



MedStar Montgomery  
Medical Center

COMMUNITY  
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# FOCUSED ON YOU

FALL 2019

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HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM MEDSTAR MONTGOMERY MEDICAL CENTER

[MedStarMontgomery.org](http://MedStarMontgomery.org)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Our Ongoing 100th Anniversary Celebration Brings Program Expansion and New Partnerships



At MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, our 100th Anniversary celebration continues with the expansion of our oncology and breast health programs. Our new Outpatient Oncology Center brings world-class cancer care to Olney, Maryland. It is overseen by one of our new providers, Behzad Doratotaj, MD, hematologist and medical oncologist. He will provide leadership to a multidisciplinary team and collaborate with Dr. Luther Ampey, III, medical director of MedStar Montgomery Cancer Center. Our new Breast Health and Imaging Center, with the most advanced treatments and compassionate care, is under the leadership of Dawn Leonard, MD.

We are also proud of our recent partnership with JSSA, a health and social wellness agency, to ensure we provide hospital-based hospice care. Patients with life-limiting illnesses, whose symptoms are unable to be managed in a typical home setting, have the opportunity to receive compassionate care from our interdisciplinary healthcare team in a comfortable environment.

We have seen continuous growth of our service lines through provider recruitment, including new physicians in gastroenterology, Ob/Gyn, hematology/oncology, and orthopaedics. John Schmitz Foley, MD, is one of our new providers at MedStar Orthopaedic Institute on campus. He treats all manner of hand conditions, specializing in complex hand, wrist, and elbow disorders affecting both adults and children.

Over the past century, we have cared for generations of local families. One great example is Georgina Frempong, featured on page 4. Georgina was able to build her family, despite the challenges of facing several ectopic pregnancies—a truly amazing story that motivates us each day.

Through our relationships with our patients and our team's broader spirit of service (see page 9), MedStar Montgomery is building a healthier local and global community. In this issue of *Focused on You*, you will find stories that showcase our commitment to giving back, our clinicians' medical excellence, and our patients' inspiring resilience. We are proud of all we have accomplished together in the past 100 years and excited to continue delivering the latest in medical care for generations to come.

Yours in good health,

**THOMAS J. SENKER, FACHE**

President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

# FOCUSED ON YOU

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MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

## COMMUNITY CLASS SCHEDULE

### EXERCISE CLASSES

**Yoga, Beginner and Intermediate**  
\$60 for 6 weeks, dates vary

### SENIOR CLASSES

**Gentle Flow Yoga for Seniors**  
\$40 for 8 weeks, dates vary

**Tai Chi**  
FREE, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays

**Senior Strength & Balance**  
FREE, dates vary

**Zumba Gold**  
FREE, Mondays and Wednesdays

### DIABETES CLASSES

**Diabetes Self-Management**  
\$40 for 2 weeks, dates vary

**Pre-Diabetes**  
\$40 per 2-week session, dates vary  
See also: Diabetes Support Group below.

### YOUTH PROGRAMS

**Home Alone**  
For ages 8 to 11, \$35  
Third Saturday of each month

**Babysitting + CPR**  
For ages 12 to 15, \$75, dates vary

### SUPPORT GROUPS

**Breastfeeding Support Group**  
FREE, drop-in every Thursday

**Chronic Illness**  
FREE, first Wednesday of each month

**Diabetes Support Group**  
FREE, last Thursday of each month

**Mothers' Support Group**  
FREE, drop-in every Monday

**FreshStart®: Smoking Cessation Program**  
FREE, every Friday

### PARENTING CLASSES (DATES VARY)

**Complete Childbirth Preparation**  
\$150 for 6 weeks

**Childbirth Express:** \$75

**Lamaze Technique:** \$60

**Breastfeeding Basics:** \$30

**Infant Care:** \$30

See also: Mothers' and Breastfeeding Support Groups above.

### OTHER CLASSES

**Living Well: A workshop for people living with a chronic disease or condition**  
FREE, dates vary

For full descriptions and to learn more about dates and times, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes](http://MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes) or call **301-774-8881 (Option 4)**.

# Compassionate End-of-Life Care *MedStar Montgomery and JSSA Partner to Bring Comfort to Patients and Their Families*



**When it comes time to make those heart-wrenching decisions about a loved one's end-of-life care, it can be difficult to navigate without a strong support system.**

Emotions surrounding the end of life can often impair sound decision-making. To address this need for support, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center and Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA), a health and social wellness agency, partnered in July 2019 to provide hospital-based hospice care from a compassionate, knowledgeable interdisciplinary healthcare team.

"At JSSA we know how difficult it is to navigate end-of-life care," says Todd Schenk, chief executive officer of JSSA. "It is one of life's most consequential moments. For those moments, we knew it was important for families to receive expert medical care in a caring and trusted setting."

Now, MedStar Montgomery patients with terminal diagnoses have readily available options for hospice care. If JSSA is their chosen hospice provider and their symptoms require continuous skilled treatment, patients may be able to stay at MedStar Montgomery for general inpatient care through the new arrangement with JSSA.

In addition, JSSA hospice patients with life-limiting illnesses, who meet specific eligibility requirements and whose symptoms are unable to be managed in a typical home setting, would receive around-the-clock medical care in a comfortable environment at MedStar Montgomery, surrounded by their loved ones. Families and individuals who qualify for this level of care receive pain and symptom management, as well as therapeutic support from a team of care providers. Licensed therapists and chaplains also provide emotional and spiritual support.

"That patient-first approach to care extends to end-of-life, which is why we have collaborated with the excellent team at JSSA to bring hospital-based hospice care to our community," says

Thomas J. Senker, FACHE, president of MedStar Montgomery and senior vice president of MedStar Health.

"We realized we had found that missing ingredient with JSSA that would align with our philosophy of care," explains Frederick C. Finelli, MD, JD, and vice president for Medical Affairs at MedStar Montgomery. Dr. Finelli is excited to have JSSA's expertise as a trusted partner and for MedStar Montgomery to be able to provide the resources and the space for this important care.

Training was a collaborative experience, as JSSA provided education to MedStar Montgomery nurses, preparing them for the wave of powerful emotions that come with hospice care, and in turn, JSSA received training on the philosophy of relationship-based care. "JSSA and Medstar Montgomery strive to create the best possible environment for compassionate and personalized hospital-based hospice care," says Ann Serafenas, senior director of inpatient nursing.

The interdisciplinary team of caring experts includes a hospice physician, registered nurses, social workers, certified nursing assistants, chaplains, volunteers, and bereavement counselors. JSSA, overseeing the care provided by the trusted team at Medstar Montgomery, works with each patient and their family to determine an individualized plan that fulfills their wishes. The plan may range from making arrangements to get family members there quickly to coordinating a visit from a special pet. Several patients have been stabilized enough so that they have been able to return home with their loved ones.

"It is all about meeting patients and their families wherever they are at, and connecting in such a way that we can have a lasting impact," says Nancy Pregnar, manager of Nursing Professional Development. "We are fortunate to be able to help them live out their final days, give them back that control, and provide comfort during a tremendously difficult time," she says. ◀◀

To learn more about seamless end-of-life care, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/HospiceCare](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/HospiceCare) or please call **301-816-2676**.

# Despite Pregnancy Challenges, *She Has an Awesome Family*

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Georgina Frempong didn't know it at the time, but in the summer of 2014, a few months after she returned home from her honeymoon, the 27-year-old newlywed was pregnant. But as she was getting ready for work as a medication tech at a nursing home, she suddenly felt an intense pain in her left side. "The pain was really bad. I couldn't even stand up," she remembers.



Her husband called 911 and Georgina was taken to a local hospital, where she learned she had an ectopic pregnancy. This type of pregnancy occurs when the fertilized egg implants outside the uterus, most often in a fallopian tube. After emergency surgery to end the ectopic pregnancy, she decided to switch to the Ob/Gyn practice at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

After a second ectopic pregnancy, she became pregnant a third time and gave birth to her first child, a healthy baby girl she named Faith, who is now 4 years old. James R. Smith, MD, Ob/Gyn at MedStar Montgomery, saw Georgina through two more ectopic pregnancies after the birth of her daughter, one of which caused one of her fallopian tubes to rupture and required surgery to remove the tube and a portion of her uterus.

When she became pregnant again, she was excited, but a bit anxious. Dr. Smith's careful attention helped calm her anxiety. "I view every pregnancy as a collaboration between the doctor and patient," Dr. Smith says.



“The nurses have been awesome, so kind and attentive. I have nothing but good things to say. My doctor is the best!”

—GEORGINA FREMPONG



**James R. Smith, MD**

“Dr. Smith stays on top of everything, making sure my hormone levels don’t indicate another ectopic pregnancy... and although we both know it’s a risk, he encourages me to stay hopeful,” says Georgina.

Happily, the pregnancy was successful, and Georgina and her husband welcomed their son Owen almost a year and a half ago. Because of the many difficulties she had experienced with her four ectopic pregnancies, they assumed

this would be their last child. They were surprised earlier this year to learn that their family of four was going to become a family of five.

“This has been a long journey for me, but I kept my faith strong and my doctor always had hope for the best throughout the journey. I have so many thank yous to say to Dr. Smith,” says

Georgina. “He’s just wonderful. He understands me and speaks very honestly with me. He always listens and doesn’t rush during our appointments. Whenever I have tests, which I do throughout the pregnancy to monitor it, he calls me promptly with the results and answers my questions. I recently recommended him to a friend with uterine fibroids who is having trouble getting pregnant. I truly thank God for him, as he has been a great help to me.”

All three of Georgina’s children have been born at MedStar Montgomery and she says she’s had a great experience. “The nurses have been awesome, so kind and attentive. I have nothing but good things to say. My doctor is the best! I live 45 minutes away, but no matter how far I move, I’m still coming to MedStar Montgomery.” ◀◀

To learn more about the specialty care in Maternity services, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/MaternityServices](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/MaternityServices) or call **301-570-7424**.



## Student Athletes Play Their Best *Supported by On-Field Medical Experts*

Olney Boys and Girls Club (OBGC) registers about 5,000 children to play sports in their organization each year. On any Saturday, when they take to one of the 13 fields at the organization's sprawling 118-acre complex for games, MedStar Health athletic trainers are right there with them to help prevent and manage concussions as well as other sports injuries.

Katie Hughes Brodka, manager of athletic training services for the Greater Washington region at MedStar Montgomery, provides a full evaluation for a youth athlete.

"This is such a valuable asset for our members," says Ken Bradford, executive director of OBGC. "It allows us to make sure that if concussions or injuries happen, we have experienced people on site who can attend to these issues right away."

MedStar has long been known for its expertise in sports medicine as the official medical team of the Baltimore Ravens, Baltimore Blast, Baltimore Orioles, Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals, US Lacrosse, and Washington Spirit, along with many collegiate, high school, and club teams in the region.

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, in conjunction with MedStar Sports Medicine and MedStar National Rehabilitation Network, has partnered with OBGC to provide on-field medical coverage, off-field education sessions about injury prevention, and streamlined access to physician and physical therapy services.

"Concussions in young athletes, especially when they happen repeatedly, have the potential to cause long-term brain issues," explains Jason L. Pothast, MD, a MedStar sports medicine physician who treats concussions and musculoskeletal injuries on MedStar Montgomery's campus. "When athletes play or practice with a concussion, that can be especially dangerous. It can lead to a longer recovery, delay their return to play, and potentially lead to permanent brain damage."

A common misconception is that an athlete needs to be knocked unconscious to have a concussion. Symptoms of a concussion can present themselves right away or may

develop slowly, even up to 72 hours after sustaining an impact of any kind. Symptoms can include disorientation, incoherent speech, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headaches, irritability, change in pupil size, imbalance, inability to focus, limited mobility, or vision problems.

"We've responded to several potential concussions in multiple sports, most often football, lacrosse, and soccer," explains Katie Hughes Brodka, manager of athletic training services for the Greater Washington region. "It is our role as athletic trainers on-site to help recognize and evaluate, as well as help educate parents on what to do next. Since signs and symptoms are not always clear-cut, it is important to understand all factors that can play into a possible concussion. This is especially important when you are talking about a youth athlete who might not be able to communicate their symptoms the same way an adult can."

Most patients do recover, but symptoms can last days or even weeks. It is important to seek care from experts trained in concussion care. Bradford says he consistently hears from parents and coaches who are happy that his organization has taken this step.

"It eases my mind that we have a resource like this available to make sure we are keeping our kids safe while they play," Bradford says. ◀◀

For more information on our Sports Medicine Orthopaedic services, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/SportsMedicine](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/SportsMedicine) or call **301-774-8958**

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**"Concussions in young athletes, especially when they happen repeatedly, have the potential to cause long-term brain issues."**

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—JASON L. POTHAST, MD



## Enhanced Cancer Care and Services, Close to You

### *New Staff Support Spurs Growth*

For decades, the Cancer Program at MedStar Montgomery has been known for delivering world-class oncology care in a community setting.

And over the last few years, our portfolio of services has expanded greatly, thanks to our membership in the MedStar Cancer Network—and our close partnership with MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute and its renowned Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Now we're taking our advanced abilities to the next level—integrating the delivery of care for cancer and blood disorders in a brand new Outpatient Cancer Center located next to the Shirley A. Smith Infusion Center and Helen P. Denit Center for Radiation Therapy.

Toward that end, we recently recruited Behzad Doratotaj, MD, as chief of Medical Oncology and Infusion. Triple board-certified in Medical Oncology, Hematology, and Geriatric Medicine, Dr. Doratotaj previously served as director of Hematology and Oncology at the North Brooklyn Health Network for New York University's Perlmutter Cancer Institute. There, he established the cancer and blood disorder program. At MedStar Montgomery, Dr. Doratotaj will help shepherd in a new era of high-quality, integrated care for patients with cancer and blood disorders by incorporating recent advances in hematology and oncology, palliative care, cancer

rehabilitation, integrative treatments, and other medical/surgical and support services.

"We already have a sophisticated infusion facility and a full-fledged, state-of-the-art radiation oncology facility," Dr. Doratotaj says. "What we're working toward now is the alignment of the medical oncology and hematology services—structurally and programmatically—with the ultimate goal of providing seamless care at MedStar Montgomery. We want patients with cancer or blood disorders to have easy access to all of our services, closer to home."



**Behzad Doratotaj, MD**

Helping to bring that idea to fruition is the Cancer Care Philanthropy Council. Launched late in 2018, the Council is co-chaired by Luther Ampey, III, MD—medical director of oncology services and director of radiation oncology at MedStar Montgomery—and community leader and donor Todd Greenstone. Council members act as champions of the program and ambassadors to the broader community, raising awareness and support for high-priority projects. The Council's current focus is the Centennial Fund, in honor of MedStar Montgomery's 100th Anniversary, which will help fund the completion of the new Center for Cancer Care and Blood Disorders. ◀◀

To make an appointment with Dr. Doratotaj, call **301-774-8697**.

To support the Centennial Fund for the new Oncology Pavilion campaign visit **[MedStarMontgomery.org/OncologyPavilion](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/OncologyPavilion)** or call **301-774-8804**.



# Kids Helping Cancer Patients

Robert Fisher of Olney has had quite the medical ordeal over the last three years. It started when his wife, alarmed by Robert's sudden unsteady and staggering gait, diverted a routine trip to the eye doctor to the emergency department at MedStar Montgomery. There, doctors discovered through a lung X-ray that the retired military man had a tumor. Following a five-day stay at MedStar Montgomery, Robert was diagnosed with lung cancer that had metastasized to his brain.

After undergoing CyberKnife at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and chemotherapy treatment at MedStar Montgomery for his brain and lung cancers, respectively, Robert thought his problems were behind him. But this past spring, he discovered he needed brain surgery.

"I came out of it with flying colors," says the now-87-year-old. "But when a social worker asked if I could use a little help around the house with yard work, I didn't decline the offer. I usually put in a garden in June, but wasn't sure if I was up to it this year."

Soon, a dozen or so high school students from Montgomery County descended upon Robert's property, pulling weeds, trimming bushes, and planting his beloved tomatoes. The students belong to a school community service and fund-raising group called Sherwood Stands Up 2 Cancer. Founded in spring 2017 by students Julianna and Emma Gross after their father died from lung cancer the year before, the group is led by their teacher-sponsor, Ms. Hartinger.

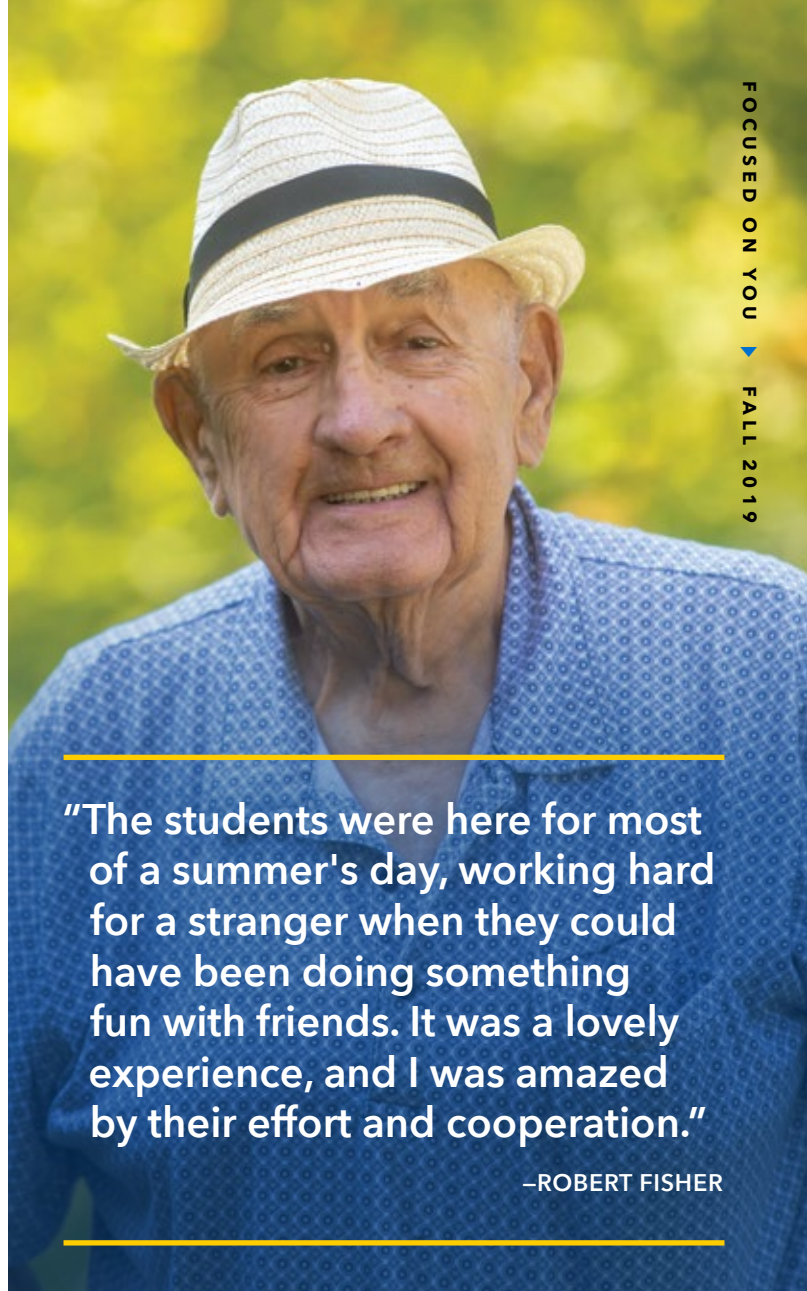
"We wanted to raise money for cancer research, as well as help cancer patients in our community who were going through some of the same difficulties my own family faced," says Julianna, now a college freshman.

This is the second year that the group has offered their landscaping and beautification services to patients at MedStar Montgomery's Oncology Program. The committed students also volunteer by making cards and gift bags, offering clean-up days, and raising funds for the national Stand Up To Cancer organization. They are truly making an impact on their community.

"I couldn't believe it," says Robert, who just received a clean bill of health this past September from his doctor. He is doing well, so he won't need to continue treatment. "The students were here for most of a summer's day, working hard for a stranger when they could have been doing something fun with friends. It was a lovely experience, and I was amazed by their effort and cooperation." ◀◀

For more information support services for our cancer patients, visit

[MedStarMontgomery.org/CancerCareServices](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/CancerCareServices) or call **301-774-8962**.



"The students were here for most of a summer's day, working hard for a stranger when they could have been doing something fun with friends. It was a lovely experience, and I was amazed by their effort and cooperation."

—ROBERT FISHER



Students at Sherwood High school and MedStar Montgomery's social worker, Samantha Falzoi, offered their landscaping services to oncology patient Robert Fisher.

# Welcoming our New Physicians

## GASTROENTEROLOGY

MedStar Health offers internationally recognized expertise in all aspects of the digestive system, including colon and rectal health. Our doctors have access to the latest diagnostic and treatment technology available. This enables us to provide a full range of treatment options to your patients.



Dr. Stanley J. Pietrak III, MD



Dr. Danny T. Shearer, MD



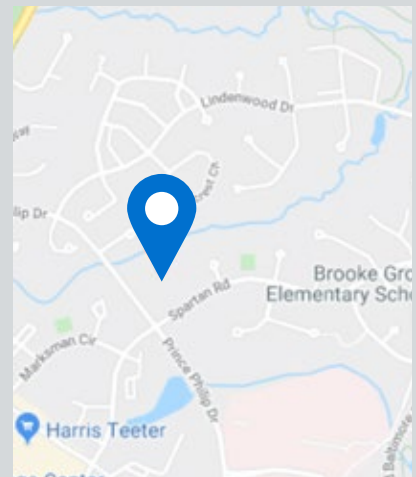
Dr. Gary William Thompson, MD



Dr. Marc Lyle Kozam, MD



Dr. Arthur N. West, MD



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- Gastrointestinal Motility Disorders
- Hernia
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Liver Disease
- Pancreatic and Binary Diseases
- Pancreatitis
- Sphincter of Oddi Dysfunction
- Ulcerative Colitis

## Gastroenterology Treatments:

- Colon and Rectal Surgery
- Colonoscopy
- Endoscopic Treatments
- Endoscopic Ultrasound and Fine Needle Aspiration
- Enteroscopy

To learn more about our Gastroenterology services, please visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Gastroenterology](http://MedStarMontgomery.org/Gastroenterology).

## ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY



John S. Foley, MD

### Dr. Foley specializes in:

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To schedule an outpatient appointment, please call **301-774-8958**.

At MedStar Montgomery, our orthopaedic specialists offer innovative treatment options to help you get your life back. All of our board-certified orthopaedic surgeons are on faculty at Georgetown University and bring the expertise of academic medicine right to your backyard in Montgomery County.

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# Your Time is Worth It



MedStar Health

## Preventive Breast Health Care Now in Montgomery County

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MedStar Montgomery  
Medical Center

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