

Appointments

Matthew Akelman, MD, joins University Orthopedics



EAST PROVIDENCE — University Orthopedics recently announced the addition of **MATTHEW AKELMAN, MD**, a fellowship-trained hand-to-shoulder surgeon, to its team of specialists. Dr. Akelman also serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at the Warren Alpert Medical

School of Brown University.

Dr. Akelman's practice encompasses the entire upper extremity – from fingertip to shoulder – caring for patients with:

- Nerve compression conditions, such as carpal and cubital tunnel syndromes
- Muscle and tendon disorders, including rotator-cuff tears and trigger fingers
- Arthritis of the shoulder, elbow, wrist, and hand
- Traumatic injuries and fractures

A Rhode Island native, Dr. Akelman earned his undergraduate degree at Brown University, his medical degree at the Medical University of South Carolina and completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Wake Forest University, where he was honored with the Frank E. Pollock Award for extraordinary clinical proficiency. He then pursued fellowship training in Hand & Upper Extremity Surgery at Duke University, focusing on complex reconstruction, arthroscopy, and arthroplasty.

"It is a privilege to return to Rhode Island to care for the community that has given so much to me," Dr. Akelman said. "My goal is to provide patients with the highest level of orthopedic care, while ensuring that every decision is made together with their values and goals in mind."

In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Akelman is an active clinician-scientist whose peer-reviewed research on upper extremity disorders has been published and presented at national meetings. Dr. Akelman will be seeing patients at University Orthopedics locations in Cranston, Cumberland, and East Providence at Kettle Point. ❖

Theresa Williamson, MD, MPH, appointed to key neurosurgery leadership positions at Brown University Health



PROVIDENCE — Brown University Health recently announced the appointment of **THERESA WILLIAMSON, MD, MPH**, as Director of the Center for Minimally Invasive and Endoscopic Spinal Surgery and Director of the Center for Innovative Neurotechnology for Neural Repair (CINNR).

Dr. Williamson, a neurosurgeon and bioethicist, specializes in spine disorders as well as brain and spinal trauma. Her appointment reflects Brown University Health's continued

commitment to advancing cutting-edge care and equitable access to neurotechnology for patients across the region.

Prior to joining Brown Health, Dr. Williamson served as Chair of the Surgical Ethics Working Group at the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics, Director of the Neurotech Justice Accelerator at Mass General Brigham, and Director of the Minimally Invasive Spine Service at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). In a joint effort between Brown University Health and MGH, Dr. Williamson will continue to lead the Neurotech Justice Accelerator, a Dana Center Initiative, fostering collaboration between clinical care, bioethics, and technology innovation.

Dr. Williamson's extensive background in both neurosurgery and bioethics will strengthen the research and innovation underway at CINNR, where her leadership will focus on improving access to neurotechnological advances for patients in need.

"My goal is to make sure that all patients have access to neurotechnologies and procedures that can improve their quality of life," said Dr. Williamson. "To do this, we must be able to both connect with individuals and improve systems of care."

Her research explores how patients across diverse communities make decisions regarding neurosurgical interventions, aiming to deliver precision technologies that are both cost-effective and outcome driven. Dr. Williamson has also mentored more than 50 undergraduate and medical students conducting research at the intersection of neuroscience, ethics, and society.

"I see CINNR as a space where we can bring patients of all backgrounds together with technological expertise and innovation to find new ways to treat spinal cord injury, pain, and neurotrauma," Dr. Williamson added.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr. Williamson to Brown University Health and the Department of Neurosurgery," said **ZIYA L. GOKASLAN, MD, FAANS, FACS**, Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Neurosurgeon-in-Chief at Brown University Health. "Her expertise in minimally invasive and endoscopic spinal surgery, combined with her nationally recognized leadership in surgical ethics and equitable access to emerging neurotechnologies, brings a unique and timely perspective to our clinical and research missions. Dr. Williamson's commitment to ensuring that the most advanced treatments are available to all patients aligns closely with our values and priorities as an academic health system. We look forward to the impact her vision and energy will have on our spine program, CINNR, and the communities we serve." ❖

Appointments

Newport Hospital names Community Advisory Panel members to help shape future of birthing center

NEWPORT — Newport Hospital has named the members of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) who will assist in evaluating the future of the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center. The panel includes patients, representatives from philanthropic and community organizations, employees, and maternal health experts who will offer guidance and recommendations throughout the review process.

The 12 panel participants are:

Lori Allan, RN – The Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center

Carol Bazarsky – Newport Hospital Foundation Board

Emily Blosser, MD – Obstetrician-Gynecologist, Medical Director, Newport Women's Health

Alex Hammer Ducas – Social Enterprise Greenhouse

Rebecca Homer, RN – The Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center

Rebecca Hurd, CNA, CLC – The Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center

Elizabeth Lynn – van Beuren Charitable Foundation

Thomas McGue, MD – Newport Hospital Foundation Board, Former Newport Hospital Chief Medical Officer

Latisha Michel, CLC, CBE, CHW – Certified Perinatal Doula, Ready Set Latch Go, LLC

Sydney Ormerod – Women's Resource Center, Newport Health Equity Zone (HEZ)

Alexandra Quick, PT, DPT – Mae Physiotherapy

Methodius Tuuli, MD – Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Women & Infants Hospital

"We are grateful to the members of the panel for generously agreeing to bring their time, experience, and perspectives to an important dialogue about the future of maternity care in our region" said **TENNY THOMAS, MD**, President and Chief Medical Officer of Newport Hospital. "We look forward to working collaboratively with the panel. Their valuable community input is vital as we plan for the future of the Noreen Stonor Drexel Birthing Center." ❖

Recognition

Hasbro Children's named to Newsweek's List of America's Best Children's Hospitals 2025

PROVIDENCE — Hasbro Children's, part of the Brown University Health health system, has been listed among *Newsweek's* list of America's Best Children's Hospitals 2025. The award is presented by *Newsweek* and Statista Inc., a leading market and consumer data portal.

The ranking awards the best hospitals in eight pediatric subspecialties: cardiology and cardiac surgery, endocrinology, gastroenterology and gastrointestinal surgery, neonatology, neurology and neurosurgery, oncology, orthopedics and pulmonology. The underlying data analysis is based on four data sources:

1. Nationwide Online Survey: Participants with knowledge about pediatric care (e.g., general and specialized pediatricians and nurses) were asked to recommend leading children's hospitals in the U.S. The survey was also promoted on newsweek.com.

2. Hospital Quality Metrics: Hospital quality metrics with a focus on indicators relevant to the respective subspecialties and accreditations/certifications were considered.

3. Patient Satisfaction: Evaluations from Google were researched for each children's hospital as a proxy for patient satisfaction with the hospital.

4. Statista Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMS) Implementation Survey: Voluntary PROMS implementation survey to determine the status quo of PROMS implementation, audits and reporting of data.

"Hasbro Children's is honored to be recognized on Newsweek's list of America's Best Children's Hospitals for the outstanding work and high-quality care provided to our patients every day. Our unwavering dedication to the best interests of our patients and community while ensuring the highest standards of patient safety truly makes a difference in the lives of our patients and families," said **SARAH FROST**, chief of hospital operations and president of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Hospital. ❖

Recognition

Reps. Baginski, Hopkins, Sen. Valverde and Care New England celebrate our veterans

PROVIDENCE — On Nov. 7, Reps. **JACQUELYN M. BAGINSKI** (D-Dist. 17, Cranston) and **MARIE HOPKINS** (R-Dist. 21, Warwick), Sen. **BRIDGET VALVERDE** (D-Dist. 35, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, South Kingstown) and Care New England held a special ceremony at the VNA of Care New England to honor the significant contributions and sacrifices made by Care New England colleagues who have served and continue to serve in the military.



Sen. **Bridget Valverde**, third from the left, Rep. **Jacquelyn M. Baginski**, fourth from the left, Rep. **Marie Hopkins**, fifth from the left, Congressman **Gabe Amo**, sixth from the left, and **Kasim Yarn**, Director of the RI Office of Veteran Services, seventh from the left, at the Care New England veterans celebration. [STATE HOUSE PHOTO]

"In addition to the tremendous responsibility our team shoulders every day, delivering high-quality, compassionate care to the patients and families in our community, our colleagues in service have also accepted the extraordinary responsibility of serving our country," said **MICHAEL WAGNER, MD**, president and CEO of Care New England Health System. "We are deeply grateful for our veterans who remind us every day what true dedication looks like."

Care New England has previously honored veteran colleagues at Kent Hospital and Women & Infants Hospital. However, this year, the event takes place at the VNA of Care New England because of an important step the VNA is taking with veterans through our partnership with the We Honor Veterans program.

"Care New England and our VNA team are deeply committed to ensuring that every veteran receives the respect and compassionate care they deserve, especially as they are near the end of life," said **JANE PIKE-BENTON**, president, VNA of Care New England. "This initiative allows us to better understand the unique experiences and needs of those who served, honoring their courage through compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgment of their life stories as a focus of the care we provide." ❖

Four Brown University Health hospitals receive 'A' grade for patient safety from Leapfrog Group

PROVIDENCE — Four hospitals within the Brown University Health system received an 'A' Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit upholding the standard of patient safety in hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. The four hospitals gaining this distinction in patient safety are:

- Rhode Island Hospital in Providence
- The Miriam Hospital in Providence
- Newport Hospital in Newport
- Saint Anne's Hospital in Fall River

"The teams at Rhode Island, The Miriam, Newport, and Saint Anne's hospitals, showcase Brown University Health's commitment to delivering outstanding patient care across our facilities," said **SARAH FROST**, chief of hospital operations and president of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Hospital. "I couldn't be more grateful to our amazing staff - their teamwork, skill, and unwavering focus on patient safety and outcomes are the driving force behind this national recognition."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring. ❖

Westerly Hospital earns 'A' safety grade from Leapfrog Group

WESTERLY — Westerly Hospital has earned an "A" Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit watchdog focused on patient safety, for the Fall 2025 report.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade rates the safety of general hospitals in the United States. The grade is based on over 30 measures, including the number of errors, accidents, injuries and infections, as well as the hospital's systems to prevent them. The program is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

"At Westerly Hospital, patient safety is our top priority and the foundation of every interaction, decision and care plan," said **RICHARD LISITANO**, president of Westerly Hospital. "I'm proud to recognize our dedicated team for their exceptional performance and unwavering commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care. Their collaboration and focus continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our patients."

"This recognition is a testament to the dedication and excellence of our entire team at Westerly Hospital," said **OLIVER MAYORGA, MD**, chief medical officer. "As a high reliability organization, we are committed to consistently delivering safe, efficient and high-quality care. This achievement reflects our unwavering focus on patient safety and clinical excellence." ❖

Recognition

Sean Monaghan, MD, recipient of the 2025 Bruce Selya Award awarded at Brown University Health 32nd Annual Research Day

PROVIDENCE — **SEAN MONAGHAN, MD**, is Brown University Health's 2025 Bruce Selya Award recipient. The annual award honors rising stars in research who demonstrate outstanding commitment to academic medicine. Dr. Monaghan was recognized for his work in "Sepsis and Innovation."

Dr. Monaghan is a board-certified surgeon at Rhode Island and The Miriam hospitals, associate professor of surgery at Brown University, a member of the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care, and vice chair of research for the Department of Surgery.

The award was presented at Brown Health's 32nd Annual Research Day at Rhode Island Hospital on November 7th, which celebrates the systems' vibrant research community and its commitment to advancing science, education, and clinical excellence across the region.

"Research and education are central to our mission, and our teams have done a remarkable job growing and strengthening that mission through the most challenging of times," said **JOHN FERNANDEZ**, CEO and President, Brown University Health. "Brown Health also continues to play a critical role in training the next generation of academic and scientific leaders."

Over the past year, Brown University Health achieved a record \$160 million in federal research funding, marking the



highest level in its history. Notable new awards include \$12 million for the COBRE on Pathogens program, underscoring the health system's culture of scientific curiosity and collaboration.

Reflecting the institution's commitment to translating research into real-world impact, Brown University Health announced new nationally scoped clinical trials in cancer prevention launching next year. These initiatives will build on an already robust clinical trials portfolio that spans nearly every department.

In addition, planning has begun for a new clinical research building on the Bradley campus, supported by a recently awarded National Institute of Health (NIH) C06 grant of \$8 million. The facility will serve as a national center of excellence in pediatric and adolescent behavioral medicine.

SUZANNE PHELAN, PhD, professor of kinesiology and public health and director of women's health at California Polytechnic State University, delivered this year's keynote presentation, "Lifestyle Interventions for Cardiometabolic Health: From Preconception Through Pregnancy, and Postpartum." Dr. Phelan completed her postdoctoral fellowship in psychiatry and human behavior at The Miriam Hospital and The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. ❖