



SCH **Pulse**

FOUNDATION

MILESTONE

February 2025 | southcountyhealth.org

On January 1st
South County Health
midwife Deb White had
the incredible honor
of delivering

RHODE ISLAND'S
**1st BABY
OF 2025**

Baby boy **Xev Enzo Finberg**
was born at 12:03 a.m. to
proud parents Tal Finberg
and Ptolemy Tassone of
West Greenwich.

Read more about this special delivery
at southcountyhealth.org/news

STAY CONNECTED

SOUTH COUNTY
HEALTH
FOUNDATION

Christine M. Foisy-Kent
VP of Development
Chief Philanthropy Officer
401-788-1608
cfoisykent@southcountyhealth.org

To receive future updates, please email
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REFLECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

In healthcare, challenges are part of the journey. What defines us, however, is how we respond. 2024 tested our resolve, yet it also reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to excellence. At South County Health, we faced each obstacle with a steady hand, a clear vision, and a steadfast commitment to our longstanding mission to be Rhode Island's Most Trusted Health Partner.

Experience has taught me that challenges often come hand-in-hand with opportunity. In 2024, we embraced those opportunities. Notably, we are proud to share several achievements that reflect our dedication:

- ✓ South County Hospital has earned a 5-star rating for quality from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — one of only two hospitals in Rhode Island and top 10% of all hospitals nationwide.
- ✓ The Leapfrog Group awarded us an 'A' grade for hospital safety.
- ✓ SCH achieved FY24 financial results that were \$3.7 million more favorable than budgeted.

As we look to 2025, I am filled with confidence — not just in what we've accomplished, but in the opportunities ahead. The Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team are committed to ongoing engagement with the community, our providers, staff, and volunteers — who are the heart of South County Health. It's clear that tough decisions lie ahead, especially if there is no relief to insufficient reimbursement rates. But our "True North" remains unchanged: we are committed to offering accessible and sustainable high-quality healthcare to all.

We will continue to advance care, support and grow our exceptional healthcare professionals, and ensure that every patient who trusts us with their care receives nothing short of excellence. Trust is not given — it is earned, day in and day out. And that trust — your trust — is the foundation of everything we do.

We are deeply grateful for the support the community has provided us. It is because of you that we can continue to make a meaningful impact, both now and in the years to come.

Welcome to this edition of Pulse. I hope it leaves you as inspired as I am about the future of South County Health.

Joseph Matthews
Chair, Board of Trustees

NEWS & MILESTONES



Transforming Knee Surgery with Robotic Precision

South County Health, in partnership with Ortho Rhode Island, became the first hospital in the state to introduce Corin ApolloKnee™, the latest in robotic-assisted technology for knee replacements. Dr. Michael Bradley recently performed the first knee replacement using Apollo at the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Surgery at South County Hospital.

This system combines precise knee assessments, unmatched surgical accuracy, and adaptable planning tools, enabling our expert surgeons to deliver life-changing care tailored to each patient. 🏆

Learn more at southcountyhealth.org/ortho



A proud moment for Ryan's parents, Brett and Krystal Uricchio

Baby Race Champions!

South County Health and URI Men's Basketball hosted the adorable South County Health Baby Race at halftime of the URI game against Davidson on January 18. Eight tiny racers competed, cheered on by the crowd, for a share of \$2,100 in scholarships. **Our top winner, 9-month-old Ryan**, crawled away with \$1,000, while second place received \$500, and all participants received \$100. Thank you to all participants for making this event a heartwarming success! 🏆

Learn more about the Center for Women's Health and Birthing Center at southcountyhealth.org/baby

PHILANTHROPY CORNER

SUPPORT SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH YEAR-ROUND!

Join our Monthly Giving Club and make a lasting impact with your recurring gift. Your ongoing support is crucial in funding state-of-the-art medical technology and innovative programs that enhance our community's health and well-being. Your contributions are essential in:

- 🏆 Strengthening Hospital Programs
- 🏆 Enhancing Medical Technologies
- 🏆 Maintaining a Healing Environment



Visit southcountyhealth.org/give to become a monthly donor and make a difference every day!

BUSINESS PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Westerly Community Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial institution that focuses on putting members' needs first and providing the best financial experience possible.



As a Business Partner, Westerly Community Credit Union is part of a legacy of business leaders committed to supporting our mission to be Rhode Island's Most Trusted Health Partner.

Learn more about our Business Partner Program at southcountyhealth.org/businesspartner



SCH STORY

A New Year's Eve Takes a Turn

For Russell (Russ) Flagg, New Year's Eve 2024 was meant to be a joyful time spent with family.

When a dive for a shot during a round of pickleball resulted in a hard fall, Russ brushed off the incident, determined to carry on. By the next day, however, the pain in his hip was undeniable. Unable to walk, Russ was transported by ambulance to South County Hospital.

"The pain was so intense I couldn't take a step," Russ recalled. "But the moment I arrived, South County Health's medical team went to work."

A WORLD-CLASS TEAM IN ACTION

Russ was diagnosed with a fractured hip and required a hip replacement. Thanks to the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Surgery at South County Health and the expertise of Ortho Rhode Island's Michael Bradley, MD, MBA, and the dedicated team at South County Hospital, he was in surgery the next day.

Reflecting on his experience, Russ shared in a heartfelt letter:

"FROM THE FIRST MOMENT I ARRIVED AT SCH BY AMBULANCE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, MY CARE WAS IN THE HANDS OF THE MOST CAPABLE WOMEN AND MEN I HAVE EVER MET. YOUR MEDICAL STAFF WENT TO WORK THAT INSTANT AND MADE MY 5-DAY STAY AND RECOVERY POSSIBLE."



A QUICK RECOVERY & A GRATEFUL HEART

Just three days after surgery, Russ returned home and was amazed by his progress. Walking, climbing stairs, and regaining his independence, he praised the exceptional care he received.

"I'm recovering at home today, and it's all thanks to Dr. Bradley, his operating staff, and the entire South County Health team," Russ wrote. "Their professionalism and compassion were extraordinary."

Russ reflected on his pickleball misstep with humor: "Next time, I'll just say, 'Good shot!'"

EXCEPTIONAL ORTHOPEDIC CARE AT SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH

Russ's story is a testament to the expert care available at South County Health. From the Emergency Department to surgery and follow-up, every step of his journey was handled with precision and empathy.

If you or a loved one needs orthopedic care, South County Health is here to provide exceptional treatment with a compassionate touch. 🍷



EXPRESSIONS OF Gratitude

"My visit to South County Hospital for my first hernia repair with Dr. Joseph Brady and the staff was excellent from the moment I walked in to the moment I entered the surgery room. I found myself thinking, **'What a well-oiled machine the staff is.'**"

I definitely recommend South County to my friends and family."

— General Surgery Patient

"I cannot rave enough about Dr. Kornas. He was knowledgeable, attentive, professional, caring, and very patient in answering all my questions. An amazing medical doctor and an asset to your facility! Dr. Hudson in the ED is also to be commended for his comforting bedside manner and for explaining everything thoroughly. Another wonderful medical doctor!"

— Emergency Dept. Patient



**Express Your
Gratitude Today!**

The experts at the Center for Advanced Orthopedic Surgery at South County Health can help you get back to doing what you love.

Learn more at southcountyhealth.org/ortho

PROVIDER UPDATES

New providers joining Primary Care and Center for Women's Health

As a lack of access to primary care, specialty doctors, and advanced practice providers (APPs) continues to affect the Rhode Island healthcare landscape, South County Health is pleased to announce the onboarding of several new providers, including:

- ✔ **Melanie Bowdy, NP** (Primary Care) – started in December
- ✔ **Taryn Carbone, NP** (Primary Care) – starting in March
- ✔ **Erin Hogan, MD** (Primary Care) – starting in April
- ✔ **Kelly Russell, CNM** (OB-GYN Midwife) – starting in April
- ✔ **Martha Moe, MD** (AVP South County Medical Group, Medical Director of Center for Women's Health, and OB-GYN Physician) – starting in July

With the onboarding of new midwives, Deb White, CNM, who has spent over 35 years as an OB-GYN provider will be transitioning to a GYN only role in Warwick. South County Health will be accepting new annuals later this spring.

While recruitment challenges persist, particularly in the face of insufficient reimbursement rates, we understand the uncertainty these issues may bring. Rest assured, South County Health is committed to deploying all available resources to recruit top-tier providers for our primary care and specialty practices. We are excited to welcome these new providers and look forward to their contributions over the next several months. ✔



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

DAISY AWARD

Jaclyn Duridas, RN, received the DAISY Award for her exceptional care and compassion. Jaclyn, a night-shift nurse on the Medical-Surgical Unit, consistently goes above and beyond in providing top-tier care to her patients. The patient who nominated Jaclyn said, "Jaclyn has taken great care of me twice while I had my total knee replacement. She is kind, caring, and compassionate." ✔



PETAL AWARD

Amanda Whaley, Medical Assistant, was recognized with the esteemed Petal Award. Amanda was nominated by a patient who wrote, "She was delightful, attentive, and calm. Her genuine care and concern felt reassuring and uplifting. In this time when people are too hurried or distracted, Amanda stopped what she was doing to find me and ask about me." ✔



GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Alyssa Gallup's career trajectory reflects South County Health's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering professional growth. Beginning her journey as a Human Resources intern in 2016, Alyssa shared, "I've always felt a sense of home working at this organization. The welcoming culture is something you experience the moment you walk through the door, and that still stands true today." ✔



Read more Staff Spotlights at southcountyhealth.org/news



CANCER CENTER UPDATE

We acutely understand and have listened to the community's concerns for the Cancer Center. The health and well-being of those we care for remains our top priority. We recognize that any change in care can lead to anxiety and uncertainty, especially for our cancer patients who rely on the Cancer Center for ongoing treatment and support.

South County Health has worked diligently to ensure the uninterrupted care of all patients of the Cancer Center. We quickly brought on locum physicians, including Drs. Alarcon, Lee, and McKinney, under the leadership of Interim Medical Director Dr. Seidler. As a result of these efforts, only 40 of the more than 1,700 oncology patients have chosen to leave the Cancer Center at this time. While we regret the loss of any patient, we recognize that many of our patients continue to entrust South County Health with their ongoing care. We are proud of our commitment to providing high-quality, community-based care as evidenced by our swift action to bring on locum physicians to meet community demand.

We remain dedicated to ensuring a smooth transition and are actively working toward securing a permanent provider solution. In the interim, we are pleased to share that Drs. Alarcon and McKinney



are accepting new patients, as is Dr. Joyce, who provides radiation oncology services. We have worked carefully to manage the transition of our current Cancer Center patients to our new providers, with a focus on clear, personal and direct communication.

It is also important to address the financial sustainability of the Cancer Center, which we are committed to maintaining for the community. While staffing is a crucial part of the equation, we must also acknowledge the significant financial challenges our oncology infusion therapy program is facing. The program is currently operating at a \$3.5 million annual loss, which includes \$2 million in subsidized drugs and \$1.5 million in underwriting operational costs. To address this, we are exploring potential partnerships with like-

minded organizations who believe oncologic care is best delivered at the local, community level.

South County Health is not the only healthcare system facing significant financial challenges in cancer care. Yale New Haven Health recently announced they will no longer be providing chemotherapies, at Westerly Hospital effective March 1, 2025. Instead, their patients are being asked to commute to Waterford, CT, for their treatment where reimbursement rates are structured fairly. South County Health believes it is imperative our elected officials here in Rhode Island address reimbursement rate disparity with CT and MA expeditiously to prevent further damages to Rhode Island's healthcare delivery system. 🌱

If you or a loved one has been impacted by Westerly Hospital's decision to no longer provide chemotherapies, South County Health may be able to help.

South County Health's Cancer Center is capable of offering a limited range of infusion therapies that Westerly Hospital discontinued. **For more information, please contact South County Health's Cancer Center at 401-783-6670.**

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to advanced diagnostics,**
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testing to help you stay
on top of your health.



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Use **Get Care NOW** to “Get in Line” any South County Health Lab
and ***your drive time counts towards your wait time.***

getcare.southcountyhealth.org

5 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS!

EAST GREENWICH

3461 South County Trail, Suite 103
Open Monday-Saturday

WAKEFIELD

70 Kenyon Avenue, Suite G10
Open Monday-Saturday

WARWICK

120 Centerville Road
Open Monday-Saturday

WESTERLY

268 Post Road, Suite 104
Open Monday-Saturday



NARRAGANSETT

14 Woodruff Avenue, Suite 1A
Now in the Walgreen's Plaza!
Monday-Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.