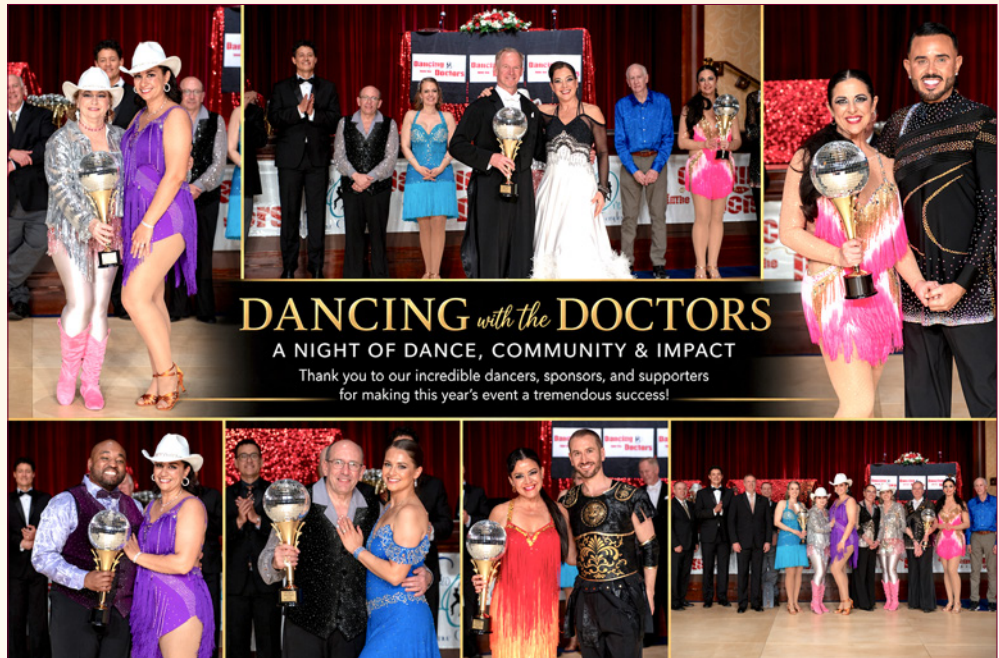


Dancing with the Doctors 2026 raises \$140,000 for Open Door Health, RIPHI

LINCOLN — Dancing with the Doctors (DWTDocs), produced by Studio One RI and the non-profit organization, Dancing for a Cause, delivered an unforgettable evening of entertainment, inspiration, and community impact on April 11, 2026, at Bally's Twin River Event Center—raising \$140,000 in support of Open Door Health, an initiative of the Rhode Island Public Health Institute (RIPHI).

Now in its eighth year, the sold-out gala brought together more than 600 guests to witness 14 local physicians step out of their comfort zones and onto the dance floor. Paired with professional dance instructors, these dedicated doctors spent months preparing and fundraising, all in support of expanding access to inclusive, comprehensive healthcare for Rhode Islanders.



Dancing with the Doctors (DWTDocs), produced by Studio One RI and the non-profit organization, Dancing for a Cause, was held on April 11, 2026, at Bally's Twin River Event Center. Physicians and healthcare professionals stepped out of their comfort zones and onto the dance floor, paired with professional dance instructors, for the fundraising "competitive" event.



"The energy in the room was absolutely electric," said **DEE SOARES**, co-founder of Dancing with the Doctors and co-owner of Studio One RI. "This event truly embodies what can happen when a community comes together with passion, purpose, and heart. We are incredibly proud of our doctors, our supporters, and the impact we've made together."

Guests were treated to an evening filled with high-energy dance performances, emotional storytelling, and a shared commitment to a meaningful cause. From elegant ballroom routines to crowd-pleasing performances, each doctor brought their unique personality and dedication to the stage—transforming months of hard work into a spectacular show.

Proceeds from this year's event directly benefit Open Door Health, Rhode Island's first and only LGBTQ+ focused community health clinic, which provides integrated services including primary care, behavioral health, sexual health, and HIV prevention and treatment. Support from events like DWTDocs helps

Participants in the event included, from left, **Amy Goldfarb, MD**, winner of the People's Choice Award, raising \$20,330 in votes and sponsors; **John Soares**, owner of Studio One RI; **Amy Nunn, ScD**, CEO of Open Door Health and one of the dancers; **Philip Chan, MD**, Chief Medical Officer of Open Door Health as well as one of the dancers this year; **Dee Soares**, Director of Dancing with the Doctors/Dancing for a Cause; and **Allan Tunkel, MD**, winner of the People's Choice Award, raising \$31,210 in votes and sponsors.

ensure that vital, affirming healthcare remains accessible to all.

Since its inception, Dancing with the Doctors has featured more than 125 physicians and raised over \$850,000 for local charities—demonstrating the powerful intersection of healthcare, community, and the arts. “This is more than just a dance competition,” added Soares. “It’s a movement—one that continues to open doors, change lives, and celebrate the incredible spirit of giving.”

An advisory board plays an important role in selecting the beneficiary each year. Throughout the year, the organization considers a variety of thoughtful recommendations that aligns with its mission. All beneficiaries must be registered nonprofits and serve communities across Rhode Island and Southern New England.

Past recipients include:

- HopeHealth Hospice
- The Izzy Foundation

- Rhode Island Free Clinic
- Blood Cancer United (Leukemia and Lymphoma Society)
- Pink Heals RI (local police and fire that supports all people battling cancer)
- Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Foundation

Plans are already underway for next year’s event, planned for April 10, 2027. For more information, visit <https://www.dwt-docs.com/about-dancing-for-a-cause> ❖



The winner’s circle at this year’s event.

2026 Dancing with the Doctors Participants/Awardees

Awards are given to the top female and top male dancers in each category. Most Technical, Most Entertaining, and the People’s Choice Award go to the doctors who raise the most money.

Robert Bartro, DDS

Shawn Binns, MD, Lincoln Pediatrics/Brown Health
Winner: Most Entertaining Award

John Cassese, MD, Radiology & Pediatrics,
Assistant Professor of Radiology, Department of Pediatrics,
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Philip Chan, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Open Door Health

Alyssa Doody, DO, South County Hospital, Wakefield, RI

Margaret Furtado, MD, Medical Associates of Rhode Island,
Bristol, RI

Amy Goldfarb, MD, RIPHI/Open Door Health Board Member
Winner: People’s Choice Award

Jerome Larkin, MD, Director,
Rhode Island Department of Health

Lola McLaren Cevallos, MD, East Greenwich
Brown Health Medical Group Primary Care
Winner: Most Entertaining Award

Edward McGookin, MD, MHCDS, FAAP, Chief of Primary Care,
Brown Health Medical Group Primary Care

Amy Nunn, ScD, Chief Executive Officer,
Rhode Island Public Health Institute

Stephanie Ros Saposnik, MD, MSCI, Women & Infants/
Brown University
Winner: Most Technical Award

Allan Tunkel, MD, PhD, MACP, Brown University Health,
Former Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education,
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
Winner: People’s Choice Award

Eric F. Walsh, MD, Ortho Rhode Island,
The Foundry, Providence
Winner: Most Technical Award

Appointments



Leanne Barrett, MA, IMH-E®, named executive director of the Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health (RIAIMH) announced the appointment of

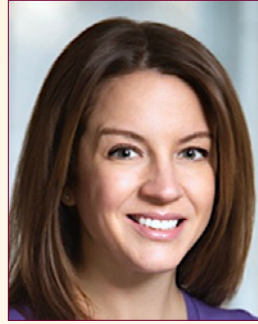
LEANNE BARRETT, MA, IMH-E®, as its next executive director. Barrett follows long-time executive director and RIAIMH founding member **SUSAN DICKSTEIN, PhD, IMH-E®**, who announced her retirement at the end of 2025.

Barrett brings more than two decades of non-profit leadership experience in early childhood, state and national policy development, grant writing and stewardship, and fostering community partnerships. She has dedicated her career to advocating for policies and practices that advance the health and well-being of young children and their families.

“The Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health has a strong history of supporting infant and early childhood professionals through training, reflective practice, endorsement credentialing, and advocacy. I am honored to be chosen to lead RIAIMH through its next chapter,” said Barrett. “I look forward to working with RIAIMH’s talented and dedicated board, staff, almost 300 members, and partners, to honor the legacy of RIAIMH and ensure its growth and continued success. RIAIMH’s role is more important than ever. As we see family stress increase, the percentage of young children in Rhode Island who have identified mental health challenges has grown significantly—from 10% in 2017 to 22% in 2025 among children under age 6 with Medicaid insurance. In order for young children and families to thrive, RI needs to support a strong and stable workforce.”

Barrett most recently served as the director of Early Childhood Policy and Strategy for Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, where she worked for almost 22 years. Prior to KIDS COUNT, she worked for the United Way of Rhode Island as VP Community Initiatives and a Program Manager at Work/Family Directions.

She holds an MA in policy from Tufts University and earned her BA in psychology at Brown University. ❖



Rachel E. Beard, MD, joins CNE as division chief of hepatobiliary and pancreas surgery

PROVIDENCE — **RACHEL E. BEARD, MD**, has joined Care New England Health System as division chief of hepatobiliary and pancreas surgery.

Dr. Beard, who specializes in hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery, surgical oncology and advanced general surgery, stepped into the role on April 1. She completed a residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston and fellowships at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. She is also an associate professor of surgery at Brown University’s Warren Alpert Medical School. ❖



Travis Cotton, MD, to lead CNE Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery Program

PROVIDENCE — Care New England recently announced the appointment of **TRAVIS COTTON, MD, FACS**, as the chief of endocrine surgery and leader of the newly established Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery Program. Dr. Cotton is a nationally recognized endocrine

surgeon who treats routine and complex conditions of the thyroid, parathyroid, and adrenal glands. He has maintained a dedicated endocrine surgery practice in Rhode Island for over a decade and is a high-volume surgeon, performing over 400 endocrine-surgery operations per year.

“I look forward to taking care of our endocrine surgery patients at Care New England. The development of this new Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery Program reflects Care New England’s commitment to expanding access to specialized surgical care and advancing clinical excellence in our community,” said Dr. Cotton. “It represents an important step in providing comprehensive, specialized, and multidisciplinary care for patients with thyroid and parathyroid disorders.”

Originally from Texas, Dr. Cotton graduated with a BS in biomedical science from Texas A&M University. He went on to receive his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School at San Antonio. He then completed his residency in general surgery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He subsequently completed the Norman Thompson Endocrine Surgery Fellowship at the University of Michigan. Following the fellowship, Dr. Cotton was recruited to the Department of Surgery at Brown University, where he is clinical associate professor of surgery while also serving as the Department’s executive vice chair of surgery. ❖

Appointments



Thundermist appoints Jeffrey Gaines, MD, chief medical officer

WOONSOCKET — Thundermist Health Center recently announced that **JEFFREY GAINES, MD, MHCMA, FACEP**, has joined the organization as its new chief medical officer. He succeeds **DAVID BOURASSA, MD**, who had served as chief medical officer since 1998 and

who will continue to provide patient care as a pediatrician at the Thundermist's Woonsocket health center.

Before joining Thundermist, Dr. Gaines served as chief medical officer and vice president of medical affairs at Newport Hospital, part of Brown University Health. He is also currently an assistant professor of medical science at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

"Dr. Gaines is not only an experienced physician and leader, but he also understands the healthcare needs of Rhode Islanders and the barriers many face in accessing care," said **CHUCK JONES**, president and CEO of Thundermist. "His background in emergency medicine will complement the work we do in community health, often serving patients with complex needs. His commitment to patient care and his record as a collaborative leader who inspires his teams are impressive. We're excited to welcome him to the Thundermist team."

In his new role, Dr. Gaines will lead a team of more than 100 providers across three locations and oversee all aspects of clinical operations. Thundermist currently employs more than 650 individuals and serves more than 65,000 patients across the state. Thundermist provides services to everyone regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

"What stands out most to me about Thundermist is its mission to remove barriers and deliver exceptional care—and its deep commitment to creating an environment where every team member can make the greatest possible impact," Dr. Gaines says. "After more than 16 years of living in Rhode Island and raising my family here, I'm honored to join this incredible organization and its dedicated team. I'm excited to listen, learn, and partner in support of the communities we serve."

Dr. Gaines earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan, completed his residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, and received a Master of Health Care Management from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He has served as the chair of the board of Coastal Medical and chair of the Brown University Health Wellness and Resiliency Council. He is also a board member of the American College of Healthcare Executives of Rhode Island and is a fellow at the American College of Emergency Physicians. ❖

Recognition

South County Hospital named a 2026 Castle Connolly Top Hospital for C-Section, Spine Surgery

WAKEFIELD — South County Hospital has been named a 2026 Castle Connolly Top Hospital for C-Section, Spine Surgery, and Hernia Surgery, placing it among the top hospitals nationwide for excellence in these specialties.

"We're proud to receive this recognition across multiple specialties," said **AARON ROBINSON**, president and CEO of South County Health. "It reflects the high-quality, patient-centered care our teams deliver every day and reinforces our position as a trusted leader in advanced surgical care."

The Castle Connolly Top Hospitals designation is a data-driven program that evaluates hospitals nationwide based on clinical excellence, patient safety, outcomes, and physician expertise. By analyzing comprehensive claims data, Castle Connolly highlights hospitals that are setting new standards in specialized care.

MARTHA MOE, MD, medical director of the Center for Women's Health, reflected that "this recognition in C-section care highlights the strength of our obstetrics team and their dedication to providing safe, compassionate care for mothers and babies during one of life's most important moments."

MICHAEL BRADLEY, MD, MBA, president of Ortho Rhode Island, added, "We are honored to partner with South County Hospital through the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Surgery in providing world-class spine care. This recognition is a testament to the expertise of our surgeons—Drs. Ian Madom and Diana Douleh—and to our shared commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for our patients."

KEVIN CHARPENTIER, MD, chief medical officer, said "We are proud to be recognized for excellence in hernia care, which reflects our surgical team's precision, innovation, and commitment to delivering safe, effective outcomes that help patients return quickly to their daily lives." ❖

Recognition

Women & Infants Hospital recognized among *Money's* Best Hospitals for Maternity Care 2026

PROVIDENCE — Women & Infants Hospital announced it has once again been recognized as one of *Money's* Best Hospitals for Maternity Care of 2026. Among 75 hospitals nationwide included on this year's list, Women & Infants earned an A+ rating, underscoring its leadership in maternal and newborn care.

This distinction highlights the hospital's ongoing commitment to delivering exceptional, patient-centered care for mothers and newborns. *Money's* evaluation considers key indicators of quality, including care before, during, and after birth, patient satisfaction, safety outcomes, and notable maternity care accreditations.

"Women & Infants Hospital is honored to be recognized by *Money* for our maternity care services," said Interim President and Chief of OBGYN, Women & Infants Hospital, **METHIDIUS G. TUULI, MD, MPH, MBA**, "This achievement reflects the dedication of our entire team, who work tirelessly every day to provide the highest-quality care and support to the families we serve."

The ranking methodology draws on patient ratings from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as well as distinctions from leading accrediting bodies such as the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and The Joint Commission.

View the full list of *Money's* Best Hospitals for Maternity Care 2026 [here](#). ❖

Rep. Bennett, Sen. Bissaillon honored by Thrive Behavioral Health

STATE HOUSE — Rep. **DAVID A. BENNETT** and Sen. **JACOB E. BISSAILLON** have been honored by Thrive Behavioral Health as its Legislators of the Year.

Senator Bissaillon (D-Dist. 1, Providence), who chairs the Senate's Housing and Municipal Government Committee, was selected for the award for his strong and successful advocacy for behavioral health, particularly mobile crisis response and stabilization services.

"I am deeply humbled to receive this recognition from Thrive Behavioral Health, which does such outstanding and vitally important work to support Rhode Islanders, and to share the honor of Legislator of the Year with Representative **DAVID BENNETT**, who is a tireless champion for behavioral health in our state. Through my experience in public service and professional life, I know firsthand that access to critical supports and services can be powerfully and positively transformative for individuals, families, and communities. Securing essential resources and strengthening Rhode Island's behavioral health infrastructure will always be a priority for me, and I am grateful to everyone who shares in that commitment," said Senator Bissaillon.

Said Thrive President and CEO **DAWN ALLEN**, "Sen. Jake Bissaillon has been an invaluable ally to Thrive and to the communities we serve. His steadfast focus on equitable health care, accessible mental health treatment, and stable housing reflects a profound understanding of the challenges facing our communities, and a genuine commitment to meeting them. His advocacy aligns seamlessly with our mission and has made a real and lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most."

Representative Bennett (D-Dist. 20, Warwick, Cranston), in whose district Thrive is located, was honored for his longtime support and advocacy for the agency and his understanding of the direct impact of behavioral health services on local communities.

"A healthy behavioral care system means healthier communities where more people can thrive. I have seen



From left, Thrive Behavioral Health Board Chairperson **Jennifer Wheelehon**, Rep. **David A. Bennett**, Sen. **Jacob E. Bissaillon** and Thrive Behavioral Health President and CEO **Dawn Allen** at Thrive's Legislative Breakfast, where the agency presented Representative Bennett and Senator Bissaillon with its Policy Impact Award.

firsthand the community benefits of accessible behavioral health services as both a psychiatric nurse and in my time representing my constituents in the State House. Students do better in schools, substance abuse declines and social isolation lessens as communities become more connected and resilient. An investment in behavioral health is an investment in a happier, healthier Rhode Island," said Representative Bennett. Said Allen, "Representative David Bennett has long been one of Thrive's most valued allies. With a deep, personal understanding of the important work we do and the high-quality services we deliver, he has consistently shown up as a tireless advocate and an unwavering source of support. He is someone we can always count on to stand with us when it matters most."

The behavioral and mental health services provider presented the awards at a legislative breakfast held April 10 at its Warwick headquarters. The event featured remarks from Congressman **SETH MAGAZINER**, Senate President **VALARIE J. LAWSON** (D-Dist. 14, East Providence) and Thrive leadership, as well as a powerful client story highlighting the real-world impact of behavioral health services. ❖