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Recognition



Dr. Donald Coustan recognized as giant in obstetrics and gynecology

DONALD R. COUSTAN, MD, of Jamestown, director of the Prenatal Diabetes Program in the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Women & Infants Hospital and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Alpert Medical School, has been recognized as a “Giant in Obstetrics and Gynecology.” This recognition

is part of a series by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology (AJOG) through which AJOG recognizes individuals who have changed the practice of medicine.

Dr. Coustan is an internationally recognized expert on the management of diabetes in pregnancy and is the author of more

than 200 research papers and scholarly publications. He was chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Women & Infants Hospital and the Alpert Medical School from 1991 to 2008.

“This is a wonderful honor for Dr. Coustan and the hospital in general,” said Diane Rafferty, interim president and chief operating officer of Women & Infants Hospital, a Care New England hospital. “Dr. Coustan, like so many of our physicians, works tirelessly every day to help improve the lives of women. Through his innovative work in the field of maternal-fetal medicine, and in particular his groundbreaking research on treating diabetes in pregnancy, he has impacted women’s health care in unique and valuable ways.” ❖



Dr. Matthew Bivens recognized as EMS Physician of the Year by GFREMSCC

FALL RIVER – The Greater Fall River Emergency Medical Services Coordinating Committee (GFREMSCC) has named **DR. MATTHEW BIVENS**, EMS Medical Director for St. Luke’s Hospital, as 2017 EMS Physician of the Year.

“I am very honored to accept this award, and it is a real privilege for

me to be associated with the EMS services in our region, which I consider to be truly elite EMS services,” Dr. Bivens said at the GFREMSCC annual conference on October 27. He added that the award reflected the commitment of the entire St. Luke’s emergency department team, under **DR. JENNIFER POPE**, to supporting and partnering with local EMS.

Dr. Bivens was nominated jointly by Acushnet Fire/EMS Chief Kevin Gallagher and New Bedford EMS Director Mark McGraw.

Chief Gallagher lauded Dr. Bivens for his successful efforts to inspire significant policy changes with the office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS).

In particular, the award recognized the work organized by Dr. Bivens and involving multiple local private and municipal EMS companies – including Acushnet EMS, Alert EMS, East-Care EMS, Fairhaven EMS and New Bedford EMS – to provide

prehospital tranexamic acid (TXA), an inexpensive and life-saving medication for trauma patients. Randomized trials, and also U.S. military battlefield experience, have shown that TXA, when provided as early as possible to a trauma patient, can be life-saving.

Use of the medication by 911 ambulances was pioneered by EMS companies affiliated with St. Luke’s Hospital, in a year-long program administered by Dr. Bivens and Brian Giorgianni, the St. Luke’s Hospital EMS Coordinator, and in cooperation with Rhode Island Hospital trauma services. This year, the pilot program led to changes in statewide EMS protocols for both Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Dr. Bivens was also one of many EMS leaders and medical directors who, concerned about the opioid epidemic, have championed non-opioid pain management options for the state’s ambulances. Working with Acushnet EMS, Dr. Bivens coordinated a special project application to include Ofirmev, an IV preparation of acetaminophen (better known in pill form by its brand name Tylenol) on ambulances. There was such strong interest in this and other non-opioid pain management options that the Department of Public Health skipped the standard approach of a special project, and in October adopted “IV Tylenol” and other non-opioid pain relievers as emergency protocol update options for EMS. ❖

Recognition

Rhode Island Hospital named one of the nation's 50 top Cardiovascular Hospitals by IBM Watson Health

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island Hospital is among the nation's top cardiovascular programs, according to IBM Watson Health's recent "50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals 2018" study. Rhode Island Hospital is one of only three hospitals in New England to earn the distinction, and the only one in the state.

The annual study, conducted by IBM Watson Health's Truven Health Analytics, identifies the top U.S. hospitals for in-patient cardiovascular services. The study uses a balanced national scorecard of hospital performance metrics to identify the highest performing cardio-

vascular service lines in the nation.

The Watson Health 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals study measures attainment in key performance areas: risk-adjusted inpatient mortality, risk-adjusted complications, percentage of coronary bypass patients with internal mammary artery use, 30-day mortality rates, 30-day readmission rates, severity-adjusted average length of stay, wage- and severity-adjusted average cost per case and CMS 30-day episode payment measures. The study has been conducted annually since 1999. This is the fourth time Rhode Island Hospital has been

recognized with this honor.

"We are so honored that Rhode Island Hospital has been recognized by IBM Watson for our cardiac care. This speaks volumes to the tremendous expertise within the Lifespan Cardiovascular Institute, and the outstanding patient care provided in the inpatient setting at Rhode Island Hospital," said **MARGARET M. VAN BREE, MHA, DrPH**, president of Rhode Island Hospital.

The top hospitals were announced in the November 6, 2017, edition of *Modern Healthcare* magazine. ❖

Lifespan hospitals earn top patient safety scores in national Leapfrog ratings

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island, The Miriam, and Newport hospitals all received an "A" in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade released recently by The Leapfrog Group. Lifespan is the only health system in Rhode Island to receive the top score for all its eligible hospitals.

Leapfrog, the national nonprofit health care ratings organization, gives grades of A, B, C, D and F to hospitals based on their performance in preventing medical errors, infections and other harms. Nationwide, 832 hospitals earned an A.

"Our outstanding professionals work diligently every day to ensure that patients receive the highest quality care and best possible outcomes in the spirit of delivering health with care," said **CATHY E. DUQUETTE, PhD, RN**, executive vice president for nursing affairs at Lifespan. "We are proud and honored that Leapfrog has recognized the tremendous investment in continuous improvement at each of our hospitals."

Developed under the guidance of a blue ribbon national expert panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,600 U.S. hospitals twice each year. It is calculated by top patient safety experts, peer reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. ❖



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Recognition

Southcoast Health hospitals receive 'A' grades for Patient Safety in Leapfrog's Fall 2017 Hospital Safety Grade

NEW BEDFORD – Southcoast Health has been recognized for its dedication to patient safety by being awarded an “A” grade in the Fall 2017 Hospital Safety Grades, which rates how well hospitals protect patients from preventable medical errors, injuries and infections within the hospital. Southcoast Health's three hospitals – St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford, Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River and Tobey Hospital in Wareham – were each recognized with the top rating.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades assign A, B, C, D and F letter grades to hospitals nationwide. St. Luke's, Charlton Memorial and Tobey were three of 832 hospitals to receive an “A” for its commitment to reducing errors, infections, and accidents that can harm patients.

“Patient safety is paramount to everyone at Southcoast Health,” said **KEITH HOVAN**, President & CEO of Southcoast Health. “When patients are admitted to a Southcoast Health hospital, they and their families can be confident that we have the personnel, training and systems in place to maintain the highest level of clinical care and patient safety.”

The Hospital Safety Grades are compiled under the guidance of patient safety experts and administered by The Leapfrog Group, a national, independent nonprofit. The Hospital Safety Grades are free to the public and designed to give consumers information they can use to protect themselves and their families when facing a hospital stay. ❖

HARI holds annual meeting; members recognized for service

PROVIDENCE –The Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) recently hosted its 85th annual meeting at the Providence Marriott Downtown. Recipients of the Benjamin R. Sturges Distinguished Service Award, Francis R. Dietz Award for Public Service, and the American Hospital Association (AHA) Grassroots Champion Award were honored by the association and its attendees.

HARI recognized **MICHAEL DACEY, MD**, president and chief operating officer of Kent Hospital and president of Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, as the newly-appointed chair of the HARI Board of Trustees. John Holiver, chief executive officer of CharterCARE Health Partners, has been elected vice chair of the board.

EVE KEENAN and **STEPHEN GREENE** were awarded the Benjamin R. Sturges Distinguished Service Award. Keenan was honored for her commitment and dedication to South County Health where she serves as chair of the board of trustees. Greene was recognized as chair of the Westerly Hospital Board of Trustees. The Distinguished Service Award is bestowed in honor of Benjamin Sturges, a community leader who devoted his life to health care and to bettering the community.

The Francis R. Dietz Award for Public Service was presented to **SEN. V. SUSAN SOSNOWSKI** and **REP. TERESA TANZI** for their leadership on legislation to reduce the regulatory burden of physician offices acquired by hospitals or healthcare systems. The Francis R. Dietz Award for Public Service honors individuals for remarkable contributions to health care issues.

The American Hospital Association's Grassroots Champion Award was presented to **CHRISTOPHER LEHRACH, MD**, executive director of network development for the Eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island Division of Yale New Haven Health. The award recognizes hospital leaders who effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect hospitals' vital role in the community, who have done an exemplary job in broadening the base of community support for hospitals, and who have been tireless advocates for hospitals and patients.

HARI President **TERESA PAIVA WEED** presented the HARI 2017 Annual Report. The report included highlights of the association's numerous legislative victories and quality initiatives. In addition to HARI's advocacy efforts, Paiva Weed provided attendees with a summary of HARI's member-focused services and business plan for 2018. ❖

Appointments

Linda Hunter, EdD, named president-elect of the American Midwifery Certification Board

LINDA HUNTER, EdD, CNM, FACNM, of Pawtucket, a certified nurse midwife and assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology (clinical) in the Midwifery Program in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Women & Infants Hospital and The Alpert Medical School, has been appointed president-elect of the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB). She will be appointed president in 2019 and will serve a three-year term.



Hunter joined the Midwifery Program in November 2007, previously working as a registered nurse in the emergency room, labor and delivery, and as a staff educator at Women & Infants from 1982 to 1995. Once completing her graduate education in nurse midwifery at the University of Rhode Island, Hunter worked in private practice in New London, CT. She then joined the faculty of the University of Vermont (UVM), during which time she worked in a hospital-based nurse midwifery practice and held faculty appointments in the College of Medicine and Nursing. Hunter actively participated in the classroom and clinical education of nursing and medical students and received her doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from UVM in 2008.

A contributing editor, Clinical Rounds section for the *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health*, Hunter is also the current chair of the Certificate Maintenance Committee of the AMCB. ❖



J. Tessa Draper, MD, joins Southcoast Physicians

FALL RIVER – Family medicine physician **J. TESSA DRAPER, MD**, has joined Southcoast Physicians Group.

Dr. Draper earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Massachusetts Boston before completing her medical degree at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. She completed residency in family medicine at Cambridge Health Alliance and Carney Hospital through Tufts University School of Medicine.

Dr. Draper is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians and Massachusetts Medical Society. Her professional interests include addiction medicine, women's health and quality improvement. ❖

Ganary Dabiri, MD, PhD, joins CharterCARE

Dermatologist **GANARY DABIRI, MD, PhD**, joins CharterCARE as the Associate Program Director for CharterCARE Medical Associates and Director of the Dermatology Wound Healing Clinic at Roger Williams Medical Center.



Dr. Dabiri is board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology and a Fellow of the American Board of Dermatology.

She completed her residency at Roger Williams Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine, where she served as chief resident in dermatology in her final year. She also completed a Wound Healing Fellowship at Roger Williams.

Dr. Dabiri completed medical school at Albany Medical College, where she also received her PhD and master's degree in cell biology and cancer research. She received her Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Florida International University.

A member of the American Academy of Dermatology, The Rhode Island Dermatology Society, the New England Dermatology Society, and the American Medical Association, Dr. Dabiri has numerous research publications and presentations to her credit. ❖

Obituaries



ALBERTO V. ERFE, MD, 78, of Lincoln passed away peacefully November 11, 2017. He was the beloved husband of Hilda (Giron) Erfe.

Born in the Philippines, he had lived in Lincoln for the past 43 years.

Dr. Erfe was a physician specializing in internal medicine and cardiology for over 40 years. He was a graduate of University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine & Surgery in the Philippines. After arriving in Rhode Island, he was trained at Miriam and Rhode Island Hospitals. He was on the staff of Landmark Medical Center, Woonsocket and the former Fogarty Memorial Hospital, North Smithfield. Besides his wife, he is survived by his loving son, Vincent Erfe and his wife, Kirstin of Washington, D.C.; his beloved grandchildren, Jack and Madeleine; a sister and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Dr. Erfe's memory to La-Salette Shrine, 947 Park Street, Attleboro, MA 02703 would be appreciated. ❖

DR. HO YONG LEE passed away at the age of 91 years on October 29, 2017 surrounded by his loving family at his home in Providence.

Dr. Lee was born in Korea and raised in Seoul, younger of two brothers. After graduating Seoul National University College of Medicine, Dr. Lee served as Captain in the Korean Air Force during the Korean War. He first came to the United States in 1953 to complete his medical training. He subsequently, returned to Korea, obtained a position as a medical school professor, married and started a family there. Ultimately, though, he and his wife chose to immigrate to the United States, and settled in Rhode Island.

Dr. Lee served as the Chief of the Pathology Laboratory at the Rhode Island State Department of Health for 25 years. He worked on many public health initiatives to improve the quality and efficiency of care given to the people in the state. He was active for decades in the Korean Association of Rhode Island, serving as its president for a time.

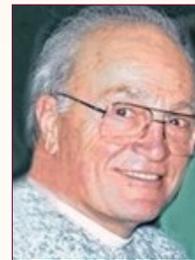
Dr. Lee was a caring and devoted father who spent many hours chauffeuring his children to and from classes, camps, tournaments, and team practices, helping them with homework, and encouraging their hobbies and enthusiasms. With his wife, he

built a beautiful home in Barrington, which was a haven for his children and grandchildren during their visits. The magnificent flowering magnolia and cherry blossom trees and the annual harvest of tomatoes and cucumbers there were a testament to that fact that Dr. Lee was ever a gardener and farmer at heart. A talented and inspired artist, his many paintings are a legacy that continue to grace the homes of his children and friends.

Dr. Lee is survived by his wife of 57 years Theresa Soon Yung, daughters Susanna, Marian and Sandra Lee Chen, son-in-law, Sidney Chen, and his grandchildren Larissa, Alexander Chen and Elizabeth Chen. In lieu of flowers, donations may be directed in memory of Dr. Ho Yong Lee to LEEF (Laurelmead Employee Educational Fund) 355 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence, RI 02906 or Zion Korean United Methodist Church, 35 Kilvert St., Warwick, RI 02886. ❖



FRANK MERLINO, MD, 93, of Warwick, died November 18, 2017, after self-diagnosing his afib, but uncharacteristically, misdiagnosing an unrelated complication. For 59 years, he was the beloved husband of Mary Ellen (Murtagh) Merlino, who he lovingly cared for until her death in 2010.



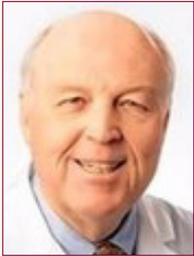
He graduated from Classical High School and attended Brown University before completing medical school at Tufts University. He was a Captain in the U.S. Navy tending to the needs of injured soldiers during the Korean war.

Dr. Merlino was the second board-certified cardiologist in the state, and practiced at Rhode Island Hospital for over 35 years. He was the president of the medical staff of the hospital from 1972 to 1973.

He is survived by his six sons, and their wives, John and Melissa of Atlanta, GA, Mark and Bobbie of Washington, DC, Matthew and Debora of Sandy Springs, GA, Andrew and Lynne of Dallas, TX, Frank and Hike of Warwick, Paul and Kia of Atlanta, GA, and his 12 grandchildren. Frank was predeceased by his son Francis and his daughter, Maribeth.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to Nursing Education, RI Hospital Foundation, PO Box H., Providence, RI 02901 will be appreciated. ❖

Obituaries



RICHARD J. "DICK" RYTER, MD, passed away peacefully on November 13, 2017 surrounded by his loving family. He was a resident of Cranston, Rhode Island and Green Hill, Rhode Island.

He was a graduate of College of the Holy Cross and Cornell University Medical College and completed his residency in internal medicine at the University Hospitals of Cleveland, and Case Western Reserve University Hospitals. Dick was honored with an appointment to chief resident, before establishing his private practice in Rhode Island. He was a member of the Providence Medical Society, the Rhode Island Medical Society and the American Society of Internal Medicine.

Dick is survived by his wife, Marcia, as well as their daughter Amelia and her husband Mark Nihill, and their son Jack. He was predeceased by his son, Joseph "Jay" Ryter. ❖



ROBERT DENNIS TARRO, MD, 82, of North Kingstown passed away Nov. 8, 2017, peacefully at home surrounded by his family. He was the loving husband of the late Mary (Rogers) Tarro.

He graduated from Classical High School, Georgetown University College of Arts and Sciences, and Georgetown University School of Medicine. He went to the Graduate School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and completed his residency training in otolaryngology/head and neck surgery at Rhode Island Hospital. He served as a Captain in the United States Air Force. After his military service, he returned to Rhode Island to raise his family and begin his career.

From 1967 until his retirement in 2012, Dr. Tarro practiced in partnership with Drs. Vartan Papazian and Thomas Della Torre, later to become Rhode Island Ears, Nose, and Throat Physicians.



He was on staff at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital, Miriam Hospital, Our Lady of Fatima Hospital, and Blackstone Valley Surgicare. At Memorial, he served as president of the medical staff and chief of otolaryngology. He was a fellow of the American Academy of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery, the American College of Surgeons, and the American Society of Otolaryngology Allergy. Dr. Tarro was a member of the Pawtucket Medical Society, Rhode Island Medical Society, and New England Otolaryngologic Society. It was his honor and privilege to serve his patients and the community for almost 50 years.

He was a good father, a committed physician, and an honorable man who lived a happy, full and productive life until the end. He will be missed and cherished by all those who knew him.

Dr. Tarro is survived by his eight children: R. Dennis Tarro II and his wife Lissa of Sterling, VA; Anthony M. Tarro and his wife Patricia of North Kingstown; John M. Tarro, MD, and his partner James Mooney of Cranston; Pamela A. Tarro of Providence; Jennifer J. Walsh and her husband Richard of Hingham, MA; Christopher T. Tarro and his wife Tejal of Greenville; Matthew R. Tarro of Santa Monica, CA; and Mark S. Tarro of Quincy, MA.

He also leaves nine grandchildren, several nieces and nephews, a large extended family and many dear friends.

In honor of his passion for life, memorial donations may be made to the Memory & Aging Program at Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence, RI 02906 or the Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org. ❖