

Appointments

Julie Abilheira, RN, MS, appointed President of Brown University Health's Massachusetts hospitals



PROVIDENCE — Brown University Health has appointed **JULIE ABILHEIRA, RN, MS**, as president of its Massachusetts hospitals, Morton Hospital in Taunton and Saint Anne's Hospital in Fall River. In her new role, Abilheira will lead strategic, clinical, and operational priorities for both hospitals, with a focus

on advancing Brown Health's integrated care model, enhancing service excellence, and expanding access to care.

Abilheira brings more than 25 years of health-care leadership experience to the position. Most recently, she served as senior vice president of clinical services, overseeing medicine, cancer, radiation oncology, and dermatology services at Brown University Health.

"I am deeply honored to have the opportunity to serve as president of two vibrant and vital community hospitals," said Abilheira. "I have been incredibly impressed by the talent, compassion, and dedication of the physicians and staff at both hospitals. Their commitment to the patients and families they serve is truly unmatched, and I look forward to supporting them as we continue to build on the strong foundations already in place throughout our communities."

Working alongside Abilheira will be **HEIDI TAYLOR**, who has expanded her leadership responsibilities and now serves as chief operations officer and chief financial officer for Brown University Health's Massachusetts hospitals. Taylor, who previously served as president and vice president of finance at Morton Hospital, brings more than 30 years of healthcare leadership experience in finance and operations. ❖



Julia A. Katarincic, MD, named President of University Orthopedics, Chief of Orthopedics for Brown University Health, and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics at Brown

EAST PROVIDENCE — University Orthopedics recently announced that **JULIA A. KATARINCIC, MD**, has been named President of University Orthopedics. In addition, Dr. Katarincic has been appointed Chief of Orthopedics for Brown Uni-

versity Health and Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

A nationally recognized hand surgeon and respected physician leader, Dr. Katarincic has been an integral part of University Orthopedics for many years. She previously served as chief of the practice's Hand and Wrist Center, chaired the organization's Operations Committee, and has been a member of the Executive Committee. A dedicated educator, she has also received multiple Teacher of the Year awards for her commitment to mentoring the next generation of orthopedic surgeons.

"Dr. Katarincic has earned the respect of her colleagues through her collaborative leadership style, thoughtful decision-making, and unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care, education, and research," said University Orthopedics Chief Operating Officer **MICHELLE R. DEROCHÉ**. "Her deep understanding of our organization and our mission makes her exceptionally well positioned to lead University Orthopedics into its next chapter."

The leadership transition also marks an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary contributions of **EDWARD AKELMAN, MD**, who, over the past decade, has served as President of University Orthopedics, Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, and Chief of Orthopedics for Brown University Health.

During Dr. Akelman's tenure, University Orthopedics expanded into Massachusetts, recruited outstanding physicians and advanced practice providers, broadened its specialty orthopedic services, and continued its commitment to exceptional patient care, innovation, education, and research. He'll remain with University Orthopedics as a physician, focused on the patient care he's always loved.

"It is truly an honor to follow in Dr. Akelman's footsteps," said Dr. Katarincic. "Over the years, Ed has been a mentor, colleague, and friend whose vision and leadership have helped shape University Orthopedics into one of the region's premier orthopedic practices. I am deeply grateful for his guidance and look forward to building on the strong foundation he has created while continuing our unwavering commitment to exceptional patient care, education, and research."

Dr. Katarincic earned her Bachelor of Arts in mathematics from Dartmouth College and her Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She completed her internship and orthopedic surgery residency at Rhode Island Hospital and a fellowship in Hand and Microvascular Surgery at Mayo Clinic. She is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, with a Certificate of Added Qualification in Surgery of the Hand. ❖

Appointments

Bethany Gentilesco, MD, named senior associate dean for inclusive community at Brown

PROVIDENCE — **BETHANY GENTILESCO, MD**, associate professor of medical science and of medicine, clinician educator, at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, has been appointed the senior associate dean for inclusive community, effective August 1.

A native of New York, Dr. Gentilesco earned her undergraduate degree at Amherst College and medical degree at Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College of Cornell University in 2001. After residency training at Stanford University, she began her career as an academic hospitalist and joined the Brown faculty in 2007.

In addition to serving as an associate residency program director for the Department of Medicine, Dr. Gentilesco chairs the department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Her ongoing scholarly projects focus on the teaching of race and racism in medical training and she completed the Brown Advocates for Social Change and Equity (BASCE) fellowship. In 2024, she received the Mentorship Award in Diversity and Equity at The Warren Alpert Medical School.

As senior associate dean for inclusive community, Dr. Gentilesco will serve as the primary leader of the Office of Belonging, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within the Division. ❖

Recognition



Gerontological Society of America names URI professor Nekehia Quashie, PhD, among its newest fellows

KINGSTON — **NEKEHIA QUASHIE, PhD**, assistant professor of public health in the University of Rhode Island's College of Health Sciences, has been named a fellow by the Gerontological Society of America for her outstanding contributions to the field of gerontology.

Fellow status is the highest category of the organization's membership. Only about 50 professionals nationwide are selected for the distinction annually. Quashie was chosen in the category of Behavior and Social Sciences.

"This is the ultimate recognition of my scholarly contributions to research on aging and more broadly, my professional service to the field of gerontology," said Quashie.

"The new fellows will be recognized at the Gerontological Society of America's annual meeting in National Harbor, Maryland from Nov. 4-7. Quashie has been a member of the Society since 2015, after completing her PhD in sociology from the University of Utah in 2014.

"In addition to presenting at the annual conference, I have gladly served the organization in multiple ways, from reviewing abstracts submitted for the conference to organizing and leading writing groups that support early scholars—from doctoral students to junior faculty—to advance our research agendas," said Quashie.

Quashie is currently an associate editor for the Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, one of the flagship journals of the organization. ❖

South County Hospital designated with a Silver Plus Achievement Award

WAKEFIELD — South County Hospital has been recognized by The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association for continued success in using the Get With The Guidelines® program. This award reflects a commitment to using the most up-to-date evidence-based treatment guidelines to improve patient care and outcomes in our community.

South County Hospital was named a Silver Plus Achievement Award Hospital with Target: Type Two Diabetes, Honor Roll.

"South County Hospital is committed to improving patient care by adhering to the latest treatment guidelines," said **PETER F. GRAVES, MD, MBA**. "Get With The Guidelines helps our teams put proven science into practice every day. Research shows this approach can support better recovery, with the ultimate goal of helping people live longer, healthier lives."

Get With The Guidelines brings the expertise of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association into hospitals nationwide, helping ensure patient care is aligned with the latest research- and evidence-based guidelines. Get With The Guidelines - Stroke is an in-hospital program designed to improve stroke care through consistent adherence to these guidelines, which can minimize long-term effects of stroke and help prevent death. ❖

Recognition

Brown University Health hospitals recognized for exceptional stroke treatment

PROVIDENCE — Four Brown University Health hospitals have been nationally recognized for providing exceptional patient care and outcomes by The American Heart Association (AHA).

Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, Newport Hospital and Saint Anne's Hospital have all received the prestigious Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke GOLD PLUS Quality Achievement Award. The award recognizes programs that demonstrate commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability.

All four hospitals also received AHA's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll designation for demonstrating they met quality measures with over 90% compliance for the prior year.

"As Rhode Island's only Joint Commission-certified Comprehensive Stroke Center, we know that every second counts when it comes to stroke care," said **MELISSA HARMON, MSN, RN, ASC-BC**, manager of the Comprehensive Stroke Program at Rhode Island Hospital. "Our teams are committed to delivering rapid, high-quality care that gives patients the best possible chance for recovery."

"We strive to provide exceptional care to our patients each day, and we are grateful to be recognized by the AHA again this year for the high-quality care that we provide to our stroke patients," said **KAREN SCHAEFER, MSN, APRN, AGCNS-BC, ASC-BC, FCNS** stroke program manager for The Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital. "Early stroke detection and treatment are key to improving survival, minimizing disability and accelerating recovery times. Get With The Guidelines helps us ensure patient care is aligned with the latest research- and evidence-based guidelines."

Additionally, the hospitals were honored for:

- **Rhode Island Hospital** received the AHA's Target: Stroke Honor Roll Advanced Therapy and Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus designations, in addition to Advanced Therapy and AHA's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll.
- **The Miriam Hospital** received AHA's Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus as well as the AHA's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll designations.
- **Newport Hospital** received AHA's Target: Stroke Honor Roll designation and AHA's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll.
- **Saint Anne's Hospital** received AHA's Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll. **V**

Kent Hospital earns American Heart Association Stroke Gold Plus recognition

WARWICK — Kent Hospital has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus quality improvement award with Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll. This award is for Kent's commitment to ensuring people experiencing stroke receive timely, appropriate treatment based on nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately helping to save lives and reduce disability.

"Earning the Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus recognition is a testament to our Kent Hospital team's unwavering dedication to life-saving care," said **CAROLYN JACKSON**, President and COO, Kent Hospital. "This achievement starts the very moment a patient enters our doors, driven by the rapid, expert responses of our Emergency Department staff who work seamlessly with our stroke specialists to deliver critical treatments when every second counts. By consistently meeting these high national benchmarks, we are ensuring that our community members receive the most advanced, evidence-based care precisely when they need it most."

Kent Hospital also received the American Heart Association's Target: Type 2 Diabetes™ Honor Roll award. Target: Type 2 Diabetes aims to ensure patients with Type 2 diabetes, who might be at higher risk for complications, receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized due to stroke. **❖**

Roger Williams Medical Center receives Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus

NORTH PROVIDENCE — Roger Williams Medical Center has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus quality achievement award, the highest recognition, for its commitment to ensuring people experiencing stroke receive timely, appropriate treatment based on nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately helping to save lives and reduce disability.

"Roger Williams and CharterCARE Health of RI are committed to improving patient care by adhering to the latest treatment guidelines," said **JEFF LIEBMAN**, CharterCARE CEO. "Get With The Guidelines helps our teams put proven science into practice every day. Research shows this approach can support better recovery, with the ultimate goal of helping people in Providence and surrounding communities live longer, healthier lives."

He credited the work of the hospital's stroke committee under the leadership of **GAYLE REBOVICH, MD**, Director of the Division of Neurology; **CANDY WRAY, RN**, Nurse Manager of the ED, and **RACHEL BERNIER**, Clinical Quality Coordinator. The committee included **SHELLI HARDING**, **SARAH KONECNIK**, **TRACEY CASALA**, **MICHELLE SOLITRO-FITZGERALD**, **ANATOLY KAZAKIN, MD**, **MEGAN LEVIGNE**, **RUSSELL DAVIS**, **KARA LEFEBVRE**, **ELIZABETH GREENE**. **❖**

Recognition

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island recognized as 2026 World's Top Disability Inclusive business

PROVIDENCE — Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI) has been recognized as a World's Top Disability Inclusive Business for its performance on the 2026 Disability Index®. The designation marks the fifth consecutive year BCBSRI has achieved a top score.

This recognition reflects BCBSRI's progress towards building a workplace where all employees can contribute and drive long-term success. Companies scoring at the highest proficiency levels earn recognition as World's Top Disability Inclusive Businesses.

Disability Index is the world's leading independent benchmarking tool for evaluating corporate disability inclusion and is used by hundreds of leading companies across the globe.

"Our leadership and associates are dedicated to building a workplace where everyone feels supported and valued," said **CAROLYN BELISLE**, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility. "This honor recognizes that commitment and motivates us to use insights from our Disability Index scores to continue advancing our inclusion efforts."

BCBSRI's top score reflects its comprehensive array of programs and policies that support a culture of accessibility and belonging, including:

The Disability Inclusion Network, an employee business resource group that promotes and provides guidance on accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities and impairments.

Project SEARCH, an internship program based at BCBSRI that prepares high school students with intellectual or developmental disabilities for post-graduation employment.

Grants and in-kind support for community organizations that serve people with disabilities

Inclusive workplace policies and practices, including hiring, recruitment, and retention efforts, and initiatives that promote physical, digital, and systemic accessibility.

A highly active supplier engagement program that encourages engagement with disability-owned businesses. ❖