage. “It’s important to seek medical care with the very first signs of stroke symptoms,” Buhler says. “We can administer tPA, but only within the first three hours of stroke onset — or up to four and a half hours in certain patients. A mechanical thrombectomy may be beneficial within six hours of stroke onset or, for some patients under certain conditions, up to 24 hours of onset.”

While everyone experiences a stroke differently, there are common and easily recognizable symptoms. The Act FAST acronym (see above) is a way to remember them.

## Reduce Your Risk

You have the power to reduce your risk of stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges everyone to begin by making healthy lifestyle choices. This means staying physically active; eating more fruits, vegetables and foods low in sodium and salt; maintaining a healthy weight; and avoiding cigarettes. Properly managing certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, can also help lower risk. Learn more at [inova.org/stroke](http://inova.org/stroke).

# TOP Spot

Inova Fairfax Medical Campus receives highest ranking from federal agency

Three Inova hospitals received five out of five stars — a perfect score — in an annual hospital quality ranking by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Inova Fairfax Medical Campus (IFMC), Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and Inova Mount Vernon Hospital are the first and only hospitals in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area to ever receive the highest ratings from CMS.

**CMS evaluates hospitals on up to 57 quality measures. The seven key measures are:**

- |                                  |                                     |  |   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>1. Outcomes</b> – Mortality   | <b>3. Outcomes</b> – Safety of care | <b>5. Efficiency</b> – Medical imaging | <b>7. Process</b> – Effectiveness of care |
| <b>2. Outcomes</b> – Readmission | <b>4. Patient Experience</b>        | <b>6. Process</b> – Timeliness of care |   |

Among the more than 4,500 U.S. hospitals evaluated, only 337, or 7 percent, received five-star ratings.

“There is no question that the talented and dedicated physicians, nurses and staff at Inova Fairfax Medical Campus deserve five stars,” comments Scott Betzelos, MD, Chief Medical Officer of IFMC. “This recognition by CMS underscores Inova Fairfax Medical Campus’ commitment to quality, patient safety, teamwork and exceptional patient experience every time, every touch.



## Care to Give?

Here are some quick facts about donating:

- You can donate blood starting at age 17, or at 16 with a parental consent form.
- Only 38 percent of the U.S. population is eligible to donate blood and less than 5 percent actually donate.
- You can donate up to six times per year — about every two months.
- Inova Blood Donor Services has donor centers in four locations and operates mobile blood drives on a daily basis throughout the Washington, DC, metro area.

Alexis Carena, here with her son, Griffin, needed a blood donation five years ago after she bled severely during delivery. She now speaks out about the importance of giving blood.



Although women with placenta accreta often require blood transfusions, there are other delivery situations that also necessitate blood use. There are also many other traumatic incidents and medical situations that drive the need for transfusions at Inova, making the hospital's Blood Donor Services a crucial part of saving lives.

"We've been in situations where we've needed 20 units or more for a single

patient," says Barbara Nies, MD, who specializes in maternal-fetal medicine at Inova. "If a woman has a rare blood type, getting a match can be difficult. That's why it's essential that we have the partnerships we do."

Inova Blood Donor Services (IBDS) is part of Blood Centers of America, a network of blood banks that work together to help with critical or urgent needs. Additionally, Inova Blood Donor Services works with the donation-focused organization that Alexis founded called Heroes for Moms.

Blood is unique as a resource because it can't be purchased; it is only available through generous volunteer blood donors, adds Julia Ward, Marketing Manager at Inova Blood Donor Services. That means the donations must be constant to keep up with hospital demand, and IBDS works with local organizations to host blood drives on a daily basis to ensure supplies are adequate, she says.

"There's no substitute for blood," she continues. "And there's always a need. Donating blood truly does save lives."

# LIFE FORCE

Blood donors play a crucial role for range of patients, including new moms

Five years ago, Alexis Carena had an MRI near the end of her first pregnancy to check for complications. A few days later, once the results were in, she was admitted to Inova Fairfax Medical Campus due to placenta accreta, which causes severe bleeding during delivery. She delivered her son soon after.

"A blood donation saved my life," Alexis explains. "If it hadn't been for the people who take the time and effort to donate, I wouldn't be here for my son."

Since giving birth, Alexis has become a passionate advocate for blood donation, particularly for new moms, and is constantly trying to raise awareness about donation opportunities, both through Inova and donation events.

## RED ALERT

To learn more about Inova Blood Donor Services, call **866.256.6372** or visit **inovablood.org**. To find out about blood drives to save mothers' lives, visit **heroesformoms.com**.

# GET BACK IN SHAPE SAFELY

## Inova expert offers tips on avoiding overuse injuries

**A**s the spring weather makes outside exercise more rewarding, plenty of people are hopping off the treadmill and onto the trails. Whether you're returning to form or gearing up to run for the first time, make sure that your enthusiasm doesn't outstrip your abilities. Launching into a workout routine without proper preparation can often put you at risk for overuse injuries such as stress fractures and muscle tears.

Jessica Wertz, DO, a family and sports medicine physician at Inova Sports Medicine, shares some solid get-fit tips:

### START WITH STRENGTH

"Running is great exercise, but your muscles need to support the repetitive stress that the activity demands," Dr. Wertz says. "Prepare with squats and lunges — gradually increasing the number of reps and sets — to strengthen leg muscles."

### START SLOW

As tempting as it might be to go from the couch to a 5K, doing too much too soon can make you vulnerable to injury. Dr. Wertz suggests keeping a training log so that you can increase activity by 10 to 20 percent per week.

### BUILD IN RECOVERY DAYS

"No matter how much you run, you need rest days for your body to recover,"

Dr. Wertz notes. "One or two days per week are ideal, and you don't have to spend them lounging. Pursue active recovery options like yoga, Pilates or swimming."

### MIX IT UP

Among athletes of all ages, Dr. Wertz tends to see overuse injuries in those who specialize in one sport, which means they're repeatedly stressing the same muscles, tendons and joints. To minimize risk, consider some cross-training, such as doing strength training a few times a week to balance out any cardio



Jessica Wertz, DO  
Sports Medicine

work. If you're not sure how to combine them, Dr. Wertz suggests talking with a personal trainer or physical therapist to create a plan.

She adds that overuse injuries tend to show up gradually over time, worsening with more activity. If you're experiencing any nagging pains after activity — especially if the pain lingers after icing and rest — check with your doctor to make sure you're not dealing with something more serious like a stress fracture, or muscle or tendon tear.

## JOINT HEALTH

Learn more solutions to repair joint problems at [inova.org/joint](https://inova.org/joint).

## Treatments for Ankle Problems

For athletes sidelined by chronic ankle problems like arthritis, help is at hand. The Inova Total Ankle Replacement Program brings together a multidisciplinary team for a surgical procedure that treats end-stage ankle arthritis. The surgery preserves motion and significantly reduces joint stress.

Inova also offers non-surgical treatment options and minimally invasive procedures such as arthroscopy to remove damaged cartilage and tissue. Talk to your doctor about what options are most appropriate for your ankle issues. Find out more at [inova.org/ankle](https://inova.org/ankle).

# AGAINST AL

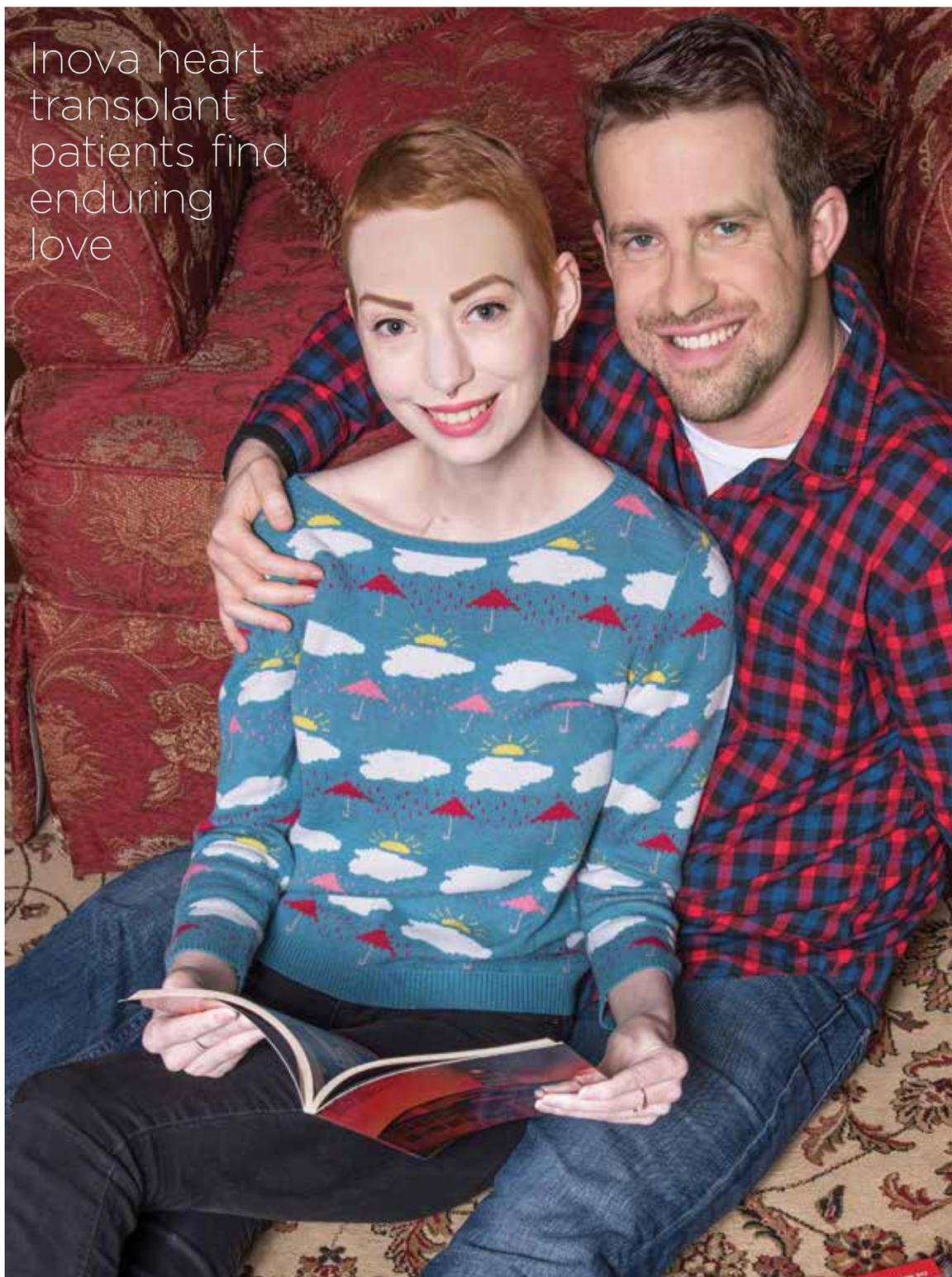
**O**n Taylor Givens and Collin Kobelja's first date, the couple paused their dinner for a medicine break. Both needed to take anti-rejection drugs to help sustain their transplanted hearts.

"It was a weirdly touching moment," recalls Taylor, 24. "To see those parts of ourselves mirrored in someone else was really cool."

Perhaps even more ironic is how the pair's love story sprung from their experiences at Inova, where a heart transplant saved each on June 9, 2011. Rooming just yards away from each other at Inova Fairfax Medical Campus (IFMC), Taylor and Collin were in a race for their lives: Taylor's heart was failing, possibly from a virus, while Collin had been born with a faulty heart and his first transplant was failing decades later. Both were predicted to die within days if donor organs couldn't be found.

The two clung to life while hooked up to ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) machines that supported their heart and lung function — equipment Inova has invested in heavily since 2010. "When you place someone on ECMO, their heart has already died, and this machine is keeping their body alive waiting for another heart to become available. Few people get from needing emergency ECMO to transplantation, just

Inova heart transplant patients find enduring love



# LODDS

## COMPLETE CARDIAC CARE

Located at the Inova Fairfax Medical Campus, Inova Heart and Vascular Institute provides a full spectrum of diagnostic, therapeutic, surgical and interventional cardiac services. To schedule an appointment, call **703.776.4001** or visit **inovaheart.org**.

One might say Taylor Givens and Collin Kobelja are lucky in love. They hope to marry on a future June 9 — the day in 2011 each received a heart transplant.

due to the long wait time for organs in the U.S.," says Shashank Desai, MD, Medical Director, Inova's Heart Failure/Transplant Program. "So the fact that this happened twice in people in the same 24 hours at Inova Fairfax Hospital, who are now together, is more miraculous."

### A LIGHTNING STRIKE

In 1986, Inova established the first heart transplant program in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and has since performed hundreds of heart transplants. Between 20 and 25 heart transplants are done at IFMC each year, Dr. Desai says, a consistently higher volume than most centers in the region.

Taylor and Collin, 17 and 22 at the time, were too sick to interact meaningfully during their hospitalizations, although their parents had met. They later connected on social media, and Taylor was aware of Collin's subsequent move to California and his third heart transplant, which he received in late 2012.

It wasn't until June 9, 2016 — exactly five years after their Inova transplants — that sparks finally flew between the two. Visiting the area, Collin texted Taylor to ask if their heart transplant team members were still around. Taylor, who happened to be at IFMC awaiting discharge after a tonsillectomy, told Collin to stop by her hospital room.

"Afterwards, it kind of felt like both of us got struck

by lightning," Taylor says. "Looking back now, we see everything that had to go wrong for us to be together."

"I told her that we should hang out — and not in a hospital room!" says Collin, now 29. "Five days later, we met for dinner."

### EYE ON THE FUTURE

Anchored by their shared experiences, the couple intends to marry one day — symbolically on a June 9. And they continue to prove their mettle during ongoing challenges. Taylor is undergoing treatment at Inova for Burkitt lymphoma, a rare complication arising from her heart donor's exposure to the Epstein-Barr virus. Typically, the virus only causes mononucleosis, but for immunosuppressed patients, it can trigger lymphoma.

Collin, who moved back to the Bethesda area last summer, has been able to support his sweetheart throughout the ordeal, which has included surgery and chemotherapy. Her prognosis is extremely good.

"A lot of 'us' is bad things happening but with really good timing and good outcomes," jokes Taylor. As she continues to heal, the pair continues to advocate for organ donation, eyeing a healthy future while fully aware that life rarely provides a neat and tidy outcome.

"The whole point of having a transplant is just so you can live your life. Go make it as normal or not-normal as you want," Collin says. "Yes,

## Don't Ignore These Heart Attack Signs

Heart attacks don't always announce themselves with dramatic symptoms. Sometimes, even mild pain or discomfort in your chest — especially if it gradually worsens — can signal this condition, which affects 735,000 Americans each year. Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, the American Heart Association recommends calling 911 if you or a loved one feels:

- Chest discomfort such as pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- Discomfort or pain in one or both arms, the neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath, either with or without chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting or lightheadedness
- Breaking out in a cold sweat

you're different, you're special in a way ... but that's not how I think about it. We're just grateful to be alive and have a relationship where we can love each other."

Dr. Desai says the couple's cases both exemplify the type of teamwork Inova clinicians embrace. "From complete opposite ends of the spectrum, these two came to the same point: needing us to buy them time to get a transplant," Dr. Desai recalls. "They have the type of story that inspires our staff to do what they do and keeps us going."

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](http://inova.org).

If you do not wish to receive future mailings from Inova, please contact us at 703.972.2044 or [inova.org/unsubscribe](http://inova.org/unsubscribe).



8110 Gatehouse Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042

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

IHS-076-IFH

NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
INOVA HEALTH  
SYSTEM

## EVENTS

# Make a RUN for It!

StarKid 5K to be held  
on June 3

It's time to lace  
up your sneakers!

The Inova Children's Hospital StarKid 5K and Family Fun Run will take place Sunday, June 3, 2018, at the Fairfax Corner Shopping Center.

Now in its 12th year, the StarKid 5K benefits Inova Children's Hospital, which provides lifesaving care in a kid-friendly environment close to home. Since its inception, the StarKid 5K has raised more than \$1 million for the hospital — all thanks to the generosity of our community.

The StarKid 5K is much more than a race. Besides the main event, there is a shorter "fun run" for the littlest runners in attendance and activities such as face painting and music that are perfect for the entire family. Strollers and four-legged friends are welcome too. To learn more or to register to participate, visit [inova.org/5K](http://inova.org/5K). We hope to see you there!



Do quality ratings really matter?  
They do when you are the patient.



Only Inova received the highest ratings  
for quality from CMS.

We're honored to be the first and only DC metro area hospitals awarded five out of five stars by CMS, an independent government agency. This recognition was earned through a rigorous analysis of 57 patient care standards that we exceed every day. It's Inova's ongoing commitment to personalized medicine that leads to better outcomes for our patients. To learn more, visit [inova.org/fivestarhealth](http://inova.org/fivestarhealth).



Inova Fairfax Medical Campus • 3300 Gallows Road, Falls Church, VA 22042 • 703.776.4001

### 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.



### Subscribe Now!

Sign up to  
receive e-newsletters  
about health topics  
and programs at  
[inova.org/subscribe](http://inova.org/subscribe).



### Ask the Expert

Find a FREE  
Ask the Expert lecture  
on a health topic that  
interests you at [inova.org/AskTheExpert](http://inova.org/AskTheExpert).



### Baby Time

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

