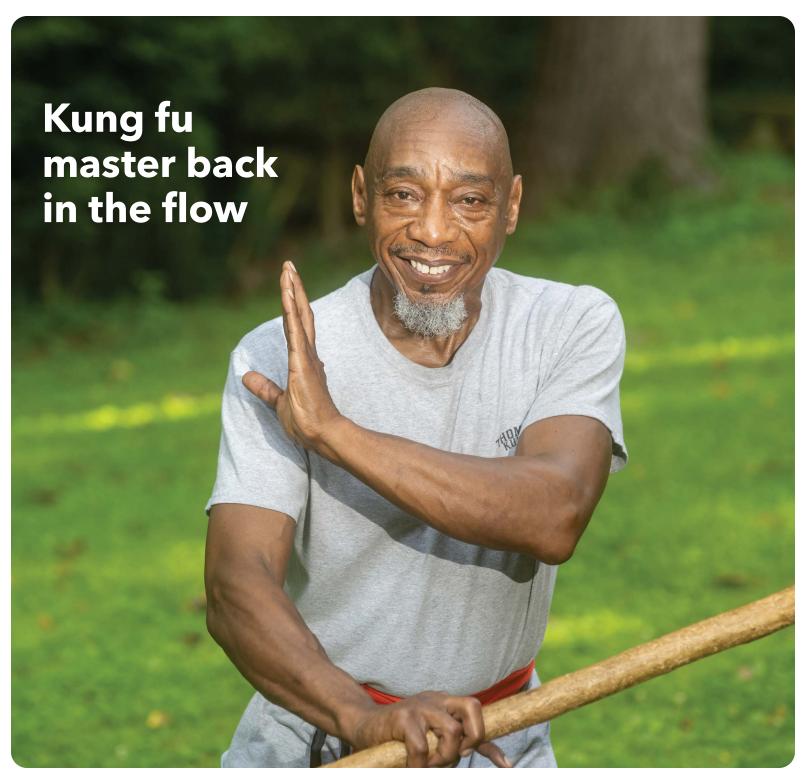


Focused On You

Winter/Spring 2023

Health news and information from MedStar Montgomery Medical Center



Inside: New research role brings access to cutting-edge care | Minimally invasive procedure takes patients from unbearable pain to pain-free in a single day | A team approach is the key to fighting lung cancer Kung fu master is now free of pain, thanks to spine surgery | Breast cancer patient benefits from new technology

The expertise to advance health care for our community.



Happy Spring! Here at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, we continue our mission to enhance our community's health and well-being by offering high quality, compassionate, and personalized care. The previous 12 months were marked by noteworthy change and achievement across the medical center and I'm proud to review some of those achievements in this edition of our *Focused on You* newsletter.

In 2022, we expanded several programs and achieved numerous milestones as a healthcare organization. We celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Center for Successful Aging, an innovative care model where we provide a full spectrum of care to seniors in our community. Additionally, we opened MedStar Health Radiology at Olney-an outpatient imaging center designed with the patient in mind, offering better accessibility along with our high-tech imaging services including mammography, X-ray, ultrasound, and CT technology. Most recently, our commitment to excellence was recognized as we received the **Stroke GOLD-PLUS Award** from the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines, and were recognized as a high performing hospital for stroke by US News and World Report. We are honored by these recognitions, and I'm especially proud of our associates and medical staff for their outstanding work.

In this edition of Focused on You, we highlight our pledge to providing you great access to the best care and technology services in the county. Bob Abbott says extreme pain from gallstones convinced him to seek professional care, and with the assistance of Samer Charbel, MD, chair of the MedStar Montgomery Department of Gastroenterology, he achieved

relief from his condition. Dr. Charbel performed an endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), an advanced GI outpatient procedure that is used to diagnose and treat problems in the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts and pancreas, and involves no incisions, quick recovery, and immediate relief.

Using advanced technology, we also helped breast cancer survivor Heather Hewling quickly recover.

MedStar Montgomery became one of the first hospitals in Maryland to use a new and innovative treatment,

Magseed©. With this advanced option, our care providers enhance the accuracy of breast cancer surgery and improve a patient's overall experience.

Kung fu master Robert Thompson's life is much better too, now that he is free from pain. The 58-year-old teacher of the art suffered for two years before seeking treatment. Thanks to Andrew Mo, MD, spine surgeon, Mr. Thompson's numbness and tingling are now gone, and he's back to teaching kung fu!

There is so much to be hopeful for as we look forward to the coming months. Rest assured that we will continue with our vision of being the trusted leader in caring for people and advancing health, always providing outstanding care to our community.

Wishing you continued health,

Thom n

Thomas J. Senker, FACHE President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

Focused On You

Kenneth A. Samet, FACHE President and CEO, MedStar Health

Gary Fernandes, PhD Chair, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Board of Directors

Thomas J. Senker, FACHE President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Senior Vice President, MedStar Health **Tonja Paylor**Director of Marketing & Communications

Stefanie Bryant Senior Marketing & Communications Specialist

Writers
Karen Hansen
Leslie A. Whitlinger
Susan Walker

In 2022, we expanded several programs and achieved numerous milestones as a healthcare organization.

New research role brings access to cutting-edge care.

By Karen Hansen

In 2022, we added a clinical research coordinator to our team at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center—a game changer that supports both patients and hospital staff.

Ngozi Wexler, MD, vice president of Medical Affairs and Ob/Gyn at MedStar Montgomery explains why: "Having a clinical research coordinator is crucial to building our research infrastructure. The coordinator will handle the considerable administrative workload that attends any research project, freeing investigators to focus on the science. This will enable us to start new clinical trials and meet an unmet need for patients by providing access to early and new therapies." In addition, patients will enjoy the convenience of having local access to trials for which they previously would have had to travel to large cities or out of state.

Dr. Wexler adds, "Many physicians want to do research, and we want to hire the best. The fact that we offer the advantages of a large, specialized tertiary care facility in the personalized setting of a community hospital is very attractive to many physicians."



Ngozi Wexler, MD

Notably, the new position is being funded entirely by philanthropy. In March 2022, Dr. Wexler collaborated with the Philanthropy team at MedStar Montgomery to express the need for this part-time position. Within four days, Marian Maylath of Silver Spring, Maryland, generously made a philanthropic investment to fund

the position. Within two weeks, a second anonymous partner generously matched the philanthropic gift so the position could be full time, enabling a quicker start and broader growth of new research. Dr. Wexler doesn't see this enthusiasm as merely fortuitous. "It tells me that this is much needed in the community."

The inspiration for Marian's generosity dates to 1965, when her father, John Maylath, MD, joined what



Marian Maylath, a passionate advocate for women's health, is thrilled that her philanthropic investment will help more women gain access to clinical trials.

was then called Montgomery General Hospital, later becoming its first medical director. For Marian, this philanthropic partnership is deeply personal. Through her other charitable work, Marian is a passionate advocate for women with stage four metastatic breast cancer. "Many women say it takes too long to travel to clinical trials. To streamline that, they want more opportunities to go locally. So this was a win-win."

Oncology is one of five research areas MedStar Montgomery will pursue, along with Bariatric Surgery, Cardiology, Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, and Nursing. "If we can initiate four to six studies within the first year," says Dr. Wexler, "it's definitely going to help patients who need thinking outside the box." Already, a study is underway to examine how Transcendental Meditation may prevent professional burnout and improve resiliency—a timely issue as hospitals worldwide deal with the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Relieving some stress is another way the clinical research coordinator will assist patients who want to investigate the latest therapies but don't know where to find them. The coordinator will facilitate connections to all available opportunities—within the MedStar Health network and beyond.

As Dr. Wexler puts it, "It's good all the way around–for patients, their families, doctors, and the community."

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Support** to learn how your philanthropic gift can help make a difference.

Minimally invasive procedure takes patients from unbearable pain to pain-free in a single day.

By Susan Walker

Maurice Hart can handle pain better than most.

That's why when he doubled over because of searing pain in the center of his chest under his breastbone, his primary care doctor said, "You're tough, but this pain is more than even you can handle. Go to the emergency room."

The pain was similar to what he had experienced eight years ago when he had gallstones, but his gallbladder had been removed, so he couldn't imagine what could be causing this new bout of extreme pain. Maurice's wife drove him to the emergency room at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, where a CT scan found something very unusual. Even though he had no gallbladder, Maurice had a gallstone lodged in his bile duct.



Dr. Charbel, MD

"The emergency room doctor said he'd never seen this before," says Maurice.

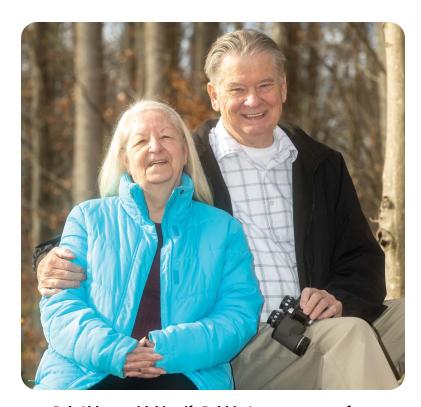
He was quickly referred to Samer Charbel, MD, chair of the MedStar Montgomery Department of Gastroenterology. Dr. Charbel is the only physician at MedStar Montgomery who performs a minimally invasive

treatment for obstructions of the bile duct and pancreatic duct called endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). He underwent additional training in the procedure and has been performing it for 15 years.

"ERCP combines endoscopy and X-ray. It's performed using an endoscope, which is guided down the patient's esophagus to the location of the

"The care I received from everyone at MedStar Health–nurses, doctors, staff–was outstanding."

-Bob Abbott



Bob Abbott, with his wife Bobbie Jo, says recovery from his gallstone procedure was a breeze and he was back to being active in no time.

blockage," explains Dr. Charbel. "Once we've visualized the stone after injecting contrast in the bile duct, I use tools to move the stone to the small intestine, where it will be passed in the stool. If needed, I widen the opening of the bile duct and place a temporary stent or tube to make the duct wider and prevent future stones. Obstruction of the bile duct causes significant pain and increases the risk of infections, and this procedure delivers immediate relief without open surgery."

After writing off his pain twice, a third attack convinced him he needed help

Bob Abbott has also experienced the big pain that tiny gallstones can cause. "I wrote off my first attack as the result of eating spicy food," he says. "Two nights, later, it happened again, lasting longer and hurting more. The third night, I was hit with debilitating pain under my ribcage travelling down my belly and I knew I needed to go to the hospital."

Dr. Charbel was called in to perform ERCP and found that not only was a gallstone almost completely

blocking the bile duct, but there was also a serious infection in the duct.

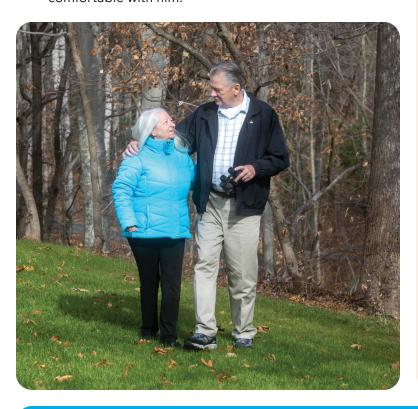
"After removing the stone and placing a stent to enlarge the duct, we drained the infection," notes Dr. Charbel. Bob's recovery from the infection and pain was immediate after the procedure. The following day, his gallbladder was removed.

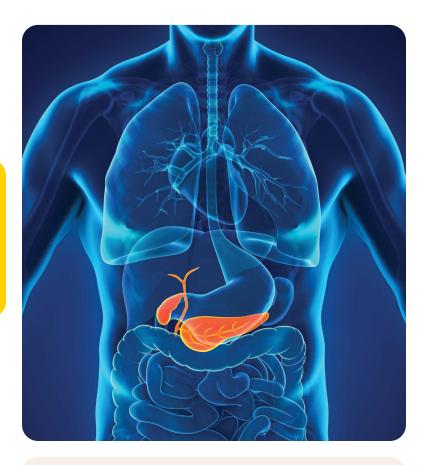
"I had a very positive experience with Dr. Charbel. He explained the procedure before he performed it and answered all my questions. I felt really comfortable with him."

-Maurice Hart

"The care I received from everyone at MedStar Health–nurses, doctors, staff–was outstanding," Bob says. "They even made arranging my follow up appointments easy."

Maurice shares a similarly positive review of his experience. "I had no pain after my procedure and was ready to go back to work the next day! I had a very positive experience with Dr. Charbel. He explained the procedure before he performed it and answered all my questions. I felt really comfortable with him."





Benefits of endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP).

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography, or ERCP, is a procedure used to diagnose and treat problems in the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts, and pancreas. It combines X-ray and the use of an endoscope—a long, flexible, lighted tube.

For people with gall and pancreatic duct stones, duct strictures, bile duct leaks after gallbladder removal, and benign and malignant diseases of the pancreas, ERCP offers an effective, minimally invasive approach to treatment.

The advantages include:

- No need for major surgery
- No incisions
- Quick recovery
- Immediate relief from symptoms
- Can be performed on an outpatient basis

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/ERCP** to learn more.

To learn more or to make an appointment with one of our specialists, call 301-774-8962.



Robert Thompson can't imagine life without kung fu, so when neck pain made movements difficult, he was concerned. Dr. Mo put his fears to rest; after an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion surgery, the kung fu master is moving without pain.

Kung fu master is now free of pain, thanks to spine surgery.

By Susan Walker

When he's practicing or teaching kung fu, 58-year-old Robert Thompson moves swiftly and gracefully, flying through the air with legs in a 90-degree split.



Andrew Mo, MD

The art of bungo fu, a Jamaican style of kung fu, has been the central focus of Robert's life since he was 5 years old. At 11, Robert attained the rank of kung fu master, the equivalent of earning a fifth-degree black belt. After he and his family moved from Jamaica to the United States, his

self-defense training came in handy when bullies picked on him because of his accent. And today, he's the owner of a Takoma Park/Silver Spring, Maryland, bungo fu studio, where he also teaches meditation and tai chi to students of all ages.

"Kung fu is my life," says Robert. "It's all I do." But two and a half years ago, neck pain began to make it hard for Robert to do what he loves most. He assumed he had a pinched nerve and tried home treatments, but the pain got worse over time. Eventually, he could hardly move without pain.

"Dr. Mo did an amazing job. Three months later I am back to teaching kung fu."

-Robert Thompson

"I decided it was time to see a doctor and made an appointment with Andrew Mo, MD, a spine surgeon at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center," explains Robert. "I immediately felt very comfortable with him. I could tell he knew what he was talking about."

"Robert had a condition called cervical myelopathy with radiculopathy," explains Dr. Mo. "What that means is that there is tightening around the spinal cord that compresses the nerves. People with this condition

can have the same symptoms as Robert, as well as weakness, difficulty with balance, gait, and small motor skills."

While Dr. Mo's goal is to start with more conservative treatments like physical therapy, medication, and injections to decrease inflammation, Robert's condition was more advanced. "The discs at the front of the neck were pressing back into his spine and nerve roots, causing weakness and discomfort," says Dr. Mo.

Within a week of his initial appointment, Robert underwent an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion surgery to relieve the pressure on the nerves and stabilize his spine. An incision was made in the front of his neck, and Dr. Mo removed the affected discs and replaced them with spacers to take the pressure off the nerves and restore blood flow to the area.

"Right after my surgery, the pain in my neck was gone and the numbness in my fingers was significantly reduced," says Robert. "Dr. Mo did an amazing job. Three months later, I can move without pain and I am back to teaching kung fu. If you have back or neck pain, see an experienced doctor like Dr. Mo instead of living with the pain," he adds. "I'm very happy I did!"



Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Thompson** to learn more about Robert's story.





Do you need back surgery?

The first line of treatment for lower back pain is physical therapy and anti-inflammatory medications. However, if conservative treatments haven't worked and your pain is persistent and disabling, spine surgery may be an option. Depending on the reason for the pain or symptoms, surgery can provide significant relief or even eliminate the symptoms completely. These symptoms can be caused by nerve irritation, spinal instability, or degeneration. Nerves may become compressed for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Disc problems.** The vertebrae or bones in your spine are separated by discs that act as cushions or shock absorbers. These can bulge or rupture, causing spinal stenosis or a "pinched nerve" leading to radiating pain, numbness, and tingling. Discs can also degenerate with wear and tear as we age, leading to arthritis within the spine, which can lead to pain and nerve compression.
- Bony overgrowth. Our spine is made of a series of bones. As we age, there is normal wear and tear, and osteoarthritic breakdown and overgrowth/spurring can occur. This can lead to pain from the abnormal bony contact, or from bone overgrowth leading to stiffness, nerve irritation, and pain.

Minimally invasive and microscopic spinal surgery.

If your healthcare provider advises surgery, you might be a candidate for minimally invasive spine surgery.

Minimally invasive techniques offer patients:

- Faster recovery time than traditional spinal surgery
- Reduced infection
- Reduced blood loss
- Faster return to your regular lifestyle

Visit MedStarHealth.org/Spine to learn more or schedule an appointment with one of our specialists.



After a frightening initial cancer diagnosis, Heather Hewling was grateful for the kindness and expertise of Dr. Son and the support of her entire MedStar Health team.

Breast cancer patient benefits from new technology.

By Leslie A. Whitlinger

Until February 2022, the only time Heather Hewling had ever been hospitalized was to give birth. So, the otherwise healthy 71-year-old was stunned when she discovered she had breast cancer.

"I was in shock and terrified," Heather says. "I had never had surgery before and had no idea what to expect. But my doctor said, 'Don't worry. I know a great surgeon who can help you.'"

That surgeon turned out to be Jennifer Son, MD, fellowship-trained and dedicated breast surgeon at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. Her efforts over the last few years have helped transform the breast health program into the sophisticated regional leader it is today.

"Dr. Son saw me right away and really listened to my questions and worries," says Heather, who was especially

concerned about the prospect of chemotherapy. "And then, I'll never forget it, she looked me straight in the eye and said, 'I'm going to take good care of you."

Dr. Son delivered on her promises. First, they reviewed all of Heather's options together. Based on a specific genetic review of her biopsied tissues, Heather would not need chemotherapy after all, wiping one major worry off her list.

Then Dr. Son utilized an innovative new technology designed to enhance the accuracy of breast cancer

"This was my first time at MedStar Montgomery and I can't say enough good things about the entire experience."

-Heather Hewling

surgery. Called the Magseed® marker, this technique uses a tiny, implanted magnetic stainless-steel bead the size of a rice grain that pinpoints the tumor's exact position within the body. MedStar

"Breast cancer today is very treatable and getting more so with each new medical innovation."

-Jennifer Son, MD

Montgomery became one of the first hospitals in Maryland to begin using Magseed in August 2021.

"Most breast cancers aren't palpable, meaning they can't be felt, and are only discovered though a mammogram," explains Dr. Son. "So, traditionally, between 70% to 80% of all breast cancer patients will need to have a wire inserted directly into their tumor on the day of surgery to correctly guide the surgeon."

Until the advent of Magseed, wire localization was the standard operating procedure. However, it wasn't perfect. The wire sticks out of the skin, so it can be bumped and moved off target before the patient even gets to the operating room. By comparison, the Magseed marker stays right where

it's put, directly on top of the biopsy site.



Jennifer Son, MD

That difference can be dramatic. Studies show that some stray microscopic cancer cells can be missed in 20% to 50% of surgical procedures done with a guide wire. Conversely, that risk of error drops down to between 6.5% and 10% with the Magseed system.

Another advantage is that Magseed can be placed days, weeks, or even months ahead of surgery, giving patients additional time to contemplate their options or to complete any adjuvant therapy.

On February 7, 2022, radiologists implanted the Magseed marker into Heather's breast in a 20-minute procedure. The next day, Heather underwent a successful total lumpectomy with bilateral construction with Dr. Son. She then had 16 sessions of radiation therapy and is now on a five-year medical regimen.

Five months after surgery, Heather's feeling great.

"This was my first time at MedStar Montgomery and I can't say enough good things about the entire experience," she says. "Everyone was so professional, but also warm and compassionate, making you feel at home. And Dr. Son is just amazing, a beautiful soul who immediately put my fears to rest. I have already recommended her and the team to someone who was just diagnosed."

For her part, Dr. Son wants women to know that "breast cancer today is very treatable and getting more so with each new medical innovation."

"From breast conservation techniques to targeted therapies to new technologies like Magseed, women now have more options than ever before and are doing very well post-treatment," Dr. Son confirms.



Heather is feeling great, and she's back to spending time in her garden and seeing friends.

Visit MedStarHealth.org/BreastCancer to learn more about our services or to make an appointment with one of our specialists.

Online classes and support groups.

We offer a wide range of classes and support groups to help you on your journey to wellness. Some classes are currently virtual. For specific dates and times when not listed below, please visit **MedStarHealth.org/Classes**.

Cancer support

Support Group for Cancer Survivors

The patient support group provides a safe place to share encouragement and receive information and guidance while discussing the unique challenges of living with a cancer diagnosis. Free. *Meets the first Friday of every month, noon to 1 p.m.*

Support Group for Caregivers

This group provides both practical and emotional support to caregivers. We explore ways to support loved ones while practicing self-care. Learn about resources and problem solve to deal with the challenging and rewarding aspects of caregiving. Free.

Meets the second Friday of every month, noon to 1 p.m.

Gentle Yoga

Yoga classes are tailored to meet survivors' needs at all stages of treatment and recovery. Classes combine guided breathing exercises, slow stretches, and special yoga sequences to improve balance, strength, and flexibility. Free. Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

To register for Cancer Support/Yoga classes, contact Samantha Falzoi at samantha.w.falzoi@medstar.net or 301-570-7878.

Senior exercise classes

Senior Strength and Balance

Have fun, feel better, and get fit with this group exercise class. It is designed to help increase coordination, strength, and balance for everyday movement while maintaining cardiovascular health. Free. Meets in person every Wednesday, 1 to 2 p.m.

Gentle Flow Yoga for Seniors

Learn and work your body through a variety of yoga poses to increase strength, balance, and flexibility. Led by a certified yoga instructor specializing in older adult

fitness, the class ends with a wonderful meditation that soothes the mind and body. Free. *Meets every Friday*, 10 to 11 a.m.

Childbirth and parenting classes

Complete Childbirth Preparation This six-week program prepares expecting parents for a positive birthing experience. The program covers labor, delivery, the birth process, and caring for a newborn. It includes the Infant Feeding class and Infant Care class.

Fee: \$150. Six-week program, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Call for dates.

Childbirth Express

This one-day condensed course will prepare couples for a positive birthing experience. The course covers labor, delivery, and the birth process. Fee: \$75.

Lamaze Technique

Learn about breathing patterns, position changes, and relaxation techniques to find comfort during labor. This class is for those who have received childbirth education before or need a refresher for the next labor and delivery. Fee: \$60.

Infant Care

This class is designed to give a complete head-to-toe look at how to care for your little one and provide you with hands-on experience. Topics include bathing, feeding, diapering, safety issues, and much more. Fee: \$35.

Infant Feeding

This interactive class aims to instill confidence in your feeding journey with your newborn, whether you are breastfeeding or bottle-feeding. Topics include the biology of the breast and breast milk, starting techniques, pumping, hand-expressing milk, bottle-feeding, and formula information.

Fee: \$35.

Support groups

Infant Feeding/New Mom Support Group

For new moms to get answers to their questions about breastfeeding, including whether baby is getting enough; nighttime feedings; pumping and storing milk, and returning to work while continuing breastfeeding. Free. *Meets every Thursday*.

Weight Loss Support Group

This group provides a supportive space for individuals who have had weight loss surgery, those who are thinking about or planning to have weight loss surgery, or those who want to get back on track with their weight loss journey. Free. Second and fourth Monday, 7 to 8 p.m.

Diabetes Self Management Support Class

For people diagnosed with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes or those who have pre-diabetes. Learn about knowing and controlling your hemoglobin, A1C, blood pressure, glucose monitoring, cholesterol, medication management and healthy nutrition. Virtual. Free, 3-Class series, 12 to 1 p.m.



Some classes are virtual. For full descriptions, or to learn more about dates, location, and times, visit **MedStarHealth.org/Classes** or call **301-774-8881** (Option 4).

State-of-the-art cancer care, close to home, makes all the difference.



Mary Ellen Gillard

In 2017, Mary Ellen Gillard was devastated when a routine mammogram revealed lumps in both of her breasts. After an ultrasound and a biopsy, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. "I have always been a fit and active person, and breast cancer does not run in my family. I was shocked," she says.

After meeting with her cancer team at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Mary Ellen opted to have a bilateral mastectomy. That was followed by radiation and chemotherapy consisting of about 60 appointments over nine months. "It was a tough year," she says. "But my family and friends supported me throughout the experience. And my caring medical team helped immensely," she says.

"Everyone made me feel so comfortable...the receptionists, nurses, doctors, technicians...I had a great team," Mary Ellen says. "The fact that this local community hospital is providing state-of-the-art care in such a compassionate environment truly improves the patient experience. I recommend MedStar Montgomery to anybody who asks."

Today, Mary Ellen is cancer-free and enjoying life. She especially loves playing in an occasional softball game. To express gratitude for her care experience at MedStar Montgomery, Mary Ellen has made a philanthropic gift to support the renovation and expansion of the hospital's oncology pavilion. In addition to making a philanthropic investment, she has joined the hospital's Philanthropy Committee as a patient advocate—providing a patient perspective regarding philanthropy initiatives, both proposed and underway, to support the hospital's programs and services.

"I am grateful to my care team and thankful that I am able to play a role in helping the hospital continue to provide the kind of care that it does to our community."

-Mary Ellen Gillard

To share your gratitude for your caregiver, please contact Jennifer Smith at jennifer.t.smith@medstar.net or call 301-774-8804.

Welcoming our new providers.

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center



Kunwardeep Sohal, MD Gastroenterology

301-774-8962



Samer Charbel, MD Gastroenterology

301-774-8962



Vandhna Sharma, MD Endocrinology

301-774-4529

Congratulations to our team at the Center for Successful Aging.

The new center and program have been offering exceptional and comprehensive care for our neighbors for the past year.

Whether you are searching for a primary care provider or a consultant to see the bigger picture of your health, the team is here for you.

Highlights:

- A new high-intensity outpatient clinic to prevent hospital admissions when possible
- Our team includes a clinical pharmacist, a physical therapist, a social worker, a nurse practitioner, and a geriatric physician

We look forward to serving you and your family!



To schedule an appointment at the Center for Successful Aging, call **301-570-7400.**

Meet our gastroenterology providers.

We care for patients with digestive diseases with a comprehensive and integrated approach.

Patients benefit from system-wide access to specialists and sub-specialists in gastroenterology at MedStar Health. Our patients receive the highest quality patient-centered care.

Visit MedStarHealth.org/Gastro for a complete listing of physicians and locations.



Samer Charbel, MD



Raena Olsen, DO



Kunwardeep Sohal, MD Gary Thompson, MD



18109 Prince Philip Dr., Olney, MD 20832 301-774-8962 | MedStarHealth.org



It's how we treat people.