

RIMJ Covers Capture Mid-Century Medical Landscape

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The covers of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal* (RIMJ) offer a portrait of the state's medical history and innovations, as well as other glimpses of life at the time. Perusing the archives,¹ you never know what you will find, as these covers, captions, and related content from 1974 illustrate.

Weather-wise, looks like some snow decorated the region during the holiday season (Figure 1). The March 1974 cover showcased up-to-date modalities in nuclear medicine (Figure 2). And, welcoming springtime, the May cover featured the latest post office stamp, (18-cents!), of the first woman physician to receive a medical degree in America, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. The caption stated there are many physician philatelists, some of whom specialize in stamps concerning medical subjects (Figure 3).



Figure 2. March 1974
Single probe rectilinear scanner illustrated an introduction to nuclear medicine and imaging modalities in use.



Figure 4. June 1974
The Providence V.A. Hospital at Davis Park, which marked the 25th anniversary of its opening on June 6th.

V.A. Hospital at Davis Park

The cover and editorial in the June issue 50 years ago showcased the 25th anniversary of the Providence V.A. Hospital at Davis Point (Figure 4) (See sidebar). According to a 2018 document in the National Register of Historic Places, "State-of-the-art facilities with buildings for research and patient care were the hallmarks of the post-World War II Veterans Administration medical centers, referred to today as the 'third generation' of veterans' hospitals."²

At that time the VA had the largest network of hospitals in the nation. Figure 5 shows a photo of the main building of the Providence VA

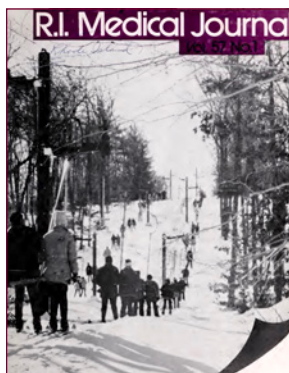


Figure 1. January 1974
Snow makes brief return to Rhode Island ski areas.
[COURTESY OF RHODE ISLAND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL]



Figure 3. May 1974
Reproduction of postage stamp with image of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, first woman physician to receive a medical degree in America.



Figure 5. Providence V.A. Hospital, 1948.
[NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES¹]

The V.A. Hospital at Davis Park³

Our cover this month is devoted to the Veterans Administration Hospital of Providence, Rhode Island, located on a commanding hill-top in Davis Park. On June 6th is celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its opening.

The caliber of V.A. medicine can be measured by the stature of the medical authorities who appeared on the anniversary program – all affiliated with V.A. hospitals. One of the more prestigious names was that of **Dr. Rosalyn S. Yalow**, who, with the late **Solomon A. Berson**, developed radio-immunoassay while working in a V.A. hospital.

In the past quarter century, it has served the veterans of Rhode Island well. In the absence of a medical school in the local area, it has been affiliated with Boston University, training residents in both medicine and surgery.

Two new developments were announced in connection with the anniversary celebration. The first is expected approval for the building of an extensive, new, two-story ambulatory wing to provide for a rapidly expanding ambulatory service.

The second development is the formal affiliation in the Brown University Medical School to commence with the coming academic year. The hospital will receive students from the medical school and train residents in the various specialties in coordination with the other teaching hospitals in the Brown system.

We congratulate "The V.A." on the occasion of its observance of twenty-five years of service to the state and its veterans and look forward to a continued complete relationship and a closer integration with the medical community of Rhode Island.



Figure 6. September 1974
The issue described the start of statewide training programs in Emergency Medical Services.

in 1948, one of six of 46 hospitals completed by 1950 to serve the veterans of World War II.²

Emergency Medical Services

The Sept. 1974 issue contained an article by Edward J. Lynch, an RIMJ editor, with photos on the development of formal training courses for the emergency medical services (EMS) in the state (Figure 6). The first educational forum was held at The Miriam Hospital in 1970, coordinated by **DR. ROBERT L. CONRAD**, a surgeon and chair-

man of the Rhode Island Medical Society's Emergency Medical Services Committee, formerly known as the Disaster Committee, and physician members, as well as "rescue squad workers and allied health personnel in their areas of expertise."³

The program quickly spread to Newport, Kent, Woonsocket, Fogarty and Memorial hospitals, and statewide ambulance corps. Topics included: vital signs and their significance, medical emergencies, neurological problems, surgical injuries, fractures, the emotionally disturbed and unruly, emergency childbirth, infectious and contagious diseases, environmental emergencies, and car crashes (Figure 7).³



Figure 8

Figure 7. An EMS training exercise in the early 1970s in Rhode Island on a car accident response.

[RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL JOURNAL, SEPT. 1974]

The article also described extrication courses. An ice rescue was demonstrated in February 1971 at Roger Williams Park, which proved extremely successful as "practical training exercises." In addition, a curriculum was developed for students at Rhode Island Junio College, which further expanded on the initial EMS statewide training offerings.

In looking ahead, the article noted "the obvious pressure constantly to improve, alter and modify to meet the changing circumstances of the times and the new and expanding frontiers of medical knowledge...even when certification has been achieved for all, there will still be new challenges to be met."

RIMJ Archives Online

For readers interested in a deeper dive into Rhode Island's medical landscape over the century, archival editions from 1917–2000 can be accessed online.¹ You never know what you will discover – be it a vintage 18-cent-stamp or a Leonardo da Vinci illustration in an issue on pediatrics, as shown on the Oct. 1974 cover (Figure 8).



Figure 8: October 1974
"Head of a Child" by Leonardo da Vinci, from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy. The issue contained a special section on pediatrics.

References

1. <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/c.php?g=947422&p=7661408>.
2. <https://www.cfm.va.gov/historic/UnitedStates-ThirdGenerationVeteransHospitals-1946-1958-MPSSigned.pdf>
3. *Rhode Island Medical Journal*. June 1974; p. 256.