

# Destination: **GoodHealth**

News from MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital

## **Living With Shoulder Pain?**

Our Specialists Have the  
Solutions You Need

## **Against the Odds**

Immunotherapy  
Works Miracles

## **Back to a Regular Rhythm**

Cardiac Ablation Restores  
Normal Heartbeat

## **Community Health Spotlight**

Reducing Violence  
in Our Streets



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**On the cover:** After having his shoulder replaced by the experts at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, Bob Kannenberg was able to resume his active lifestyle.



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## Letter from the President.



While many things have changed since the pandemic reached our region, one thing has remained the same...our commitment to the well-being of our patients. Here at MedStar Health, the health and safety of those for whom we care will always be our top priority. The outpouring of support and generosity we have received from the community in recent months has been overwhelming and much appreciated. On behalf of everyone at MedStar Health, thank you.

Looking ahead, we want you to get the right care when you need it. We do not want you to delay your medical needs or ignore symptoms, especially fever, cough, and shortness of breath, that would typically make you seek care or may indicate a possible COVID-19 diagnosis. The innovations we have put in place as we've begun to reopen will help ensure that we can provide effective care in the most appropriate and safe setting. While your medical condition may warrant an in-person visit, video visits and telephone consultations may be options for some individuals. We're here to help you get the care that reflects your needs and comfort level.

In this issue of *Destination: Good Health*, we share stories about the latest advances in shoulder replacement, cancer care, cardiac surgery, and more. You'll also read about our efforts to help reduce violence through a partnership with Baltimore City. Plus, we include tips for managing medications, eating for better health, and dealing with chronic pain. We hope you find it informative.

As always, I want to thank you for choosing us for your healthcare needs. We're open and ready to safely offer you the same high-quality care you have come to expect from MedStar Health.

In good health,

**Bradley S. Chambers**  
President, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital  
President, MedStar Union Memorial Hospital  
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

# We are safe and ready to care for you.

At MedStar Health, we take safety personally. Due to COVID-19, we have devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to developing and implementing policies and procedures to not only protect our patients and their families, but our providers and their loved ones, too. Our clinicians are well prepared to accurately screen for risk of COVID-19 and respond immediately to prevent further spread.

We are following the guidance of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) so that patients can get the care they need and those who provide that care can safely do so. When you come to any of our locations, here is what you can expect:

### Safe providers

Our physicians, nurses, and other healthcare team members use the proper safety gear to protect themselves and those for whom they care to keep everyone healthy.

### Masking

All patients and visitors are expected to wear a mask in our facilities, regardless of symptoms. We will provide one for you, if needed.

### Cleaning and disinfecting

We thoroughly sanitize and disinfect all patient exam, waiting, and procedure rooms after every visit.

### Hand sanitizing

Hand sanitizer dispensing stations are located throughout our facilities.

### Screening patient and visitors

We screen all patients and approved visitors for symptoms at all of our hospitals, medical offices, and physical therapy locations.

### Physical distancing

While inside our facilities, we help you practice physical distancing with floor markers, signage, and reconfigured waiting areas.



We also have been working hard to provide alternative options to in-person appointments. Through our telehealth platform, you can now see your provider without leaving your home using MedStar Health Video Visits.

Just call your provider's office to verify that this type of appointment is appropriate for you, then schedule the visit the same way you would an in-person visit. At the time of the appointment, your provider will send you a link through email or a text message. Click on that link to start the visit. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many insurance providers, including Medicare and Medicaid, offer some coverage of telehealth services.

Don't put off getting the care you need. Call your provider today to see if a video visit is an option for you.



To learn more about MedStar Health Video Visits, visit our patient experience website at [MyVideoVisit.MedStarHealth.org](https://MyVideoVisit.MedStarHealth.org).

# Living with shoulder pain?

Our specialists have the solutions you need.



**The shoulder joint has the greatest range of motion but the least stability. Kannenberg now moves comfortably, thanks to his shoulder replacement.**

Approximately 53,000 people in the U.S. have total shoulder replacement surgery each year, a number that is projected to grow with the aging population.

The procedure, most commonly performed to relieve the pain of arthritis and restore function to the joint, has also become a more viable option for many people due to the many advances that have been made in recent years.

“The unique and complex anatomy of the shoulder makes it the joint with the greatest range of motion but the least stability. Thus, it is more susceptible to strain, repetitive injuries, and aging than other joints,” says Anand M. Murthi, MD, chief of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, part of MedStar Orthopaedic Institute.

Our specialists at MedStar Union Memorial have extensive knowledge and skill in treating a wide range of shoulder conditions. In fact, they were the first in Maryland to earn The Joint Commission’s advanced sub-specialty certification in shoulder and elbow surgery, and they rank in the top 10 in the country in terms of the number of Medicare shoulder replacements performed.



## Outpatient shoulder replacement

Today, MedStar Union Memorial is among those leading the nation in making total shoulder replacement more accessible and convenient to patients—with the shoulder specialists here performing more and more surgeries, both traditional and reverse shoulder replacements, on an outpatient basis.

That’s good news for the growing number of patients in the region who are opting to have shoulder replacement. Bob Kannenberg, 56, is one of them.

“I’ve always enjoyed lifting weights and have done so for many years to



**Kannenberg is now pain free and able to lift weights again since having his shoulder replaced during an outpatient procedure at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital.**

“Returning home the same day as surgery is generally much less stressful for patients,” says Dr. Stein. “Patients who have their surgery performed as an outpatient benefit in numerous ways without sacrificing any long-term results. It makes for a much better patient experience and is a testament to our expertise and surgical skills.”

In October of 2019, Kannenberg had his right shoulder replaced as an outpatient. He also benefitted from the hospital’s approach to pain management during shoulder replacement—an approach designed to reduce the need for opioids.

“During the procedure, we use a regional nerve block, which also provides long-lasting pain control,” Dr. Stein explains. “Most patients find that once that wears off, their pain can be managed using a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication, ice, and compression.”

“The entire experience was just amazing,” Kannenberg says. “Dr. Stein and his team did a great job communicating with me...so I knew what to expect. Today, my range of motion is great and I have eased back into lifting weights again.”



**Anand M. Murthi, MD**



**Jason Stein, MD**

affecting my ability to sleep. That’s when I knew I needed to see a specialist.”

His primary care physician referred him to Jason Stein, MD, a fellowship-trained shoulder and elbow surgeon at MedStar Union Memorial, who initially tried cortisone shots to alleviate Kannenberg’s discomfort. While the shots worked for a short period of time, the pain always returned.

Finally, Dr. Stein recommended shoulder replacement surgery with the option of having it as an outpatient procedure—enabling him to go home just a few hours after surgery.

stay in shape. Unfortunately, that also contributed to the development of arthritis in my right shoulder,” he says. “I was experiencing a lot of pain, which I treated with anti-inflammatories and ice, but then the pain started



**Gardening is no longer a painful chore for Ruby since her shoulder replacement.**

### **Computer-assisted shoulder replacement**

MedStar Union Memorial also continues to lead the way in adopting the latest technologies to enhance surgical procedures. For example, Dr. Murthi was recently the first surgeon in Maryland to perform computer-assisted navigational shoulder replacement surgery using a new technology that delivers increased accuracy in joint replacement procedures.

The technology is primarily used when performing a reverse shoulder replacement, an alternative type of shoulder replacement recommended for patients who have irreparable damage to the rotator cuff and severe arthritis. During the surgery, the position of the ball and socket joint is switched so a different set of healthy muscles can be used to move the arm. It's a complex procedure performed for a condition for which there was previously no effective treatment.

Irene Ruby was among the first patients Dr. Murthi operated on using computer-assisted guidance. "I fell years ago and tore the rotator cuff tendons in my right shoulder," the 69-year-old explains. "They were reattached, but the entire experience was pretty awful. Over time I developed arthritis in my shoulder and, ultimately, learned that the tears returned."

She made an appointment with Dr. Murthi, who told her she was an ideal candidate for a reverse shoulder replacement and scheduled her for the procedure.

"The technology provides real-time guidance, allowing for greater visibility of the target anatomy, and greater flexibility to make adjustments. This can significantly improve the precision and placement of shoulder replacement components, leading to better outcomes and increasing the longevity of the components," he explains.

Ruby returned home the next day feeling great. "After my first experience, I was a little apprehensive, but this was so different. I wouldn't have waited this long if I knew it was going to be so easy. I didn't even need any pain medication."

Dr. Murthi notes that most shoulder replacements in the U.S. are done by orthopaedic surgeons who are good surgeons, but not shoulder specialists. "Seeing a shoulder specialist makes a big difference in terms of the quality of care a patient can expect to receive."

"Studies show that high volume centers, such as ours, have better outcomes and fewer infections and complications," Dr. Stein adds. "As such, shoulder problems should be cared for by experienced orthopaedic specialists."



**Ruby says she would have had her shoulder replaced sooner if she knew it was going to be so easy.**



To learn more about our shoulder specialists at MedStar Orthopaedic Institute or to schedule an appointment, visit [MedStarOrtho.org](https://www.MedStarOrtho.org) or call 877-34-ORTHO (877-346-7846).

# Managing medications to **achieve the best outcomes.**

Medications play a key role in helping many individuals, especially older adults, maintain their quality of life. However, for some, managing medications to achieve the best outcomes, can be a challenge.

“Medication management is a problem for a lot of people, particularly those with several physical or mental conditions,” says Nicole Brandt, PharmD, MBA, a pharmacist in the Center for Successful Aging at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. “Many of these individuals are over the age of 65, a population that is more likely to take multiple medications and more susceptible to side effects due, in part, to the physical changes that accompany aging.”



**Nicole Brandt,**  
PharmD, MBA

In fact, according to the American Public Health Association, people age 65 and older make up just 12% of the population but account for 34% of all prescription medication use and 30% of all over-the-counter medication use.

“What typically happens is an older adult will see different doctors for different conditions with each prescribing medication separately,” she explains. “As the number of

medications increases, so does the risk of side effects and significant interactions, some of which can be serious. Plus, many of these patients are on complicated regimens, which further compounds the situation.”

Whether you are dealing with medication management challenges personally, or caring for someone who is, there are things you can do to reduce the risk of the medications doing more harm than good. Dr. Brandt offers these tips:

- Designate one primary care provider—it can be a person or a team—to help manage the entire medication list. Having this list available at all times is essential and it should include over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal remedies, in addition to prescriptions. An annual “medication check-up” can eliminate what is no longer needed and ensure all medications are compatible.
- Listen carefully when a medication is prescribed and ask questions to find out the name of the drug, its purpose, proper dosing, and potential side effects. Take notes and remember that prescribed



medicines should not be stopped without a provider’s instructions.

- Work with the provider to simplify the medication regimen. Having to take several different medicines a day at different times is a challenge. Once-a-day dosing, if possible, is ideal.
- Try to fill all of your prescriptions at the same pharmacy so that the pharmacist can check for duplications or possible drug interactions and explain any potential side effects.

“Medication management is an ongoing process, one that needs to be adapted continually, especially with changing physical or mental conditions,” Dr. Brandt notes. “The use of medications is not something to be taken lightly. Making sure they are taken safely is the best way to achieve the optimal outcomes.”



For a referral to the Center for Successful Aging, call 855-212-8202.



Boone's response to the specialized treatment he received for his lung cancer has been remarkable.

# Against the odds.

## Immunotherapy works miracles.

More than two years ago, Lafayette Boone thought his life was over after being diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. "I was ready to give it up to the man above," he says. Today, he is still very much alive and feeling good.

"Shortly after his diagnosis, he was started on a targeted therapy—to which he did not respond," says Mahsa Mohebtash, MD, medical director of MedStar Franklin Square Cancer Center at Loch Raven Campus, located on the grounds of MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. "Since his cancer expressed high

levels of PDL1, we decided to try a different approach and switched him to immunotherapy."

Normally, the immune system fights foreign substances like viruses and bacteria. Proteins such as PDL1, called an immune checkpoint protein, help keep immune cells from harming normal cells in the body. This allows some cancer cells to "trick" the immune system and avoid being attacked as foreign, harmful substances.

"Immunotherapy boosts the immune system by helping it recognize

and fight cancer cells and has been shown to be very effective in treating certain types and stages of cancer, such as advanced non-small cell lung cancer," explains Dr. Mohebtash, a board-certified oncologist and hematologist. "It involves using a drug called an immune checkpoint inhibitor to boost or restore the body's natural defenses against cancer. Also known as biotherapy or biologic therapy, it tends to have fewer side effects than other cancer therapies as well."

Boone was started on immunotherapy in August 2017,





going in for an infusion every three weeks for a half hour session. Now, the 77-year-old former smoker is in complete remission.

**Mahsa Mohebtash, MD**

"I'd never spent a night in a hospital before

all of this started," Boone says.

"Thanks to Dr. Mohebtash and her team, I feel great. I even joined the rehabilitation program at MedStar Good Samaritan and am still doing that three times a week. I fell in love with it. People say I look much younger than I am."

"Immunotherapy for lung cancer is relatively new, but some patients respond to it better than other therapies," explains Dr. Mohebtash.

"Lafayette's response has been remarkable, especially for someone with stage IV lung cancer. He has completed immunotherapy and now comes in to see us every three months for a CT scan and blood work. We also check for tumor markers. His story is an excellent example of the outcomes that are possible."

She notes that cancer cells are complex and often unpredictable, so immunotherapy does not work for everyone, even for some tumors with high levels of PDL1 expression.

"Healthcare providers and researchers are still learning about immunotherapy and how to predict who will benefit the most from this treatment. But it is already helping to extend and

save the lives of many cancer patients and holds the potential to become more precise, more personalized, and more effective than current cancer treatments in the future."



### Did you know?

If you are a current or former smoker, you may qualify for a type of lung cancer screening called a CT lung scan that can identify cancer in its early stages, when it is most treatable. The screening is painless, and the cost is covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. To learn more, call 410-591-6969.

**Now, Boone is able to enjoy daily walks with his dog, Miss Pepies.**



For more information or for a free physician referral, visit [MedStarCancer.org/Baltimore](https://www.MedStarCancer.org/Baltimore) or call 877-715-HOPE (4673).

# Back to a regular rhythm.

Cardiac ablation restores normal heartbeat.

Tracy Clark has been physically active all of his life. "I played a lot of sports in high school and college and just really enjoy exercising. It's what I do," says the 48-year-old, who also co-owns a masonry contracting company, a labor-intensive business that alone would keep most people fit.

But he always suspected that something wasn't quite right with his heart. "I could be in the middle of a run and get a weird feeling in my chest. Then I'd get lightheaded and sometimes pass out," Clark explains. "At first, I thought it was from overexertion since I was only in my early 30s. Because it kept happening, I decided to get it checked out."

A stress test revealed he had ventricular tachycardia, also called V-tach, a type of abnormal heart rhythm or arrhythmia that occurs when electrical signals in the lower chambers of the heart cause it to beat too fast. This can result in fainting or even cardiac arrest.

While it is usually triggered by another heart condition, it can also be caused by intense exercise.

The cardiologist Clark saw prescribed an antiarrhythmic medication to stabilize his heart rate. But he didn't like how it made him feel. "I was always tired," he says. Hoping to get off the medication, he explored other treatment options to no avail. So, he went back on the medication for the next 15 years.

When Clark's doctor told him that significant advances had been made in the field of cardiac ablation, he decided to look into it as a treatment that might improve his quality of life. He made an appointment with Glenn Meininger, MD, director of Cardiac Electrophysiology Services

at MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital.

"There are basically four treatment options for V-tach: eliminate the trigger (stop exercising), antiarrhythmic medications, an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD), and cardiac ablation," explains Dr. Meininger. "Unfortunately, medications can result in side effects as in Tracy's case, and an ICD does nothing to prevent the heart from going into V-tach. It simply restores to normal a potentially life-





**Clark is now cycling at a competitive level, thanks to the specialized care he received at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital.**

ventricular tachycardia ablation because of his level of fitness and his desire to fully resume his active lifestyle. "Tracy is a very competitive individual who has no problem pushing himself. So that put him at an even higher risk of going into V-tach when exercising."

The procedure targets the origin of the V-tach by inserting a catheter into the heart chambers through the veins of the leg. When areas that are critical to the arrhythmia are identified, a localized delivery of radiofrequency energy is transmitted to the target area, damaging the tissue and causing scarring. This blocks the electrical signals that are contributing to the V-tach symptoms.

"While the ablation itself takes just a few minutes, a great deal of planning is involved, including 3-D cardiac mapping. When you insert a catheter into a beating heart, a lot of things can happen," Dr. Meininger notes. "Most procedures take three to four hours from start to finish."

Clark's procedure went well and today, he is in better shape than ever before. Among the activities he most enjoys is cycling, spending 10 to 12 hours per week on his bike during which he rides 150 to 200 miles. "My conditioning is great now," he

says. "I am riding with some really fast, competitive cyclists and have no problem holding my own."



**Glenn Meininger, MD**

"The success of V-tach ablation varies depending on the patient's specific heart condition. The procedure is most effective in patients with a single focus or trigger, but with a structurally

normal heart otherwise. Even in cases where a patient experiences a recurrence, most will still have less V-tach than prior to the ablation," Dr. Meininger says.

"In fact, V-tach ablation is now being used more frequently and earlier in the management of the condition, particularly in centers with a high volume of patients and experience," he adds. "It's a great option for patients when medications are not effective or well tolerated."

"I can't say enough good things about Dr. Meininger," Clark adds. "He always makes you feel like you're his only patient. He is genuine and affable and the fact that he has an athletic background made him easy for me to relate to."

threatening rhythm when it occurs. Ablation is an appealing treatment option for some patients, especially young, otherwise healthy individuals, because it destroys the abnormal tissue that is causing the heart to beat incorrectly."

Dr. Meininger agreed that Clark was an ideal candidate for



**To make an appointment with one of the specialists at MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, call 410-554-6727.**

# Eating mindfully for better health.

If you have found yourself mindlessly finishing off a big bag of chips or a quart of ice cream during these unsettling times, you are not alone. Many of us turn to food for comfort when we are experiencing stress.



Jessica DeCostole, MS, RD

“But emotional eating can negatively affect your health—both physically and mentally,” says Jessica DeCostole, MS, RD, a dietitian educator in the Good Health Center at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. “It can lead to weight gain, or worsen preexisting conditions like diabetes, especially if you aren’t able to do as much physical activity as usual. Those things, in turn, can cause or exacerbate depression or anxiety.”

The solution? Mindful eating. “At times like this, it’s essential to pay attention to what, when, how, and why you’re eating,” she says. “Mindful eating is an approach to food that brings mindfulness to food choice and the experience of eating, so you eat healthier and enjoy your food more. When you slow down and pay attention to how and what you eat, you’re more likely to make better decisions that will nourish your body.”

DeCostole shares the following tips on how to practice mindful eating:

- **Unplug.** Avoid watching TV and talking on the phone or texting while you eat. Stop working and step away from the computer. Set everything aside and take a break to enjoy and savor your food. Focus on your meal.
- **Slow down.** Your brain needs time to register that you’re eating and to communicate to your body when you are full. Set your fork down between bites. It’s likely that you’ll eat a lot less. This helps prevent overeating, weight gain, and digestive stress.

- **Chew well.** Devouring food without chewing very well can trigger unpleasant symptoms like bloating, gas, and indigestion. The saliva in your mouth is full of active enzymes that help break down food, making it easier to digest and allowing for better absorption of vitamins and nutrients.
- **Only eat when you’re hungry.** Ask “why am I eating?” before you take a bite. If your answer is boredom, stress, or another emotion, try redirecting yourself by calling a friend or taking a walk. This helps you avoid emotional eating and mindless snacking.



- **Be present.** Notice the colors, shapes, and aroma of your food. As you take a bite of food, think about the flavors and textures as you chew. Truly focusing on your food will also encourage you to slow down and enjoy the experience of eating.

“Mindful eating can be a magical, stimulating experience that supports good health. By tapping into all of your senses, you will appreciate your food more,” says DeCostole.



For a free healthy eating guide, visit [MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth) or call 855-212-8202.

# Dealing with chronic pain? Consider seeing a psychologist.

According to the Academy of Pain Management, chronic pain affects more Americans than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. In fact, pain is the most common reason that people see a physician. Pain—especially chronic pain—can be a complex condition that involves more than a physical sensation. Often the pain is caused by biological, psychological, and emotional factors as well.

“When a person is in pain, it affects their thoughts and emotions,” explains Natasha Durant, PhD, a pain psychologist at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. “Pain can cause depression, anxiety, and stress, all of which can make pain worse. Pain may interrupt your ability to sleep and affect your appetite, adding to your body’s dysregulation, and these factors can make pain worse as well. It’s a vicious cycle. To treat pain effectively, you must address the emotional and psychological aspects as well as the physical.”

While individuals with pain seldom think to seek assistance from a psychologist, more and more clinicians are starting to recognize that they can be a valuable part of a comprehensive pain management treatment plan. So, what can you expect if you decide to see a psychologist to help manage your pain?

“Most psychologists specializing in pain management use several tools to help them conceptualize the patient’s situation and inform the development of the best treatment plan,” says Dr. Durant.

“This usually includes a comprehensive interview and careful behavioral observation. There are also a number of questionnaires that are used to measure mood symptom severity, perceived disability, and personality factors, which further enhance our understanding of a patient’s pain,” she notes.

Testing can also examine neurocognitive functioning. “Cognitive and neurological processes such as attention, concentration, planning, reaction

time, and memory may be impaired in patients with pain,” Dr. Durant adds.

“This could be the result of head injuries, interference from the pain itself, or medication effects. In elderly patients, cognitive impairment may also occur as a result of dementia.” Based on this comprehensive assessment, the psychologist will design a treatment plan specific to your unique needs.

“Treatment plans may involve teaching you relaxation techniques and other ways to manage stress, addressing any anxiety or depression that may accompany your pain, and, if the pain contributes to insomnia, helping you with that,” she says.

Dr. Durant says that the majority of patients find they can manage their pain better after just a few sessions with a psychologist, though some, such as individuals with depression or dealing with a degenerative medical condition, may benefit from a longer course of treatment.

“Alleviating pain isn’t always straightforward. But by helping you understand and manage what you are experiencing, you can cope more effectively with your pain, and move on with your life.”



**Natasha Durant, PhD**



For more information or to schedule an appointment with Natasha Durant, PhD, visit [MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth) or call 855-212-8202.

# Community lectures and class schedules.

At MedStar Health, we care about the health and wellness of our community. One of the ways we try to keep you healthy and active is by offering a variety of free and low-cost special classes, events, and screenings at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital. They including the following:

## Cancer prevention

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings

Colon Cancer Screening

## Exercise and fitness

Yoga

Gentle Yoga

Chair Yoga

Regular Tai Chi

Gentle Tai Chi

Chair Exercise

Advanced Senior Fitness

Fitness for 50s

Groove and Move Senior Fitness Class

Rock Steady Boxing for Parkinson's

LOUD for LIFE®

BIG for LIFE®

## Heart health

Free Blood Pressure Screenings

Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

## Lung care

Pulmonary Rehabilitation



## Support groups

Amputee Support Group

Aphasia and Communication Disorders Support Group

Arm-in-Arm: Breast Cancer Support Group

Caregiver Support Group

Stroke Support Group

Diabetes Support Group

## Wellness and prevention

Massage Therapy or Integrative Reflexology

Migraine Clinic

Freshstart® Smoking Cessation Program

Living Well with Hypertension

National Diabetes Prevention Program

Diabetes Management

Life Balance/Weight Management



For more information, including times and locations, call toll-free 855-212-8202 or visit [MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth). Note that some activities are temporarily on hold, but should resume soon. Contact us, and learn how you can stay healthy for life.

# Community Health spotlight.

## Reducing violence in our streets.

Violence is a big problem in Baltimore—some consider it a public health crisis. MedStar Health is doing its part to try to reduce it through a partnership with Safe Streets Baltimore, a violence prevention program of the Baltimore City Health Department.

The evidence-based program aims to prevent violence before it occurs by employing street smart community members who have firsthand experience with violence.

The partnership, first launched by MedStar Health at MedStar Harbor Hospital, has since been expanded to MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital with the help of a grant from the PNC Foundation.

The program involves positioning specially trained associates, known as hospital responders, in each hospital's emergency department (ED) where they work evenings and weekends, when most violence occurs. The responders intervene with both the victims and perpetrators of crimes who come into the ED for care.

There they conduct risk assessments with patients, and work with them to create individualized plans to prevent further injury or retaliation. Hospital responders also provide service referrals to ensure comprehensive support for patients and serve as role models—connecting these individuals with

jobs, education, and other resources to help them live better lives.

The hospitals' programs are linked to established program sites in nearby communities, which employ violence interrupters—teams focused on shifting norms around violence through a variety of community outreach and public education initiatives. The hospital responders collaborate with Safe Streets' site staffs to mediate conflicts as needed. This includes detecting, identifying, and intervening in activities that may lead to violence in targeted neighborhoods. Their constant presence weakens the

allure of gangs and the street life culture that often perpetuates violence.

"The program works because those affected by crime can relate to our hospital responders and the violence interrupters in the communities," explains Elizabeth Sebastiao, regional program manager, Community Health. "They speak to them in a way they understand. That helps build a relationship that can lead to positive change. To improve lives on the streets of Baltimore, the community has got to work together. This program is proof that it can be done."



Distributing free food outside the Woodbourne McCabe Safe Streets site during the recent shutdown are Antoin Torain, MedStar Health Safe Streets hospital responder; volunteers Elena Peters, Camille Mills, Kyesha Mills; and Lisa Jones, the Safe Streets site director.



To learn more about the Community Health programs offered at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, visit [MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/DestinationGoodHealth) or call 855-218-2435.



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**Trust your heart to MedStar Health.**



**Chief of Cardiac Surgery Michael Fiocco, MD, (seated), with cardiac surgeons (left to right) Brian Bethea, MD, and Ricardo Quarrie, MD.**

At MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, our team of cardiac surgeons understands the anxiety patients have with heart surgery. From minimally invasive and hybrid techniques for aortic and valve disease to open heart procedures, our surgeons work together with you to provide the best treatment option.

We participate in major clinical trials and studies—allowing us to provide innovative solutions to our patients ahead of others.

**[MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust](https://www.MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust)**

*This photo was selected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. All providers are expected to follow the current MedStar Health guidelines for safety, including proper masking and physical distancing where appropriate. Learn more at [MedStarHealth.org/Safe](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Safe).*