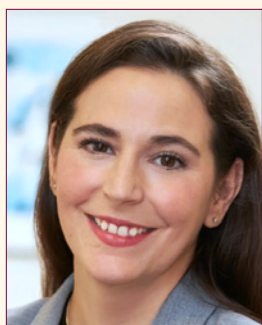


Appointments



Providence Community Health Centers names Mary Benvenuto as President, CEO

PROVIDENCE — **MARY BENVENUTO**, a seasoned healthcare executive with more than 20 years of leadership experience, has been named President and CEO of Providence Community Health

Centers (PCHC). Benvenuto, who will join PCHC on October 13, 2026, was a unanimous selection of the Board of Directors following an extensive national search. She replaces **MERRILL THOMAS**, who will be retiring later this year after 25 years.

Benvenuto brings a proven track record of operational excellence, strategic growth, financial stewardship, and mission-driven leadership to Rhode Island's largest federally qualified health center. She currently serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial and Operating Officer at Open Sky Community Services, a \$140 million behavioral health and human services organization serving communities throughout Central Massachusetts. In this role, she oversees operations, including finance, information technology, human resources, facilities, data strategy, real estate, and organizational growth initiatives.

Prior to joining Open Sky, Benvenuto served as Chief Financial Officer of Manet Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center in Massachusetts, where she partnered with executive leadership to expand access to care, strengthen operational performance, and support organizational growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her experience also includes executive leadership roles with Last Mile Health and the United Way of Rhode Island. Benvenuto received her Master of Science in accounting from Nichols College and Bachelor of Science in accounting from Bryant University.

As CEO, Benvenuto will lead a team of 500 employees as she guides strategic initiatives that support patient access, workforce development, operational excellence, financial sustainability, and continued investment in community health. Her leadership comes at a pivotal time as PCHC continues to expand services and strengthen its role as a trusted provider of comprehensive primary care, behavioral health, dental care, specialty services, and community-based healthcare programs. ❖

Brown graduate John Gaitanis, MD, to lead NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

BETHESDA, MD — National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director **JAY BHATTACHARYA, MD, PhD**, announced the selection of **JOHN GAITANIS, MD**, as director of NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Dr. Gaitanis began his role on August 23rd.

As NICHD director, Dr. Gaitanis will shepherd the investment of NICHD's approximately \$1.7 billion annual budget, facilitating research to advance maternal, gynecologic, and child health, as well as the health of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He will lead a staff of about 1,100 who either conduct research at NICHD or support some of the institute's approximately 2,300 research grants and projects at organizations throughout the United States and internationally.

"With the burden of chronic disease on the rise, Dr. Gaitanis's forward-thinking approaches for NICHD research will help us adapt to the realities of today," Dr. Bhattacharya said. "We're eager for research advances in prevention, precision, and systems-level understanding to pinpoint root causes of these conditions and yield transformative advances in clinical care to improve health for women, children, and people with disabilities."

Dr. Gaitanis, a nationally respected expert in complex neurodevelopmental disorders, epilepsy, and autism, brings nearly three decades of clinical, academic, and leadership experience to the position. He previously served as Chief of Child Neurology at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, and Director of Child Neurology at Brown Medical School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Gaitanis has advanced research and clinical care for individuals with complex neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, expanded access to specialized services, and trained physicians to deliver comprehensive, individualized care. His work has also advanced clinician education and evidence-informed approaches that support the health, communication needs, autonomy, and dignity of nonspeaking individuals with autism.

Dr. Gaitanis received his MD from Brown Medical School and completed his pediatrics residency at the University of Rochester. He subsequently completed his neurology training at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School, where he served as chief resident, followed by fellowship training in epilepsy and clinical neurophysiology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center/Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Gaitanis previously served on the board of the Epilepsy Foundation of New England and currently serves on the board of the Medical Academy of Pediatrics and Special Needs (MAPS), a national leader in translating emerging science into clinical care for children with severe, chronic, and complex medical conditions. MAPS is home to the only U.S. fellowship program of its kind, providing physicians with advanced training in the application of translational medicine across this highly complex and historically underserved pediatric population. In recognition of his leadership and contributions to the field, Dr. Gaitanis received the MAPS Trailblazer Award in 2025. ❖



Appointments



George Hanna, MD, joins University Gastroenterology's Liver Center

PROVIDENCE — University Gastroenterology (UGI) announced that it's expanding access to comprehensive gastrointestinal and liver care for patients throughout Rhode Island and Southern New England with the addition of fellowship-trained gastroenterologist **GEORGE HANNA, MD**.

A Rhode Island native, Dr. Hanna is a general gastroenterologist with a particular clinical interest in diseases and conditions affecting the liver. He treats a broad range of gastrointestinal conditions, including gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, diverticulitis, difficulty swallowing, and Barrett's esophagus. His areas of special interest include abnormal liver tests, fatty liver disease, drug-induced liver injury, autoimmune and viral hepatitis, and cirrhosis.

Dr. Hanna earned his medical degree from Jefferson University in Philadelphia before returning to Rhode Island to complete his internal medicine residency at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. He subsequently completed a three-year gastroenterology fellowship at Yale Bridgeport Hospital, serving as chief gastroenterology fellow during his final year. He is board-certified in internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Joining University Gastroenterology also represents a homecoming for Dr. Hanna. Born and raised in Rhode Island, he grew up in Lincoln, spent summers in Narragansett, and attended Mount Saint Charles Academy, where he played hockey. Growing up in a family of physicians, he saw firsthand the value of building meaningful relationships with patients—an experience that continues to shape his approach to care. After nearly a decade of medical education and training, returning to Rhode Island to practice medicine fulfills an important personal and professional goal.

"My parents, aunt, and grandfather all practiced medicine in Rhode Island, so I grew up seeing the relationships they built with their patients and the importance of knowing each patient as an individual," Dr. Hanna said. "That human connection has always stayed with me. I've spent the last decade working toward the opportunity to come home, and I'm grateful to now be caring for patients in the community where I grew up and joining a practice that shares those same values."

Dr. Hanna sees patients at University Gastroenterology's Staniford Street office in Providence. He performs procedures at the Staniford Street and West River locations, as well as The Miriam Hospital.



CharterCARE names Ciaran J. McNamee, MD, chief of thoracic surgery

PROVIDENCE — CharterCARE Health of RI has announced that **CIARAN J. MCNAMEE, MD**, has been named Chief of Thoracic Surgery and Thoracic Diseases for the system. An active staff member of Massachusetts General Hospital

and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Assistant Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School, he most recently led the thoracic program at Care New England through its affiliation with Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Dr. McNamee will provide Rhode Islanders with access to world-class thoracic surgery, especially in the treatment of related cancers. He will immediately add a depth of knowledge and experience to the nationally recognized surgical oncology program at Roger Williams Cancer Center, and will lead thoracic care at both Roger Williams Medical Center and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital. CharterCARE has invested heavily in advanced robotic surgery technology, which match Dr. McNamee's clinical interests in robotic surgery and incorporating innovations at the frontiers of medical care to provide autonomy and well-being to those in need.

A recognized leader in the field with more than 20 years of academic practice, surgery, and research experience, Dr. McNamee joins CharterCARE to enhance the thoracic surgery program and to establish a thoracic oncology service across the system. His clinical interests include benign and malignant esophageal disease, COPD, lung cancer, thymoma and thymic cancer, minimally invasive and robotic surgery.

Board-certified in surgery and thoracic surgery, he received his medical degree from McGill University, Faculty of Medicine in Canada, and performed his residencies in surgery at Alberta Hospital, and in cardiothoracic surgery at Broadgreen Hospital and Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. He completed a fellowship in clinical thoracic surgery at the University of Manitoba and a Master's in experimental surgery at the University of Alberta.

In making the announcement, CharterCARE CEO **JEFFREY LIEBMAN** stated, "Access to world-class cancer and surgical care is an important thread in Rhode Island's quality of life. I'm proud that CharterCARE has attracted a national talent to take a leadership role in the development of our thoracic surgery program. His special interests in thoracic oncology and research background in lung cancer will advance patient care and treatment options and complement the work of the Roger Williams Cancer Center." ❖

Recognition

Brown University Health hospitals named among nation's best in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2026–2027 rankings

PROVIDENCE — *U.S. News & World Report* released its 2026–2027 Best Hospitals ratings recently; The Miriam Hospital, Rhode Island Hospital, Newport Hospital and Saint Anne's Hospital were recognized in the annual rankings. The Miriam Hospital and Vanderbilt Rehabilitation Center at Newport Hospital are ranked number one in Rhode Island and in the Providence metro area. All four Brown University Health hospitals received "high performing" scores in specialty care.

"Across Brown University Health, our clinicians and staff are dedicated to delivering exceptional, world-class care to patients throughout Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts every day," said **SARAH FROST**, chief of hospital operations at Brown University Health and president of Rhode Island Hospital. "We are proud to see several of our hospitals recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*, this recognition reflects the skill, compassion and commitment of our teams and the trust of the communities we serve."

The Miriam Hospital has earned the honor of top hospital in Rhode Island for 15 straight years, starting with *U.S. News & World Report's* first state rankings in 2012–2013.

"To be recognized once again as the No. 1 hospital in Rhode Island is a tremendous honor and a reflection of the exceptional care our teams provide every day," said **MARIA DUCHARME, DNP, RN**, president of The Miriam Hospital and chief quality executive at Brown University Health. "For 15 consecutive years, The Miriam Hospital has earned this distinction, underscoring our team's unwavering commitment to quality, safety and compassionate care. I am deeply proud of our physicians, nurses, clinical teams and staff whose dedication continues to make this recognition possible."

U.S. News also gave the hospital "high performing" rankings for its excellence in care and treatment in the following eight conditions and adult specialty areas:

- Hip Replacements
- Hip Fracture
- Knee Replacements
- Back Surgery Spinal Fusion
- Colon Cancer Surgery
- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Pneumonia

Vanderbilt Rehabilitation Center at Newport Hospital has earned the honor of top rehabilitation center in Rhode Island and the Providence metro area for the 2026–2027 rankings. Newport Hospital also earned a "high performing" ranking for its excellence in specialty care and treatment for the following condition:

- Diabetes

Rhode Island Hospital received "high performing" rankings for its excellence in care and treatment in the following three conditions:

- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Repair
- Lung Cancer Surgery
- Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement

In addition, Saint Anne's Hospital received a "high performing" ranking for excellence in:

- Hip Replacement

For the 2026–2027 rankings and ratings, *U.S. News* evaluated nearly 4,500 hospitals across 14 adult specialties and 23 procedures and conditions; only 16% of evaluated hospitals earned a Best Hospitals designation. ❖

Brown University Health's LifePACT earns prestigious national accreditation for critical care transport

PROVIDENCE — Brown University Health's Critical Care Transport Team, LifePACT, has earned accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS), becoming the third ground-only medical transport program in the United States to receive this prestigious recognition.

CAMTS accreditation is considered the gold standard for medical transport programs, recognizing organizations that meet rigorous national standards for patient care, safety, clinical excellence, education, and operational performance. This designation reflects LifePACT's commitment to delivering the highest level of critical care during patient transport.

LifePACT specializes in the emergency transport of critically ill and injured adult and pediatric patients, providing advanced critical care while safely transferring patients to the most appropriate medical facility. Like the lifesaving care often associated with helicopter medical evacuation services, LifePACT delivers that same level of expertise through specialized ground transport.

Operating from Providence, the LifePACT team staffs two advanced life support ambulances 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Each year, the team transports approximately 1,500 critically ill or injured patients throughout Rhode Island and the surrounding region.

During every transport, LifePACT's highly trained team have access to advanced medical technology to stabilize patients and continue intensive care before they reach the hospital. The team's capabilities include mechanical ventilation, advanced cardiac monitoring, oxygen therapy, and the transport of patients requiring highly specialized cardiac support devices, including intra-aortic balloon pumps and Impella heart pumps.

"We have monitors, ventilators, oxygen equipment, and the ability to transport patients on balloon pumps and Impella devices that support patients experiencing severe cardiac emergencies," said **NELSON PEDRO**, a critical care paramedic

and operations manager for Life Pact. "Our team brings the intensive care unit directly to the patient, ensuring they receive expert critical care every step of the journey."

"This accreditation is a testament to the dedication, expertise, and professionalism of our entire LifePACT team," said **SARAH FROST**, chief of hospital operations at Brown University Health and president of Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's. "Achieving CAMTS accreditation demonstrates our commitment to providing the highest quality care for patients during some of the most critical moments of their lives." ♦

Westerly Hospital honored with the 2026 Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) Lantern Award

WESTERLY — Westerly Hospital is proud to announce that its Emergency Department has been honored with the 2026 Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) Lantern Award, a national recognition of excellence in emergency nursing.

This is the first time Westerly Hospital has been selected for the award. Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London, and Pequot Health Center in Groton, CT also received the honor last year. All three emergency departments are part of Yale New Haven Health.

The ENA Lantern Award showcases an Emergency Department's accomplishments in incorporating evidence-based practice and innovation into emergency care. It encourages departments to share

stories that reflect a commitment to both exceptional patient care and the well-being of nursing staff.

"This prestigious recognition encourages Emergency Departments (ED) to share stories that highlight their commitment not only to exceptional patient care but also to the well-being of their nursing staff," said **SHANNON CHRISTIAN**, chief nursing officer at Westerly Hospital. "It stands as a visible symbol of Westerly's dedication to quality, safety and fostering a healthy work environment."

The ED was selected for outstanding performance in leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research. The award reflects ongoing efforts to create a supportive and resilient environment for

staff while delivering the highest standard of care to patients and families.

"We are incredibly proud of our Emergency Department teams for earning this national recognition," said **OLIVER MAYORGA, MD**, interim president, Westerly Hospital. "Their hard work, compassion and unwavering commitment to the patient and family experience are what make this honor so well deserved. This award reflects the excellence they bring to our emergency departments every day."

The Lantern Award is valid for three years and serves as a beacon for other emergency departments striving for excellence. ♦

The Miriam Hospital Emergency Department recognized as an Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) Lantern Award recipient

PROVIDENCE — The Miriam Hospital Emergency Department has been selected as a recipient of the 2026 ENA Lantern Award, which recognizes exceptional innovation and evidence-based practice improvements that result in improved patient care and staff well-being.

"Receiving the ENA Lantern Award is a testament to the extraordinary commitment, compassion and expertise of our emergency department team," said **MARIA DUCHARME, DNP, RN**, president of The Miriam Hospital and chief quality executive for Brown University Health. "At The Miriam Hospital, our nurses and front-line clinicians are empowered to lead innovation and drive meaningful change. This recognition reflects their unwavering dedication to delivering exceptional care while creating a safer, more supportive environment for patients, families and staff."

The Miriam Hospital earned the Lantern Award for exceeding the criteria for Lantern Award designation in the areas of quality, safety, healthy work environment, and innovation in nursing practice and emergency care. In addition, ENA notes that Lantern-recognized departments demonstrate exemplary performance across the core domains of leadership, practice, education, advocacy, and research initiatives that improved patient access and strengthened workforce safety in its emergency department. Guided by a culture of shared governance and nurse-led innovation, the department achieved a 40 percent reduction in patients who left without being seen, helping ensure more timely access to emergency care.

The department also implemented several safety enhancements to better protect patients and staff, including a weapons detection system, a reinforced triage area and wearable panic

badges for employees. These investments reflect The Miriam Hospital's commitment to creating a safe environment where caregivers can deliver the highest-quality emergency care.

"This recognition reflects the extraordinary commitment of our emergency department team to deliver exceptional care every day," said **DENISE BRENNAN, DNP, RN, CNL**, director of Emergency Services, Radiology Nursing and the Stroke Program for The Miriam Hospital. "I am deeply grateful to our nurses, physicians, support staff and clinical leaders, whose dedication

to quality, safety, innovation and continuous improvement made this achievement possible. The Lantern Award reflects the culture they have built together and their unwavering commitment to patients, families and colleagues."

The Miriam Hospital is among 126 recipients nationwide recognized this year and one of only two hospitals in the state of Rhode Island to ever receive this award. This designation is granted through a rigorous national peer review process and is valid for three years. ❖

South County Hospital earns 17th consecutive Outstanding Patient Experience Award

WAKEFIELD — South County Hospital is proud to announce it has once again been recognized with the Outstanding Patient Experience Award from Healthgrades—marking 17 consecutive years (2010–2026) of this prestigious honor. This recognition places South County Hospital among the top 5% of hospitals nationwide for Outstanding Patient Experience and an even more elite group of only 27 hospitals nationwide to earn the award for 17 straight years, and the only hospital in Rhode Island to do so.

"This recognition reflects the commitment of our entire team—from our providers and nurses to our support staff and volunteers—to creating an exceptional experience for every patient who walks through our doors," said **AARON ROBINSON**, President and CEO of South County Health. "Outstanding patient care is about more than just delivering excellent clinical outcomes; it's also about making every patient feel heard, respected, informed, and cared for throughout their healthcare journey. We are honored that our patients continue to recognize the compassion, personalized attention, and high-quality care that define the South County Health experience."

The Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award recognizes hospitals that consistently deliver exceptional care while placing patients at the center of every interaction. Based on patient survey data, the award reflects excellence in

communication, responsiveness, cleanliness, and the overall quality of the patient experience. Healthgrades distinctions are widely recognized by patients seeking trusted information when choosing where to receive care, particularly for elective procedures.

In addition to this milestone, South County Hospital has recently earned several other top Healthgrades distinctions, including:

- 5-Star Rating for Treatment of Heart Failure (2025–2026)
- 5-Star Rating for Treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (2025–2026)
- 5-Star Rating for Treatment of Pneumonia (2025–2026)
- Pulmonary Care Excellence Award (2025–2026)
- 5-Star for Treatment of Diabetic Hospitalizations (2026)
- 5-Star for Outpatient Total Knee Replacement (2026)
- 5-Star Rating in Vaginal Delivery (2024–2025), Top 10% in the Nation
- 5-Star Rating in C-Section Delivery (2024–2025)

These recognitions reflect South County Hospital's continued commitment to delivering exceptional clinical outcomes while providing every patient with a compassionate, personalized, and high-quality healthcare experience. ❖