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Atlantic General Hospital & Atlantic General Health System



New Gudelsky Family Medical Center to bring expanded outpatient surgery care to the community ...p 4

Helping patients and our community navigate mental and behavioral health challenges ... p 6

Online Appointment Scheduling Now Available... p 16

Presidents' Letter

As we approach the final weeks of 2021, it is important for us to reflect on all of the challenges we have faced as a community, and recognize the magnitude of our strength when we come together as a whole.

With a lingering pandemic that has brought new waves of COVID infection and hospitalization, this year has not been easy. But even through these immensely difficult times, the community has illuminated bright spots of unmatched compassion, empathy and – most importantly – unity.

We are proud to be your **care.givers**.

This COVID-19 pandemic has given Atlantic General Hospital and Health Systems the opportunity to closely observe and analyze the needs of those we serve. This insight allowed us to make necessary changes in order to better provide accessible, high-quality care to those who need it most. Whether modifying existing services or instituting new initiatives, every move we make as an organization revolves around one thing: the health and well-being of our community.

Our dedicated staff has been on the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,

and we have witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of the illness. While the physical complications associated with the virus are obvious to most, the less tangible implications of this pandemic can be overlooked: deteriorating mental health.

Fear, grief and isolation have reached extraordinary levels due to COVID-19, and the negative effects associated with enduring these stressors long-term have become apparent. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, a CDC survey from June 2020 reported, “31% of respondents reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, 13% reported having started or increased substance use, 26% reported stress-related symptoms, and 11% reported having serious thoughts of suicide in the past 30 days.”

This is layered on top of the already-high incidence of depression and anxiety and other mental health illness that existed in pre-pandemic years.

Taking the necessary steps to address mental health issues can be an intimidating and stressful experience. In June of this year, we implemented an innovative integrated behavioral health program in our primary care offices to ease the process as much as we can.

With the launch of the new program, it is now possible to schedule video visits with our behavioral health specialists right from any one of our many primary care offices. That means patients of our provider practices in Ocean View, DE or Pocomoke, MD no longer have to travel the extra miles to our Behavioral Health Center in Berlin. A therapy session or medication check-up is just a button-click away.

In January 2022, our Behavioral Health Center will begin providing walk-in services to those in acute distress. Our trained specialists will provide immediate care for these patients, facilitating the transfer to higher levels of care or connecting them, as needed, to community resources.

With the goal of providing accessible, optimized health care in mind,

We are working towards finalizing arrangements for the construction of the

Gudelsky Family Medical Center, which will provide multispecialty outpatient surgery. We would like to thank the Gudelsky family and all Campaign for the Future donors for making this project a reality. And, to all of our donors: We could not do what we do every day without you. Thank you!

As the tumultuous year of 2021 comes to a close, we would also like to take this opportunity to recognize and express our sincere gratitude for our associates and medical staff. Their hard work, dedication and commitment to serving our community throughout this pandemic has been nothing short of incredible. Thus far, our staff has treated more than 500 COVID-positive inpatients and administered more than 12,600 doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Their selfless service has had a direct impact on moving us forward through this pandemic, and we are truly grateful.



Sally Dowling, MD



Kim Justice

Co-interim President/CEOs
ATLANTIC GENERAL HOSPITAL

Community Impact

Supporting the Local Economy and Our Quality of Life

- More than 940 year-round staff positions for local residents
- Total payroll of nearly \$63 million, which is spent in the communities we serve in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia
- A medical staff of 238 includes specialists in:
 - Anesthesiology/pain management
 - Cardiology
 - Dermatology
 - Emergency medicine
 - Endocrinology
 - Family practice
 - Gastroenterology
 - General surgery
 - Gynecology
 - Hospitalist services
 - Infectious diseases
 - Intensivist services
 - Internal medicine
 - Nephrology
 - Neurodevelopmental disabilities
 - Neurology
 - Nurse practitioner services
 - Oncology/hematology
 - Ophthalmology
 - Orthopedics
 - Pediatrics
 - Physician assistants
 - Psychiatry
 - Pulmonology
 - Radiology
 - Rheumatology
 - Urology

Admissions	2,582
Average Length of Stay (days).....	4.4
Patient Days of Care	11,219
Emergency Visits	28,940
Laboratory Visits (outpatient)	21,331
Radiology Visits (outpatient)	25,386
Surgeries (inpatient/outpatient)	5,998
Physician Visits (AGHS)	118,649
Cardiology/Pulmonary	3,084
EKG/EEG visits (outpatient)	

AGH/HS

Atlantic General Health System Locations

(Outpatient physician offices providing family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, bariatrics, gynecology, pediatrics, neurology, rheumatology, oncology, endocrinology, urology and/or pulmonology)

- Berlin
- Ocean City
- Ocean Pines
- Ocean View
- Pocomoke
- Selbyville
- West Fenwick
- West Ocean City



Providing 7-day-a-week walk-in urgent care services.

- **Ocean City** *(Monday-Friday in off season)*

Under construction ...



New Gudelsky Family Medical Center to bring expanded outpatient services to the community

The Gudelsky Family Medical Center will allow for expansion of surgical services available in Worcester County, while also providing a more cost-effective location for planned outpatient procedures.

- Three procedure rooms and one surgery suite will be shifted from the surgery department within Atlantic General Hospital to the new Center, built larger to accommodate the equipment, instrumentation and sterile field zones required for today's more complex procedures. The Center will also house an additional operating room.
- Construction will incorporate best practice and progressive surgical planning strategies, including improved lighting, a variety of private and semi-private pre- and post-operative patient care stations, plus discharge areas responding to the specific needs of patients.
- The Center will not be subject to rate regulation by the state of Maryland, and Atlantic General Hospital and Health System will be able to provide needed services in a less costly environment. This means that patients who are restricted to stand-alone surgery centers by their health insurance plans will now have a cost-effective option for their care – close to home. Until the Gudelsky Family Medical Center opens, patients must either forgo care due to inconvenience, or undertake traveling 20 miles or further to obtain these services.

Children ages 5 – 11 can now get a COVID-19 Vaccine

In early November, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years. Now that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended its use, kids in this age group can start getting shots right away. Here are some key questions and answers about the COVID-19 vaccine for younger kids.

Does it work?

Yes. The Pfizer vaccine is nearly 91% effective in preventing COVID-19 in young children. This is similar to adult vaccines.

Is the dose different?

Yes. It is one-third the adult dose. (By the way, providers also use smaller needles to give this vaccine.)

How many shots do kids need?

Kids need two doses (three weeks apart) for full protection.

Is the vaccine safe?

It is. The Pfizer vaccine was studied in more than 3,000 children and found to be safe. The FDA OK'd the vaccine for emergency use in younger kids after concluding that the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the known and potential risks.

Are there any side effects?

Some kids have no side effects. Others may have mild side effects that last one or two days. The most common reactions include a sore arm, tiredness or a headache. This is normal. Serious side effects (such as severe allergic reactions) are rare with COVID-19 vaccines. No children ages 5 to 11 in the vaccine trial had a serious side effect.

Why should kids get the vaccine?

- It protects their health. Although COVID-19 is often more serious in adults than in children, kids can get very sick. About 1.9 million kids between ages 5 and 11 have been infected since the start of the pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics reports. Of these, more than 8,300 have been hospitalized, and 94 have died.
- It helps keep them in school and social activities that have been disrupted by the pandemic. Such activities are important to children's education and emotional well-being.
- It slows the spread of COVID-19 to families and communities.

When and where can kids get the shot?

The vaccine is readily available in our community. Local pharmacies have added pediatric appointments for the vaccine and the local health departments and Atlantic General Hospital are offering clinics near you. Visit www.agh.care/vaccine for the latest information about upcoming clinics.

How can I learn more?

Please talk with your child's healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about the vaccine. You can also access links to information from the CDC by visiting www.agh.care/vaccine.

- The shift to providing same-day surgery outside the hospital campus will allow for enlargement of the three remaining suites in the hospital to better accommodate laparoscopic surgery and other advanced procedures.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the Gudelsky family, our *Campaign for the Future* donors, and all others who have been involved in funding and bringing this important project to fruition. We are grateful for your generosity of spirit! ●



Spotlight on Mental Health

Helping patients and our community navigate mental and behavioral health challenges.

It's important to recognize that achieving good health is more than just physical. Research shows that nearly one in five adults are living with a mental condition that affects their ability to lead fulfilling lives.

The Atlantic General Behavioral Health Center exists to provide the services that people need. These wide-ranging services include:

- Developmental health telemedicine through Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Psychiatric counseling and medication management services of Dr. Bryce Blanton, Nurse Practitioner Diane Skolka, and Sheppard Pratt telehealth providers
- The integrated behavioral health program
- TRIBE behavioral health urgent care services

Video Visits

Also offered are video visits with our behavioral health specialists, held right in your primary care provider's office.

Thanks to new communications technology plus our integrated behavioral health services program, you don't have to travel the extra miles to receive care at our behavioral health center in Berlin. Instead, if your primary care provider is part of Atlantic General Health System, you can take advantage of this important and valuable service.

Here's how the video visits program works:

- If you are a new patient, please call the Atlantic General Behavioral Health Center at **410-641-3340**. They will assist you with booking your initial appointment with board certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Diane Skolka, and collecting any necessary information for our records.

- On the date of your appointment, go to your AGHS primary care provider's office 15 minutes prior to your appointment time.
- The staff will escort you to the office's telehealth room and set up the video connection for your private consultation with Diane Skolka.
- For future visits, you will schedule your behavioral health appointments through the front desk at your primary care provider's office. These video visits are covered by most insurances – just like an in-person appointment.

This program is funded in part through support from the Rural Maryland Council.



Walk-in Behavioral Health for Individuals in Crisis

Beginning in January 2022, a new walk-in service for individuals in acute distress will be offered at Atlantic General's Behavioral Health Center, through the TRIBE partnership. It will include:

- An initial assessment by a nurse and social worker, with therapy sessions available
- Tele-visits with mental health specialists, as needed
- Real-time connection with needed resources, provided by agencies located onsite
- Transfers to a higher level of care, if needed
- Insurance and financial counseling services available for uninsured or under-insured patients.

What is TRIBE?

TRIBE stands for **Tri-County Behavioral Health Engagement** – a newly formed regional partnership between Atlantic General Hospital, TidalHealth Peninsula Regional, plus nine behavioral health community partner agencies with the mission to provide behavioral health urgent care centers or crisis stabilization centers to the community.

For more information about the services of the Atlantic General Behavioral Health Center or to schedule an appointment, please call us at **410-641-3340**. ●



Meet Diane Skolka, PMHNP Integrated Behavioral Health Provider

Diane Skolka, ANCC board certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), is the dedicated provider for integrated behavioral health services video visit appointments.

Diane provides diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders, including but not limited to depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, PTSD, ADD/ADHD, and personality disorders, with the use of medication and therapy, as appropriate.

Diane's philosophy is based on facilitating positive personal change and growth. She incorporates a "whole person" approach to care with respect to the mind-body connection.

Diane joined Atlantic General Health System in November 2020 to provide psychiatric and behavioral health care to adult patients. Prior to becoming a nurse practitioner, Diane had 19 years of experience as a registered nurse. She has a background in Critical Care/Post Anesthesia Care in addition to her role as a Patient Care Coordinator in Case Management/Population Health. Diane earned her bachelor's degree in nursing at Wilmington University and her master's degree in PMHNP studies at Eastern Kentucky University.



Atlantic General Now Offers Extended Hours for Pediatric Services

We all know that life with kids is always busy and bustling – and it's even busier now that school has started again.

We're pleased to announce that nurse practitioner **Carrie Dawes** is now offering appointments until 7 pm on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Call Atlantic General Pediatrics at **443-728-1004** to schedule your next appointment during these extended hours. ●



Carrie Dawes, CPNP
Certified Pediatric Nurse
Practitioner

2021 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

CONTINUING PROGRESS *on Multiple Fronts*

Noteworthy initiatives that were undertaken in Fiscal Year 2021 addressed several key strategic priorities.

Primary Care Behavioral Health

Approximately half of all patients seeking primary care are dealing with an underlying mental health condition that is either contributing to or complicating a physical illness. In fact, 60% of behavioral health illnesses are treated in primary care. Implementing an integrated behavioral health model increases access to behavioral health services and helps neutralize objections to care related to the stigma associated with mental illness.

Through the use of telehealth technology, the integrated behavioral health program at Atlantic General is allowing patients to receive the care they need right in their primary care doctor's office. Embedding this service in the primary care office allows providers to refer patients with an acute behavioral health concern for same-day care. It also makes it easier for individuals who live in southern Worcester County or in Sussex County to access the care they need without undertaking additional travel to Berlin, where the Behavioral Health Center is located. This program launched in June 2021.

Mobile Integrated Community Health

As much as every patient's health concern is valid, non-urgent calls to 911 often result in a strain on EMS crews – and expensive treatment for patients who could be better cared for in a different setting.

In fiscal year 2021, Atlantic General completed work with Worcester County EMS, Worcester Commission on Aging, Veterans Affairs, local police departments and Worcester County Health Department to develop a mobile integrated health unit that provides a home assessment for individuals who frequently make non-

urgent calls to 911, in order to coordinate care and connect them with appropriate community resources and to help them attain optimal quality of life while remaining at home.

Most of the interventions to-date are related to transportation, medication, and addressing safety concerns. The program continues as the participating agencies seek additional grants and a sustainable funding model.

Infectious Disease Surveillance Program

Until blood samples and lab cultures are analyzed – which typically takes several hours – a patient's care team must rely on symptoms and patient history to determine the immediate course of treatment. But with the help of infectious disease surveillance technology, those results can now be delivered electronically to the attending physician within seconds of being generated. This shortens the response time for properly isolating any patient found to have a contagious infection, and it also allows the physician to fine-tune medication therapies. This also helps reduce the risk of hospital-acquired infections and strengthens AGH's antibiotic stewardship efforts.

Additionally, the technology makes it easier to detect and analyze trends in hospital-acquired infections that can sometimes be missed with a traditional manual process, thereby making quality improvement efforts more effective and successful.

The Infectious Disease Surveillance Program is expected to be in place and fully operational by the end of the 2021 calendar year. ●

2022 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

NEW PRIORITIES

Underscore Our Continuing Commitment to Community Health

Ambient Technology

With the implementation of “ambient technology” in physician practices – electronic environments that are sensitive and responsive to the presence of people – providers will be freed from copious documentation currently required on their computers. While documentation is necessary to accurately capture medical histories and current issues that patients may be verbally describing, computer use can seem intrusive—and sometimes even interfere with the patient-provider connection. Secure, private audio devices with language recognition technology will soon replace the bulk of the typed notes entered into a patient’s record.

For patients, this means more time having a natural, meaningful exchange with their provider. It also means less time waiting in the exam room as providers finish documentation before seeing their next patient, as well as freeing up more appointment times. For healthcare providers, it means taking the heavy load of computer documentation off their shoulders, resulting in better job satisfaction and an improved work/life balance.

Osteoporosis Clinic

Osteoporosis affects approximately 5.3 million adults aged 50 years and older in the United States – and as the population ages this is predicted to increase by as much as 50% by 2025. A disability related to osteoporosis impacts quality of life, and restricts activities of

daily living as well as the ability to work. Barriers to appropriate prevention and intervention further complicate efforts to treat this clinically silent condition.

The development of an osteoporosis clinic for mature adults who are identified as high risk for falls and fractures is continuing from Fiscal Year 2021. Creating an osteoporosis clinic will provide multiple services in one setting that patients can access during a single visit. The clinic’s services will encompass risk assessment, bone densitometry, primary and specialty care provider collaboration, multidisciplinary treatment plans, and nutrition and fall prevention programs.

Mobile Patient Experience

With our already-fast pace of life getting even faster, juggling daily aspects of work and home life can be challenging for many people. Research shows that a smartphone is in almost everyone’s pocket – and many people have used that technology to help make managing their health and keeping up with medical care activities a little easier.

Over the past 12 months, AGH has enhanced the mobile patient experience so that people can receive text reminders for appointments, cancel or reschedule appointments, receive discharge instructions and care summaries, and stay connected after an inpatient stay so that the care team can intervene quickly to keep patients on the path to recovery – all via direct message. And, there’s no

need to register for a FollowMyHealth patient portal account.

This strategic initiative is continuing into 2022. Starting this fall, all Atlantic General Health System patients will have the option to text their doctor’s office with a request to be placed on a waitlist for an earlier appointment time. Additionally, once they have arrived for their appointment, they can check in on their mobile phone, verify their insurance information on record, and process any co-pays needed – right from their phone.

School-Based Telehealth

This initiative, originally begun in Fiscal Year 2020, continues into the new fiscal year as delays due to the global COVID-19 pandemic have interrupted school operations. A large number of residents in southern Worcester County – Pocomoke City in particular – face multiple barriers to appropriate health care due to factors such as cost, the lack of transportation and a dearth of health care providers. School-based telemedicine is crucial to the Pocomoke High School population. Immediate access to such resources will improve the health of the student body as well as overall attendance and academic outcomes.

Activities continue with the Worcester County Public Schools to bring this initiative to fruition at Pocomoke High School – with an anticipated launch on or before January 2022. ●

New Faces



As the new **Director of Nursing for Atlantic General Health System, Shelly Geis, BSN, RN, RRT**, is responsible for operations in the health system's 20 primary care and specialty provider offices. Shelly has a diverse

background, having begun her health care career as a respiratory therapist before moving to bariatric program management at Atlantic General Hospital and then Nanticoke Memorial Hospital where she was responsible for spearheading the programs' national bariatric accreditations. Shelly comes back to Atlantic General after holding positions as Respiratory Manager at Saint Elizabeth Healthcare, and Nurse Manager at Encompass Health in the Cincinnati area. Shelly earned her Bachelor of Nursing at Walden University, graduating Cum Laude, and is currently working toward her Master of Nursing in Executive Leadership with an emphasis in Risk Management at Walden University. Shelly resides in Berlin, Maryland, with her husband and is looking forward to continuing quality care in the community.



Margo Gill, MD, joined Atlantic General Health System (AGHS) in September 2021 to provide women's health – including general gynecology and primary care – for the Berlin and Ocean City areas. Dr. Gill provides care for pediatric, adolescent and adult women and has

a special interest in sexual health. Dr. Gill takes a holistic and inclusive approach to patient care, with a focus on eliminating the health inequities of the more marginalized populations in our community. Her diverse experience allows her to care for a wide range of patients.

Dr. Gill earned her medical degree at University of Maryland School of Medicine in 2005 and completed her residency in family medicine at the Barre Family Health Center, part of University of Massachusetts Memorial Health System. Prior to joining AGHS, Dr. Gill practiced medicine at Forest Lakes Family Medicine in Charlottesville, VA and served as a faculty physician for the Family Health Center of Worcester in Worcester, MA. She is currently accepting new patients for women's health at Atlantic General Women's Health in West Ocean City. **Appointments can be made by calling 443-728-1050.**



Patricia Morales, CRNP, joined Atlantic General Health System in September 2021 from Nanticoke Physician Network's Diabetes and Endocrinology Center, where she cared for patients with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, thyroid

conditions, polycystic ovary syndrome and other endocrine conditions.

Patricia has been a member of Delmarva's medical community for nearly a decade, with a background in diabetes and endocrinology as well as urgent care and family medicine. She received her Bachelor of Science in nursing at Salisbury University School of Nursing in 2006 – subsequently working as an ER nurse at Peninsula Regional Medical Center while earning her Master of Science in nursing at Salisbury University and her nurse practitioner certificate. Patricia also holds a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from Universidad de Santiago de Chile. She is board certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and is certified as a medical interpreter for Spanish speaking patients. Patricia is currently accepting patients with diabetes and thyroid conditions at the Atlantic General Diabetes and Endocrinology Center. **Appointments can be made by calling 410-208-9761.**



Family practitioner **Ellen Rowe, MD**, is a native of Sussex County. She received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Health Services and Medical Ethics from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, where she also

played Division 1 Field Hockey for four years. Dr. Rowe received a Master of Science in Biomedical Science from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2014. She graduated from St. George's University School of Medicine in 2018, where she was president of the Women in Medicine organization and a member of the Gold Humanism Honor Society. She completed her residency at VCU-Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News, VA. Dr. Rowe is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Medical Association, the American Medical Women's Association and the American College of Physicians. She is board certified in Family Medicine. Dr. Rowe provides care at Atlantic General Primary Care in West Fenwick, DE, and Pocomoke, MD and is currently accepting new patients. **To schedule an appointment, please call 302-564-0004.**

Board Appointments



Tina Simmons, MBA, BSN, Director of Population Health for Atlantic General Hospital and Health System, is responsible for education and outreach to improve

health literacy and outcomes for the communities we serve. She joined Atlantic General in 2019 as Director of Nursing for the health system's more than 20 primary care and specialty practices.

Tina has an extensive background in the areas of quality, performance improvement, compliance, and clinical documentation improvement – having worked within the University of Maryland Medical System in a variety of roles, and as Director of Quality for Southeast Georgia Health System. She began her career as a registered nurse in the emergency department within MedStar Health System. Tina earned her Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Goucher College and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from University of Maryland School of Nursing before completing an MBA at University of Maryland University College. Tina resides in Ocean City with her husband, sons and the family dogs.



Heather Snyder, BSN, RN, joined Atlantic General Hospital and Health System in September 2021 as Manager of Employee Health and Infection

Control. Heather has 25 years of nursing experience, most recently at Lancaster General Hospital/Penn Medicine, where she held various education, infection prevention, leadership and population health roles. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Towson University, and is completing her Master of Science in Nursing Education from the Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences. Among her other accomplishments, she is Lean Management Systems Certified. ●



Steve Green joined the Atlantic General Hospital Foundation in 2012, becoming a Board member in 2014. After serving as chair of the Membership Committee for seven years and Foundation Vice chair for two years, Steve is now the chair of the Foundation and, thereby, a member of the hospital Board of Trustees. Steve has been the publisher and editor of *The Dispatch* newspaper for 24 years. Away from the office, Steve can be found with his family on the beach, swimming in any type of water, or cheering from the sidelines at his kids' sports games and activities.



Aaron Finney was appointed to the Atlantic General Hospital Board of Trustees in mid-2020 and now serves on the Finance Committee and the Information Technology Steering Committee. A native of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Aaron returned to the area with his family to live in Ocean Pines. He is President and CEO of TRGroup, Inc., a United States SBA-certified information technology and security consulting firm. Aaron began supporting the hospital as an AGH Foundation member, before serving on the Foundation Board of Directors for six years.



Annette Wallace was appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2021. She has taught and served in administrator roles at Worcester County Public Schools since 2003. Annette began her career as a math teacher at Stephen Decatur High School, and went on to become principal of Pocomoke High School in 2012 and Chief Operating and Academic Officer for grades 9-12 at the Worcester County Board of Education in 2018. Annette is also an adjunct professor for graduate programs at Salisbury University and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Annette lives in her hometown of Snow Hill, where she is a lifelong member and Sunday school teacher at Spence Baptist Church.



Dr. Pamela Zorn was appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2021. She worked as an emergency physician for Emergency Service Associates, P.A. from 1991 until retirement in 2017. During that time she served a year as medical director of the emergency department at Atlantic General Hospital and at McCready Health. She has also been involved in volunteering with Atlantic United Methodist Church, the Shepherd's Crook Food Pantry, and Ocean City's Cold Weather Shelter. She is a member of Worcester County's Homeless Outreach Team. Dr. Zorn moved to Berlin in 1991 where she raised her three children. Today she resides in Berlin with her husband, James Almand, founding chairman of Atlantic General Hospital Corporation and Board Chairman from 1989 to 1995. ●

Awards & Recognition

AGH Shines in *Coastal Style* Magazine's Best Of Readers' Poll



Nettie Widgeon, RN

The readers of *Coastal Style* magazine have selected three AGH medical providers and one of our nursing professionals – **Nettie Widgeon, RN** – as among the Best on the Eastern Shore!

In addition to Widgeon, the three AGH medical staff so also recognized:

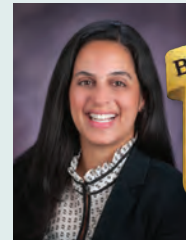
- **Lisa Bayles, DNP** (*Best Of* OB/GYN)
- **Anita Pascucci, DO** (*Best Of* pediatrician)
- **Alae Zarif, MD** (*Best Of* general surgeon)

Moreover, *Coastal Style* readers bestowed the very special distinction of Health-care Hero on the **entire staff of Atlantic General Hospital and Health System**.

Winning the *Coastal Style* Best Of Readers' Poll is widely regarded as one of the most prestigious media awards in the region. Congratulations to all!



Lisa Bayles, DNP



Anita Pascucci, DO



Alae Zarif, MD

AGH Achieves Wellness Exemplar Distinction

Atlantic General Hospital has received **Wellness Exemplar** distinction in the 2021 recognition program for Healthiest Maryland Businesses (HMB). Worksites are evaluated based on their Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Worksite Health Scorecard, in addition to other submitted materials.

The Wellness Exemplar distinction is awarded to businesses that have implemented well-established worksite

wellness practices that promote a culture of health at all levels. The successful efforts of these businesses are guided by workplace health improvement plans that implement strategies across four key categories of action including policy, programming, benefits, and environmental supports. ●



Nicole Morris Presents at Wellness Symposium

Nicole Morris, RN, was selected to participate in a panel discussion held at the 11th Annual Maryland Workplace Health & Wellness Symposium on September 15, 2021. She was part of a panel that presented ***Staying Healthy in the COVID Era: Sustainable Workplace Wellness Strategies***. Congratulations to Niki and all the panelists! ●

Congratulations!



To All Our Staff:
You are *truly* health care heroes!



AGH Earns *Get With The Guidelines*®-Stroke Quality Achievement Award from the American Heart Association

AGH's Gold Plus award recognizes its commitment to ensuring that stroke patients receive appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines.

Many people don't realize that stroke is the fifth highest cause of death in the United States – and a leading cause of adult disability as well. Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability, and speeding up recovery times.

Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke was developed by the American Heart Association to assist healthcare professionals by providing the most up-to-date, research-based guidelines for treating stroke patients. Each year, program participants apply for award recognition by demonstrating how they

have committed to providing quality care for stroke patients. In addition to following the treatment guidelines, AGH also provides education to patients to help them manage their health and rehabilitation once at home.

"We're very pleased to recognize Atlantic General Hospital for its extraordinary commitment to stroke care," said Lee H. Schwamm, MD, the national chairperson of the Quality Oversight Committee who is also Executive Vice Chair of Neurology and Director of Acute Stroke Services at Massachusetts General Hospital, in

Boston. "Research has shown that hospitals adhering to clinical measures through the *Get With The Guidelines* quality improvement initiative often see fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates," he noted.

This is the third year that AGH has been recognized with the *Gold Plus* award for its stroke treatment services. ●



Awards & Recognition

Atlantic General Receives Most Wired Hospital Award



It's the sixth year of recognition for AGH.

Atlantic General Hospital has earned the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives' **2021 Digital Health Most Wired** recognition as a certified Level 8 institution, receiving two quality awards for the Acute Care and Ambulatory settings.

This year's recognition is the sixth time in recent years that AGH has been named a Most Wired organization – recognized for its successful application of information technology solutions that positively impact the quality and safety of care, as well as improving the overall patient and family experience.

CHIME's *Most Wired* program conducts annual surveys to assess how effectively health care organizations are applying core and advanced technologies to their clinical and business programs in order to improve care for their patients.

"We're honored to have received *Most Wired* recognition once again," says Jonathan Bauer, AGH's Vice President of Information Systems. "It takes hard work and dedication from our IT team, medical staff, plus employees from the front lines to the executive suite to implement information technology initiatives that improve the quality of the care we commit to deliver every day."

A total of 36,674 organizations were represented in the *2021 Most Wired* program. Surveys assessed the adoption, integration and impact of technologies by scoring the degree of advancement in seven separate segments (infrastructure, security, administrative/supply chain, analytics/

Achieving Level 8 status in the 2021 Most Wired surveys places AGH among a select group of U.S. hospitals so recognized.

data management, interoperability/ population health, patient engagement, and clinical quality/safety).

Each participating organization received a customized benchmarking report along with certification based on their overall performance – with Level 10 being the highest certification level possible. AGH's quality awards and Level 8 certification reflects continuous improvement in its ratings over time. ●



Allergies? ... or COVID?

Here's how to tell them apart.

In the past, when allergies flared up you might have blamed ragweed or mold. But these days, you have another possibility to think about. Could it be COVID-19?

The fact is, COVID-19 and allergies can have similar symptoms. But there are a few ways to tell the two apart.

How they may be similar ...

- A runny or stuffy nose, headache, and fatigue can occur with both allergies and COVID-19.
- People with allergies sometimes have asthma, too. If so, their allergies may trigger COVID-like symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath.
- Some people with allergies can even seem to lose their sense of taste or smell – another classic COVID-19 symptom – due to a stuffy nose.

How they're different ...

Some allergy symptoms rarely, if ever, occur with COVID-19. So they can give you important clues as to what's going on. For instance, you're more likely to be dealing with allergies if you have:

- Sneezing
- Itchy, watery eyes
- An itch in your nose, on the roof of your mouth, or in your throat

Likewise, according to information from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, the following COVID-19 symptoms typically do not occur with allergies:

- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea

Of course, it's always a good idea to contact your doctor if you have any COVID-19 symptoms (especially a fever or cough), or any other symptoms that concern you. You may need to take a COVID-19 test to rule out a coronavirus diagnosis.

Tips for Feeling Better

For allergies, there's actually a lot you can do to keep them in check. For instance, you may be able to reduce your allergy symptoms by lowering your exposure to the things that trigger them for you. In the spring and fall seasons that's often pollens ... but in the winter, it can be mold or other airborne substances.

Taking steps like these can help:

- Remove and discard shower curtains, wallpaper or carpeting that show evidence of mold.
- To help control dust mites and mold, use a dehumidifier to keep the humidity in your home below 50%.
- Use a HEPA air filter to clean dust from the air.
- Wash bedding in hot water (130° F) each week.
- Use allergen-proof covers on mattresses, pillows and comforters.
- If you have pet allergies, don't let your furry friends in the bedroom

– and give them a bath once a week to cut down on loose hair and dander.

- Don't place wood in the fireplace until you're ready to burn it, so pollens and mold stay outside.

In addition to these steps, you also can ask your doctor about over-the-counter and prescription medicines to help ease allergy symptoms. ●



Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

If you haven't received a COVID-19 vaccine yet, it isn't too late to protect yourself and your loved ones! AGHRx RediScripts Pharmacy offers the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines daily, Monday – Friday. Third doses as well as boosters are available.

You can register for your shot by visiting www.agh.care/vaccine, or simply scan the QR code below. ●



Upcoming Events

Virtual Walk with a Doc – educate, exercise, empower

3rd Saturday of every month – 9 a.m.

[facebook.com/AtlanticGeneralHospital](https://www.facebook.com/AtlanticGeneralHospital)

Join us for our virtual **Walk with a Doc** the third Saturday morning of every month on the Atlantic General Hospital Facebook page, where there is a short presentation by a member of our medical or clinical staff on a current health topic. Then, walk wherever you like for the remainder of the hour. Share your post-walk selfies on social media with the hashtag **#walkedwithagh**.

Diabetes Support Group

First Wednesday of every month • 7 – 8 p.m.

Ocean Pines Library

The group provides discussion, education, and a speaker on the topic of diabetes. We will be meeting in-person at the Ocean Pines library. An online Zoom call option is available as well.

For more information or to request the Zoom call link, please contact Darlene Jameson at: **410-208-9761** or djameson@atlanticgeneral.org.

Parkinson's Support Group

Second Tuesday of every month • 3:15 – 4 p.m.

Stansell House at Coastal Hospice, Ocean Pines

For individuals suffering from Parkinson's, as well as their caregivers. Group provides discussions and mutual support, as well as education on exercise, nutrition, coping techniques, medications, and developments in treatment. For more information, contact Kay Kinnikin at **410-641-4765** or kkinnikin@atlanticgeneral.org.

CPAP Mask Fitting – appointment necessary

1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month

Atlantic General Hospital Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center, Berlin

Atlantic General Hospital's Sleep Disorders Diagnostic Center hosts a mask-fitting clinic for patients who are having trouble adjusting to their CPAP equipment. This is a FREE service, but you must call ahead to set up an appointment. To schedule, contact Robin Rohlfing at **410-641-9726**.

T.O.P.S. of Berlin – Group #169

Every Monday • 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1

Take Off Pounds Sensibly is a weekly support and educational group promoting weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. Contact Rose Campion at **410-641-0157** for more information.

Grief Support Group

Fourth Wednesday of every month • 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Conference Room 1

Our goal is to instill hope for the future and give you skills to help you find your way, by providing a supportive place where members can share stories confidentially and spend time with others who understand. Please contact Gail Mansell at **410-641-9725** or gmansell@atlanticgeneral.org for more information.

Visit www.agh.care/calendar for other upcoming events and dates.

Online Appointment Scheduling

Did you know...

If you're the patient of an Atlantic General Health System primary care provider or medical specialist, you can now schedule appointments online!

Our new and improved appointment scheduling service makes it easier than ever to schedule routine annual physical exam visits, sick visits, and follow-up care appointments. Simply go to www.agh.care and click or tap on the **Book an Appointment** icon. It's super-quick and super-easy! ●



Go to: [agh.care](http://www.agh.care)



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Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the inability to hold our regular fundraising activities, we were unable to have a formal Associates Campaign Committee during FY21. In addition to the Annual Pledge Drive, the Foundation held fall and spring AGH Apparel Sales through catalog and online methods to raised funds in support of the Foundation's Annual Appeal. Thank you to all of the AGH Associates who participated in these fundraising efforts, which raised more than \$10,000 in support of AGH's programs and services!

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2021 Anniversary

Celebration

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Thank You!

Atlantic General Hospital Foundation held a modified version of its Anniversary Celebration due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event committee reimagined the 28th Anniversary Celebration as ***The Party to Which You Give, but Don't Go*** and creatively asked participants for their support:

*There's never been a better year to support the ones that care,
And have given so selflessly throughout this COVID nightmare.*

*So we're asking that you help us celebrate a different way this year.
No need for dresses, suits and ties, as we skip the party, wine and beer.*

*Instead of everyone getting together, which is always so much fun,
Buy a "ticket" to stay home until the COVID battle is won.*

*Although we look forward to the future,
during this time of caution, Please show your support with
a donation and a bid in our auction.*

*For giving is the greatest and most wonderful act of grace.
We're blessed with Atlantic General and to have such care in place.*

In lieu of an in-person event, the fundraiser relied on sponsorships, donations of its invitees, and proceeds from an online auction. The elimination of the overhead expenses of a traditional in-person party allowed all funds raised to go directly to support Atlantic General Hospital's mission.

A special "Thank You" to the Anniversary Celebration Committee, led by Co-Chairs **Emily Tunis** and **Sara Hambury**, for planning another successful fundraiser! This year's anniversary celebration raised more than \$190,000 for the Foundation and Atlantic General Hospital.

In Appreciation:

Todd Ferrante

The Atlantic General Hospital Foundation Board of Directors extends sincere appreciation to **Todd Ferrante** for his many years of dedicated service to AGH and its mission. Todd joined the AGH Foundation Board in 2011 and was named Board Chair in 2015. His leadership and fundraising capabilities helped secure the largest single gift in AGH's history – a \$4 million donation from the Gudelsky Family Foundation to AGH's *Campaign for the Future*.

Todd Ferrante has now stepped down as Foundation Chair, but remains an active member of the Foundation Board and the AGH Board of Trustees. From AGH and the entire community: Thank you, Todd!



AGH thanks Todd Ferrante (center).

Thank You to Our 28th Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

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Continued on page 22

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Continued from page 21

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Continued from page 27

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Charles Wood *in honor of the entire COVID-19 vaccinations staff*

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2021 Penguin Swim



Despite overcast skies, hundreds of participants turned out for Atlantic General Hospital's 27th Annual Penguin Swim on New Year's Day, eager to wash away 2020 and celebrate a brand-new year while supporting our community's healthcare heroes. With special safety guidelines put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19, the modified event raised **\$72,000** for Atlantic General Hospital.

Special thanks to event co-chairs S. Michael Cylc and Phillip Cheung, and the many AGH Associates and Community Member Volunteers who helped with this event!

Legacy Sponsor – "The Emperor Penguin"

Bull on the Beach & Crab Alley
for 27 consecutive years as
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Top Fundraisers

Team – Business

1. Bull on the Beach (Ocean City, MD), \$12,000*
 2. Team Royale (Ocean City, MD), \$1,625
 3. AGH's Frosty Flip Flops (Berlin, MD), \$325
- *The Bull on the Beach team has contributed more than \$642,000 to the AGH Penguin Swim since its first year in 1995.*

Team – Community Groups

1. Ocean City Ravens Roost #44 (Ocean City, MD), \$7,545**
 2. OPST Hammerheads (Ocean Pines, MD), \$595
 3. The Atlantic Club (Ocean City, MD), \$325
- **The Ravens Roost team has contributed nearly \$143,000 to the AGH Penguin Swim over the last 12 years.*

Team – Youth/Family

1. Team Jedi (Denver, PA), \$1,895
2. Zoo Crew (Breinigsville, PA), \$1,450
3. The Brrrrrr'ng Kirbys (Berlin, MD), \$725

Team – Celebrity Challenge

1. Sally Dowling, MD, with License to Chill (Ocean City, MD), \$2,850
2. Scot Dailey, with Glen Riddle Golf Club (Berlin, MD), \$2,625

3. Buddy Sass, with Ocean City Golf Club (Berlin, MD), \$275

Individual - Adult

1. Janice McAleer (Hampstead, MD), \$1,250
2. Michael Nelson (Rosedale, MD), \$1,200
3. Max Ewancio (Berlin, MD), \$1,025

Individual – 18 & Under Division

1. Dennis Tice, Jr. (16) (Lusby, MD), \$450
2. Ty Barnes (15) (Owings Mills, MD), \$150
3. Drayce King (14) (Leonardtown, MD), \$125

Individual Celebrity Challenge

1. Annette Wallace (Snow Hill, MD), \$1,250
2. Matthew Morris (North East, MD), \$400
3. Meredith Mears (Salisbury, MD), \$325

Special Recognition for ...

- **Youngest Penguin:** Kaden Stokes (Ocean City, MD) - 2 years, 5 months and 27 days old
- **Oldest Penguin:** William Hunter (Ocean Pines, MD) - 92 years, 6 months and 20 days young

28th Annual Penguin Swim Announced

Join us as we support our community's Healthcare Heroes at the 28th Annual Penguin Swim on New Year's Day, Saturday, January 1, 2022!

Once again, the swim will be held at the Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel at 91st Street in Ocean City. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and like many other businesses and non-profit organizations, we are faced with numerous challenges for planning and holding public events. ***The health and safety of our participants, spectators, staff, and volunteers are at the forefront of our logistics planning.*** All event details are subject to change due to COVID-19 conditions and requirements at the time of the event. Please visit the event website aghpenguinswim.org for detailed, up-to-date information.

The Penguin Swim is a fun annual event to support our not-for-profit community hospital! Each year, hundreds of Penguins raise funds to help AGH provide the excellent quality care on which our community depends.

Individual and Team fundraising efforts by Penguin Swim participants enable Atlantic General to continue to provide that care — but they can't do it alone! Business sponsors help make the event a big success, as the Penguin Swim is one of the largest fundraisers in support of AGH's mission to provide a coordinated care system with access to quality care, personalized service, and education to improve individual and community health.

Event day check-in and registration runs from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The swim will take place at 1:00 p.m. on the

beach. **ALL swimmers MUST register either online or in-person AND check in to receive a wristband to gain access to the Swim Area.**

We offer a special invitation to all participants to come to the advance check-in and registration at the Princess Royale from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

The registration fee is \$25 per swimmer. All swimmers who register on or before December 10th will receive an official 2022 Penguin Swim short-sleeve t-shirt. Shirts for swimmers who register after December 10th will be available while supplies last.

Register online at AGHPenguinSwim.org. If you are a returning Penguin from last year's Penguin Swim, please LOGIN first before signing up for this year's event. Thank you!

Event Schedule

New Year's Eve at The Princess Royale

2:00 - 4:00 pm – Pre-Registration and Advance Check-in

To avoid long lines at the event, wristbands and shirts can be picked up early.

New Year's Day at The Princess Royale

10:00 am – Registration and Check-in BEGINS

12:30 pm – Registration and Check-in ENDS

1:00 pm – The Swim!

Use **#OCPenguinSwim** when posting about the Penguin Swim on social media, and make sure your post is



PUBLIC so everyone can see it! Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Become a Penguin Swim Sponsor!

The Penguin Swim has grown dramatically with 1,000+ participants, and has tremendous reach via social media.

Sponsorship benefits are many! All sponsors are recognized on our event website, AGH's Facebook pages, on a sponsor banner at the event, in all press and social media before and after the event, as well as in the annual donor recognition edition of our *care.together* magazine.

Also, all sponsorships include ads in our Event Program that will be distributed to all participants and spectators.

To learn more about how to become a Penguin Swim sponsor, contact the AGH Foundation office at **410-641-9671** or penguinswim@atlanticgeneral.org, or visit www.aghpenguinswim.org.

All proceeds benefit Atlantic General Hospital Foundation. AGH is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions to the Penguin Swim are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

The upcoming Penguin Swim promises to be filled with fun and excitement. We truly appreciate the generosity of all of our sponsors. With your support, the 28th Annual Penguin Swim will be a big success! ●

AGH'S 27TH ANNUAL FALL

Golf Classic

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Ocean City Golf Club – Berlin



Robert E. Warfield, Sr.
May 22, 1940 - January 22, 2016

The Atlantic General Hospital Foundation is honored to share in recognizing the generous commitment and loyal service of the late **Robert E. Warfield, Sr.** through the establishment of the *Robert E. Warfield Memorial Tournament* to benefit Atlantic General Hospital

An alumnus of Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, MD, and Western Maryland College (McDaniel College) in Westminster, Bob Warfield dedicated his busy life to giving to others in service and in spirit. A veteran of the United States Army, Bob served as a second lieutenant in the Army's 29th Division in Korea before moving to Ocean City and co-founding Moore, Warfield & Glick Realtors.

A Trustee at McDaniel College, Bob and his beloved wife of 47 years, Margaret 'Peggy' Warfield, endowed an undergraduate scholarship for students from Worcester County who major in economics or business. An avid sportsman,

Bob also donated a set of tennis courts on the McDaniel campus and had been an integral member of the AGH Fall Golf Classic Committee since he joined the Foundation's Board of Directors in 1999. A founding member of the hospital's Board of Trustees and former Chairman of the Board of Directors for the AGH Foundation, Bob was also a member and served on the board of directors for the Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club, and on the board of directors for the Maryland Economic Development Corporation and Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund.

A great family man, Bob loved life to the fullest and never passed on the opportunity to help someone in need. Renowned on the local links, his magnetic personality and community involvement allowed him to touch the lives of many people. Although Bob is missed by all, his legacy lives on.

Special thanks ...

to our Tournament Co-Chairs
Steven Sweigert and Terry Wright,
and to **Buddy Sass and Ocean City Golf Club,**
and all volunteers who generously gave their
time and talents to this worthwhile event.

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i.g. Burton

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Home Instead Senior Care

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i.g. Burton

Jac's Army

TOURNAMENT WINNERS

Newport Bay Front / Seaside Back Winning Teams

1. Jac's Army - Jac Stanton; Dean Mantzouris; Fred Cheek; Jeff Shields
2. Park Place Jewelers - Todd Ferrante; Law Adkins; Bryan Taylor; Bradford Taylor
3. Forever Media - Chris Benjamin; Ken Davis; Dave Kettinger; Mark Schollenberger

Seaside Front / Newport Bay Back Winning Teams

1. Lou Taylor - Lou Taylor; Penny Parker; Danny Parker; Buzz Taylor
2. Taylor Bank - Doug Cook; Thomas Coates; Dean Lewis; Chad Vent
3. Home Instead Senior Care - Don Boger; Jim DeAngelis; Tad Kaufman; Robert Williams

Golden Ball Challenge

Encompass Health - Greg Hartman; Steven Walas; Matthew Whaley; John Zimmerman

Women's Longest Drive

Penny Parker & Renee Sheehy

Men's Longest Drive

Danny Parker & Chris Takacs

Women's Closest to the Pin

Colleen Hacker

Men's Closest to the Pin

Aldo Nichini & Tom Wingate

Hole-in-One Seaside #8

Tom Wingate

Putting Contest

1. Sean Gradomski, 2. Chad Vent
3. Steve Morgan

Floating Green Contest

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Continued on page 34

The 2020 Robert E. Warfield Memorial Tournament

Thank You!

Continued from page 33

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VISION

To be the leader in caring for people and advancing health for the residents of and visitors to our community.

MISSION

To provide a coordinated care system with access to quality care, personalized service and education to create a healthy community.

VALUES

We become the leaders in caring through these values:

- C**ompassion
- A**ccountability
- R**espect
- E**rror-Free

QUALITY STATEMENT

We deliver care that is accessible, safe, appropriate, coordinated, effective, and centered on the needs of individuals within a system that demonstrates continual improvement.

SAFETY

We are committed to Zero Harm for our patients, providers, care givers, and associates.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

- W**elcoming
- O**utstanding
- W**arm

We communicate with and treat our patients as loved ones.

ETHICAL COMMITMENT

To conduct ourselves in an ethical manner that emphasizes community service and justifies the public trust.

Thank you for helping us carry out our vision, mission, and values.

ATLANTIC GENERAL HOSPITAL'S
29TH ANNIVERSARY

Celebration

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, May 19, 2022

Hosted by Kevin Myers and Family
Berlin, MD





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