

# MARYLAND'S

HEALTH MATTERS

COVER STORY:

## COMMITTED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

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**SPRING 2021**

**ACADEMIC  
MEDICINE AT WORK**  
PIONEERING MITRAL  
VALVE REPAIR DEVICE  
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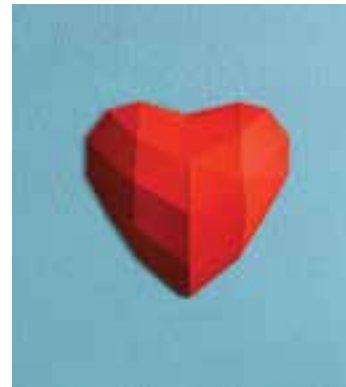
UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND  
CHARLES REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER



ON THE COVER

## COMMITTED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

For the first baby born in 2021 or the next member of your family, the Birthing Center at UM Charles Regional Medical Center is ready with a patient-centered model of care.



# 10

## ACADEMIC MEDICINE AT WORK PIONEERING MITRAL VALVE REPAIR DEVICE

University of Maryland Medical Center physician researchers use an innovative minimally invasive device in a clinical trial surgery.

# 15

## CARE PACKAGES FOR NEW MOMS

Thoughtful gifts are intended to reduce pandemic-associated postpartum sadness.



## UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND CHARLES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

**NOEL A. CERVINO**  
President/Chief Executive Officer

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please send us your comments, information requests  
or change of address to:

**craig.renner@umm.edu** or call **301-609-4394**.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Charles Regional Medical Center is committed to providing the very best in women's health services.

Over the past two years, we've completely renovated our hospital's birthing center, making it more efficient and comfortable

for our patients. Last summer, we established a partnership to provide 24/7 labor, delivery and postpartum care in our hospital. From the moment you arrive to deliver your baby, take comfort in knowing there is a trained obstetrician ready to assist in the delivery.

Recently, we hired two new OB/GYN practitioners and a new nurse practitioner in our UM Charles Regional Medical Group, bringing the total number to six highly skilled, medical professionals who are available to handle all your health needs, including well-woman visits, preventive care, fertility services and much more.

Last summer we launched our breast health program with general surgeon Charity Dugan, DO, FACOS, and last fall we introduced a new lymphedema program in our UM Charles Regional Rehabilitation practice. These new practices and programs ensure that women no longer need to leave our community to access these vital and important health services.

In this issue you'll see how these services work together for your health, and how our hospital continues to earn recognition for outstanding care—most recently for innovative patient safety initiatives for patients fighting COVID-19.

We are your community hospital, and we are committed to providing you with the best possible care.

**Noel A. Cervino**  
President & CEO

## CIRCLE OF HONOR

### RECOGNIZED FOR PATIENT SAFETY INNOVATION

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND** Charles Regional Medical Center has been named a Circle of Honor winner for the 2021 Minogue Awards for Patient Safety Innovation. The award recognizes the hospital's Mitigating the Effects of COVID: Protect Your Lungs Campaign.

Launched in spring 2020, the campaign fostered pneumonia prevention education and helped patients with COVID-19 infections continue their recovery once they left the hospital. The campaign was a collaborative effort involving several medical center teams—Population Health, Performance Improvement, Community Health, Rehabilitation Services and Respiratory Therapy—in addition to nursing and clinical staff.

"The award recognizes our commitment to patient safety and the innovative efforts of a wide range of teams across our hospital who continue to work on this project," said Noel Cervino, president and CEO of UM Charles Regional.

Key program elements included a "Prone" team for COVID-19 patients, which helps turn them in their beds and improve their respiratory recovery; COVID-19 Care Kits given to discharged patients, and a series of instructional videos on incentive spirometer use, pursed lip breathing, deep breathing, and the importance of oral care and movement. In addition, hospital staff made post-discharge calls to patients to follow up on their recovery progress.

COVID-19 readmissions and pneumonia admissions significantly decreased due to the program.

UM Charles Regional Medical Center was one of 10 hospitals throughout Maryland to receive the award.





OUT OF THE

# White Coat

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NURSE MANAGER YONNIA WAGGONER

**ALTHOUGH SHE WAS** following in the footsteps of three generations of nurses, Yonnia Waggoner said she surprised herself by pursuing her family's favorite career path.

"I didn't really grow up thinking I would be a nurse," said Waggoner, who now has 25 years of experience in critical care and emergency medicine.

Waggoner has called many places home across the country, going as far as Alaska and, most recently, Colorado.

Between moves, she has an impressive history of working in fast-moving, high-stress medical environments. This spring she's finishing the last classes for her Master of Science in nursing leadership and health care.

Following her experience in a variety of health institutions, the prospect of working at the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center Emergency Department intrigued and excited her. When her husband got a new government position in the area, Waggoner was eager to join our team as Emergency Department nurse manager.

One of the things she values most about her new position is being able to connect with the community she serves, something that can get lost in a city setting.

"I appreciate being able to take care of the community," she said. "It's incredibly fulfilling."

But Waggoner is also excited to be a part of the University of Maryland Medical System and work to bring cutting-edge technology from the affiliated research institutions to our southern Maryland hospital.

"I very much also value being part of UMMS," she said, emphasizing the resources the system has devoted to supporting emergency staff and patients.

While she is a relatively new member of the team, Waggoner is already settling into a routine—as much of a routine as she can, given the uncertainty of what each new day will bring in the Emergency Department.

Preparation is key for Waggoner and her team, and they make every effort to get patients the treatment they need as quickly as possible.

### TO UNWIND AFTER A LONG DAY:

I talk with my kids about their days and laugh with them.

### HER FAVORITE FOOD:

Nachos, I love nachos. They're really hard to mess up.

### IF SHE COULD ADD AN EIGHTH DAY TO THE WEEK:

I would spend it on a beach somewhere relaxing and listening to the ocean.

### ONE THING ON HER BUCKET LIST:

Going to see the baby panda at the National Zoo with my family.

### FAVORITE PART OF HER JOB:

I love taking care of people and knowing I'm part of such a committed team.

# GROWING OUR WOMEN'S HEALTH TEAM

NEW SPECIALISTS BRING EXPERTISE TO  
EXPAND PATIENT CARE SERVICES.



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CHARLES** Regional Medical Group – Women's Health recently added practitioners to our women's health team with appointments available in La Plata and Waldorf. As a result, local women can now enjoy additional, convenient options for quality specialty care.

## OB/GYN PHYSICIAN SPECIALISTS



David Caiseda, MD, comes to UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health following a vigorous education and early career in Puerto Rico. Dr. Caiseda's extensive experience also includes a teaching career at Georgetown University, where he used his expertise as an OB/GYN to instruct and mentor new students.



Joining Dr. Caiseda is Lauren Outlaw, MD, a board-certified OB/GYN. Originally from Indiana, Dr. Outlaw has extensive experience in international mission work. She spent her fourth year of residency serving Guatemalan women and later in several additional countries through Doctors Without Borders. Dr. Outlaw brings with her a philosophy centered around a positive relationship with her patients.

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES



New team member Vontrese Warren, a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner, joins UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health after serving at a reproductive health care practice she co-owned in an urban community.

"I've enjoyed educating, building trust and having great rapport with my patients over the years," Warren said. "I look forward to continuing this journey here at UM Charles Regional."

## CONTINUITY OF CARE

The additional specialists will also play a critical role in the UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health's new model of care for expecting mothers. Designed to provide a seamless experience from prenatal through postpartum care, this system ensures expert medical attention for women in every stage of their pregnancy.

"We couldn't be more excited to grow our Women's Health team," said Joseph Moser, MD, chief medical officer at UM Charles Regional Medical Center. "Each of our new specialists brings unique skills and a passion that will serve our entire community."

## UM CHARLES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WOMEN'S SERVICES LOCATIONS

### UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health at Waldorf

177 St. Patricks Drive, Suite 101  
Waldorf MD 20603  
301-609-4964

### UM Charles Regional Medical Center Birthing Center

5 Garrett Avenue, First Floor  
La Plata, MD 20646  
301-609-4000

### UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health at La Plata

605 E. Charles Street  
La Plata, MD 20646  
301-609-4800



To learn more about women's services at UM Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health, visit [umcharlesregional.org/womens](https://umcharlesregional.org/womens).



# IS IT BABY TIME?

Our commitment  
to women's  
health means  
we're always  
ready to deliver.

NO MATTER WHEN YOUR LITTLE ONE DECIDES TO ARRIVE, THE TEAM AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CHARLES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WILL BE HERE WAITING, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

**AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**  
Charles Regional Medical Center, we deliver babies and great birthing experiences. In 2020, our Birthing Center welcomed 497 babies, and their mothers love the amenities in our newly renovated facility. New moms thrive on the personal attention they receive, and they can't help but recommend that their pregnant friends turn to UM Charles

Regional Medical Center for their own birthing experiences.

What makes it possible to deliver such impressive care every day?

"Simply put, we're committed to our community," said Joseph Moser, MD, chief medical officer at UM Charles Regional Medical Center. "Offering maternity care close to home is important for those we serve, and we're thrilled to be able to provide it.

We pour our passion into our work every day because we all believe that when you do something, you should do it right."

Doing it right all starts at the first appointment.

## A PACKAGE DEAL

When you come to a UM Charles Regional Medical Group provider for a pregnancy test, you know you matter.

Our OB/GYNs and nurses work to make every moment of your journey special and memorable. We want you to be prepared for the road ahead and make sure you don't leave empty-handed, so we send you home with a care package.

It's a small gift, but one we hope encourages and empowers you.

"Learning you're pregnant can be an exciting and nervous time," said Ashley Nelson, lead front office coordinator for University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Group – Women's Health. "We built our maternity care packages with that in mind. We wanted to show patients that we appreciate them, we're thinking of them and we're here to help every step along their pregnancy journey."

The care packages include several items, chosen to help navigate pregnancy and beyond.

New additions to the maternity care package include:

- Prenatal vitamin samples
- A portable calendar for tracking appointments and important dates, as well as noting questions to ask the doctor
- Photo magnets with hospital contact information
- An easy way to document baby's immunizations
- Hand sanitizer
- Information on what to expect during pregnancy and after giving birth

Thoughtfully assembled, these care packages were made especially for expecting women. Yet they're only one reason UM Charles Regional Medical Center was named one of the country's best maternity hospitals by *Newsweek* magazine. Such a designation also requires constant, compassionate care.

That type of care is what we always aim to provide. To make sure it happens every day, we constantly seek to improve the care and experience of mothers and their little ones.

## PARTNERING FOR YOU

For generations, maternity care was provided by one person: a family practice physician or OB/GYN. This single provider performed check-ups, delivered babies and provided follow-up care in the hospital. Some days, this worked well. There was no lag in care, and office visits and hospital birthing occurred in a timely manner.

Some days, unfortunately, didn't work so well. After all, babies show up on their own time, and providers can only be at one place at a time. When office visits and birthing happened simultaneously, the result was exhaustion for

providers and frustration for patients.

Partnering with OB Hospitalist Group resolves these problems.

OB Hospitalist Group, the largest such group in the nation, provides nothing but hospital-based care. Their specialists are credentialed OB/GYNs who focus only on labor, delivery and postpartum care. They don't have office hours. They don't perform prenatal check-ups. And they never leave the Birthing Center at UM Charles Regional Medical Center.

"This new model of care allows OB/GYNs to focus on the patients in front of them, which improves patient care," said Michelle Gonzalez, MD, OB/GYN hospitalist with OB Hospitalist Group. "The old model had providers running back and forth from the clinic to the hospital to the emergency room. They had to be in all places at all times. It was exhausting and inefficient."

Now, when you visit your OB/GYN for a regular visit, you know your provider will be on-site. You no longer have to fear your OB/GYN will run off for an emergency birth. For working women, busy stay-at-home moms or anyone with a schedule to keep, this is greatly appreciated.

## PARTNERING THROUGH POSTPARTUM

The perks of this innovative partnership are just as obvious inside the hospital's Birthing Center. Once you arrive at the hospital in active labor, your care is managed by an OB hospitalist.

"When someone comes to us in labor—whether at 3 a.m. or 9 p.m.—she needs to see someone right away," Dr. Moser said. "With OB Hospitalist Group, there's always someone here to help with labor and delivery or if an issue crops up after a woman gives birth."

While new mothers enjoy seeing the partnership in action, much of the benefit takes place out of sight. Each day, representatives from the medical and hospitalist groups meet to discuss patient progress. If a pregnant woman is at risk for developing gestational diabetes or other conditions that complicate delivery, this information is shared so the hospitalists are prepared in advance.

This constant communication ensures a solid continuum of care for each woman.

"Our goal is to create an environment in which patients feel safe and cared for," Dr. Gonzalez said. "To do that, we have to make sure there are no gaps in our communication."

And the communication doesn't stop at birth. It goes on until discharge, when new mothers return to UM Charles Regional Medical Group for follow-up care, and continues



past that point through interactions with the postpartum support group.

“Our new model offers seamless continuity of care,” Dr. Moser said. “More importantly, women benefit from our providers’ gentle, compassionate presence. Without them, all the advanced care models and renovated birthing and recovery rooms in the world are useless. That’s what makes all of this work—our providers and partners who thrive on excellent patient care, from pregnancy to postpartum care and beyond.”

Are you expecting? Call **301-609-4800** to schedule an appointment with an OB/GYN provider at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Group – Women’s Health.







Chantal and Emile with their daughter, Joyce

## WELCOME, *Baby Joyce!*

BORN ON NEW YEAR'S DAY IN 2021, JOYCE JULIENNE BUM WAS UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CHARLES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER'S FIRST BABY OF THE NEW YEAR!

**“Everyone is so nice at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center. I recommend that everyone deliver their babies there.”**

—CHANTAL TCHEUMTCHOUA, MOTHER OF THE HOSPITAL'S FIRST BABY IN 2021, JOYCE JULIENNE BUM

**WHEN CHANTAL TCHEUMTCHOUA** learned she was pregnant with her fourth child, she was thrilled. She hoped to have all of her children before turning 30, and it was going to happen.

When she began to consider where to have her baby, she didn't think twice. Having turned to the Birthing Center at UM Charles Regional Medical Center for her previous deliveries, she knew what to expect.

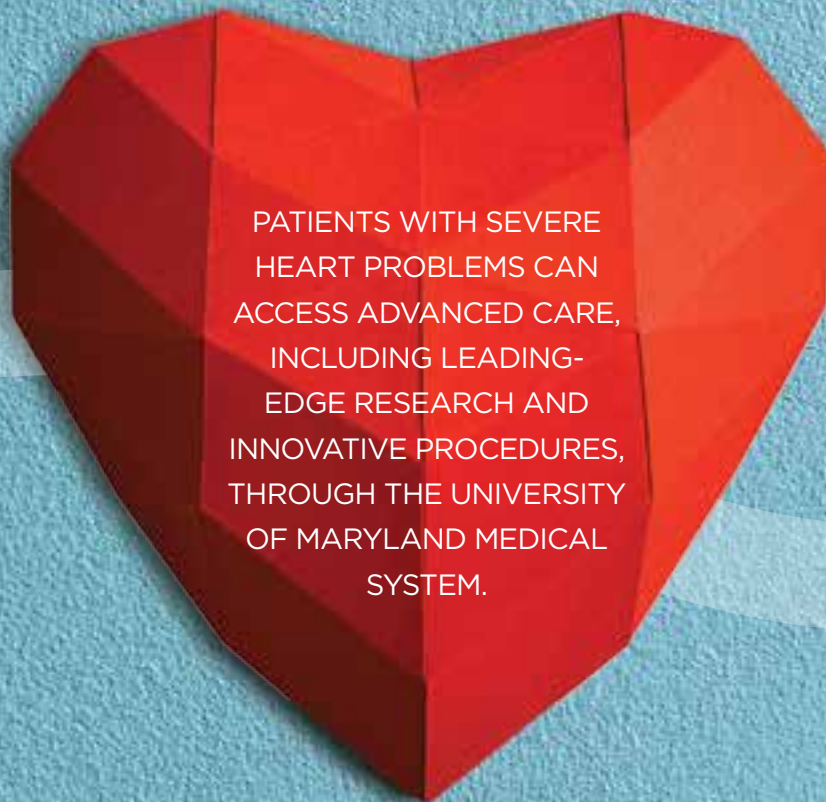
However, the Charles County resident didn't expect to go there quite as early as she did.

“I was due on January 2, but I started going into labor in the morning on January 1,” Tcheumtchoua said.

Her labor began around 9 a.m. At 4 p.m., she made a beeline to UM Charles Regional Medical Center. There, Tcheumtchoua was escorted to one of the Birthing Center's newly renovated labor and delivery rooms, where she continued laboring under the caring and watchful eye of her providers.

Then at 7:41 p.m., Joyce Julianne Bum made her grand entrance. The newest addition to the family weighed 7 pounds and measured 21 inches. For Tcheumtchoua, everything was perfect—her beautiful newborn baby and her birthing experience.

“I was so happy that Joyce was the hospital's first baby of the year,” Tcheumtchoua said. “Everyone at the hospital is always so nice, and they take great care of me and my babies.”



PATIENTS WITH SEVERE  
HEART PROBLEMS CAN  
ACCESS ADVANCED CARE,  
INCLUDING LEADING-  
EDGE RESEARCH AND  
INNOVATIVE PROCEDURES,  
THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY  
OF MARYLAND MEDICAL  
SYSTEM.

*A Higher*  
LEVEL OF HEART  
CARE



**“Since the heart is beating throughout the operation, the mitral valve repair is adjusted in real time, allowing us to achieve the perfect result.”**

— MURTAZA DAWOOD, MD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SURGERY AT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**MITRAL VALVE REGURGITATION** is a common but serious heart condition. While a healthy mitral valve will open and close with each heartbeat, a patient with mitral valve regurgitation has a valve that doesn't close entirely. Every time the heart pumps, blood flows backwards from the heart's lower chamber into its upper chamber. This makes the heart work inefficiently. Without proper treatment, it can lead to heart failure.

The traditional way to treat mitral valve regurgitation is to replace the damaged valve through open-heart surgery. But for a patient with complex health conditions, undergoing such an invasive procedure may not be safe.

This is what makes the minimally invasive HARPOON mitral valve repair system so revolutionary. Physicians may soon have this option to treat mitral valve regurgitation in a patient whose frail condition or complex health concerns may have prevented them from receiving treatment at all.

## INNOVATIVE RESEARCH IN ACTION

Currently designated an investigational clinical device, the HARPOON system was developed by research clinicians at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM). In December 2020, it was used as part of the RESTORE clinical trial sponsored by Edwards Lifesciences on a patient at the University of Maryland Heart & Vascular Center (UM HVC), located at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) in Baltimore. The device operates in stark contrast to traditional mitral valve replacement surgery.

“Currently, when the valve is replaced through surgery, the doctor needs to make a large cut in the patient's chest, open the ribcage, and put the patient on a cardiopulmonary bypass machine,” said Murtaza Dawood, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery at UMSOM and a cardiac surgeon at UM HVC. “A cardiopulmonary bypass machine takes over the heart and lungs' functions and supplies blood and oxygen to the body. The surgeon can then operate while the heart isn't beating.”

Using the HARPOON device, the surgeon reaches the patient's heart through a minimally invasive incision in the left chest and repairs the leaky valve. (See “How the Harpoon System Works” to learn more.)

“When a patient's mitral valve is healthy, two separate clusters of cords limit the movement of the valve flaps when the heart squeezes or contracts,” Dr. Dawood said. “Those flaps, or leaflets, keep the blood from flowing backward. When a patient's cords stretch or break, mitral valve regurgitation results. Mitral valve repair replaces those natural cords with artificial ones to help the mitral valve remain closed during contraction.”

The HARPOON system is designed to allow the surgery to be performed while the patient's heart is still beating, with no need for a cardiopulmonary bypass machine. When the heart remains active throughout the operation, the surgeon can make adjustments in real time.

“Repairing the mitral valve is the most important factor in determining a patient's long-term prognosis,” Dr. Dawood said. “Those benefits increase when surgeons can repair mitral valves without the potential health risks involved in open-heart surgery.”

*Continued on page 12*



## HOW THE HARPOON SYSTEM WORKS

Using image-guided technology, the surgeon inserts the device into the heart near the leaky mitral valve. The device uses a specially designed needle that makes a tiny hole to send new polymer cord material through the leaflet. The needle then withdraws the cord and secures it to tighten and close the valve. Several cords may be repaired in this manner to help the mitral valve function properly again.



## THE WAY OF THE FUTURE

The HARPOON device is one of more than 40 clinical trials available to cardiovascular patients at UM HVC at UMMC. The academic flagship of the University of Maryland Medical System, UMMC is driving innovation to provide advanced treatments for serious health conditions.

“Our cardiovascular specialists are dedicated to advancing patient care through a variety of novel methods and techniques,” said Dr. Dawood. “By participating in clinical trials, we hope to develop new technologies to provide our patients with safe, effective treatments.”

Clinical trials are a vital part of furthering medical research. UM HVC cardiac surgeons have participated in numerous clinical trials that include new minimally invasive surgeries, new devices and new ways to treat valve disease.

The UM Heart & Vascular Center has also been a clinical trial site for the MitraClip, another minimally invasive procedure developed to potentially repair a damaged mitral valve for patients who are not good candidates for traditional open-heart surgery. At this point, the MitraClip has been approved for two indications, with an extension for a third indication now being studied. These clinical trials are a necessary step to receive approval from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

Patients who enroll in clinical trials have access to groundbreaking procedures before they are available nationwide. Participants may also take pride in being able to help further medical research and identify new ways to treat heart disease and other conditions.

Minimally invasive surgeries offer multiple benefits for patients, among them less time in surgery, shorter hospital stays, faster recovery time and reduced pain.



Learn more about UMMC's advanced heart and vascular program and specialists at [umm.edu/heart](http://umm.edu/heart).

## WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE RESTORE CLINICAL TRIAL?

Possible candidates have been diagnosed with severe degenerative mitral valve regurgitation and meet other specific eligibility criteria.

Those who have had prior heart valve repair or replacement surgery or are scheduled for a cardiac or peripheral vascular procedure are among those who do not qualify.

To learn more about the RESTORE clinical trial, call **410-328-8209**.

Studies of the HARPOON device are funded by Edwards Lifesciences (IDE G200067). The device inventor and three others on the research team report ownership of stock and/or options to purchase stock in Harpoon Medical. At the present time, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration has not approved the HARPOON device for patients in the United States. Limited by federal law to investigational use.

# CARDIAC REHABILITATION:

## The path back to cardiovascular health

CARDIAC REHABILITATION IS A MEDICALLY SUPERVISED PROGRAM DESIGNED TO IMPROVE CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH AFTER A HEART ATTACK, HEART SURGERY OR DIAGNOSIS OF HEART FAILURE.

**THE CARDIAC REHABILITATION** program at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center consists of exercise counseling, training and education for heart-healthy living to make your heart stronger and healthier. Patients who complete cardiac rehabilitation greatly lower their risk of having a second cardiac event. They also lower their all-cause mortality by as much as 30%.

## A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS

Directed by a board-certified cardiologist, our program includes exercise sessions supervised by a registered nurse and/or an exercise physiologist with advanced cardiac life support certification. Additional professionals available to support cardiac rehabilitation include dietitians, diabetes educators, physical therapists and social workers.

## BUILDING UNDERSTANDING

Education topics covered during the cardiac rehabilitation program include:

- Blood pressure reduction
- Exercise benefits
- Exercising at home
- Exercising if you have diabetes
- Nutritional counseling
- Smoking cessation
- Stress management
- Understanding your medications

Exercise is the best lifestyle change you can make to improve your cardiac health and prevent cardiovascular disease.

Despite the evident benefits, only about 35% of patients who qualify actually enroll in a cardiac rehabilitation program.



Cardiac Rehabilitation is located on the second floor (2 West) of UM Charles Regional Medical Center. To learn more, visit [umcharlesregional.org/cardiacrehab](http://umcharlesregional.org/cardiacrehab) or call **301-609-4391**.

# Where Heart Problems HAPPEN

THE HEART IS RESILIENT, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE SENSITIVE TO INJURY AND CHANGE. A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS MAY AFFECT THIS HARD-WORKING MUSCLE.

LET'S EXPLORE SOME OF THEM AND WHERE THEY OCCUR.

## CORONARY ARTERIES

These blood vessels bring blood into the heart after the blood has picked up oxygen in the lungs. Over time, plaque can accumulate in the arteries' walls, causing the blood vessels to narrow and increasing the risk of a heart attack.

## VENTRICLES

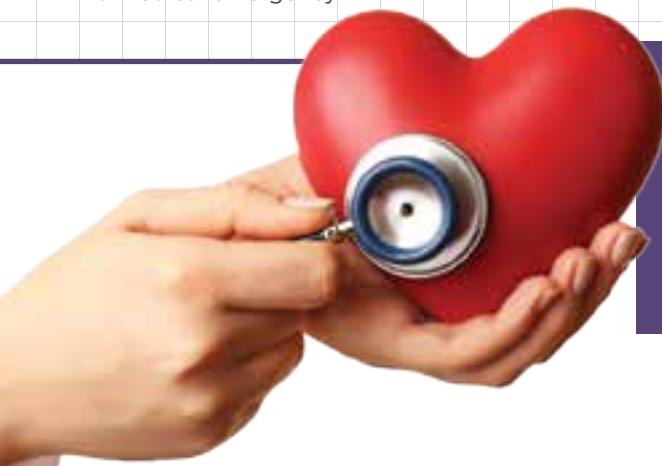
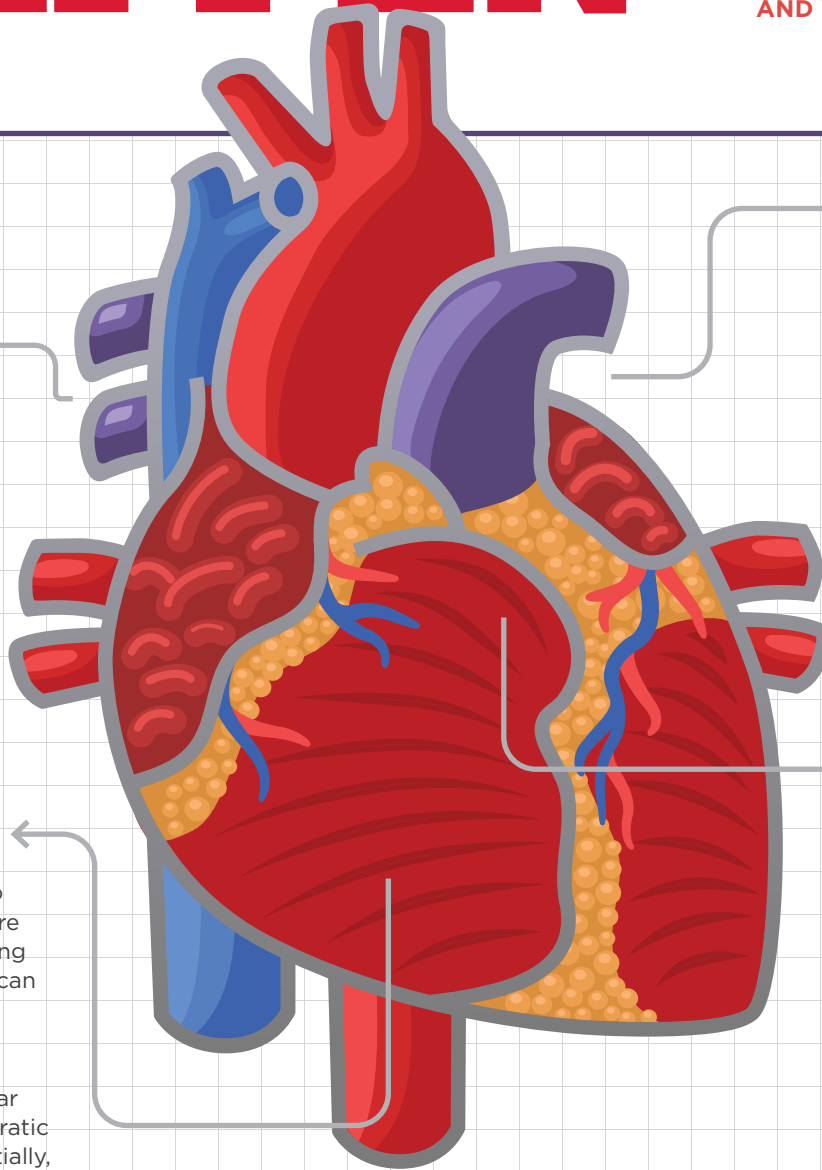
These are the heart's two lower chambers, which are responsible for maintaining blood flow. Arrhythmias can develop in the ventricles, including ventricular tachycardia—a fast heartbeat—and ventricular fibrillation, which is an erratic heart rhythm and, potentially, a medical emergency.

## ATRIA

These are the heart's two upper chambers, which pump blood out of the heart. Atrial fibrillation—one of the most common types of arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat—occurs in the atria. Also known as AFib, this condition causes the heart to beat abnormally fast and can increase your risk for stroke.

## HEART VALVES

Four valves keep blood flowing on a one-way path through the heart. Problems with blood flow can occur if the valves weaken and allow blood to leak backward or don't open or close properly.



# 12.1%

OF ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE DIAGNOSED WITH HEART DISEASE

—FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

# High Blood Pressure CAN LEAD TO STROKE

GET YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED  
AT EVERY MEDICAL VISIT.

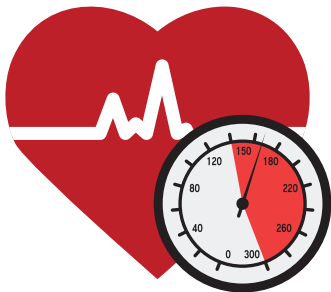
**BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS** measure the force of blood in your arteries. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is any measurement at or above 130/80. This common condition can lead to heart disease, kidney disease and stroke.

Strokes happen when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted, and hypertension can be the cause. Common symptoms of a stroke include trouble walking or speaking and paralysis of the face, arm or leg. If you see signs of stroke in yourself or others, seek emergency help immediately. Every minute counts. Some treatments work only during the first few hours.

"Time matters," said Shellee Stine, the stroke coordinator at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center. "If someone is experiencing a stroke, call 911. Stroke patients who arrive by EMS do better in the long run than those who walk in."

Our Emergency Department is designated a Primary Stroke Center by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems. When admitted, a possible stroke patient will undergo testing to identify the status of the stroke and determine the best course of action. Most patients will be treated using the full spectrum of in-house services available. For more severe cases, arrangements are in place to provide additional resources.

"We can keep you here in your community hospital for treatment and therapy," Stine said, "and we can continue your care following discharge."



## THE SILENT KILLER

TAKE ACTION AGAINST UNCONTROLLED BLOOD PRESSURE.

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**, also called hypertension, harms your heart by increasing your risk of heart failure, heart attack and stroke. Recent research published in *JAMA* surveyed more than 50,000 adults and found that rates of high blood pressure have increased in recent years while the number of patients seeking treatment for the condition decreased. Of the 18,000 patients surveyed with high blood pressure, only 44% were actively managing the condition.

### REVERSE YOUR RISK

Hypertension is a risk factor for heart disease that you can control. Here are three ways to start:

**1. Check your numbers.** Many adults don't know they have high blood pressure until it's too late. Monitoring your blood pressure at home alerts you and your physician to any potential problems and indicates if treatment is working.

**2. Commit to lifestyle changes.** Limiting alcohol consumption, getting enough exercise, managing stress levels and maintaining a healthy weight can all help lower your blood pressure.

**3. See a provider.** Adults with hypertension who had a regular health care provider were more likely to manage their blood pressure. Physicians may prescribe medication and provide guidance on ways to stay within a healthier blood pressure range.

Want to learn more about reducing your heart disease risk or better managing high blood pressure? A UM Charles Regional Medical Center primary care physician can help. Find one near you at [umcharlesregional.org/findadoctor](http://umcharlesregional.org/findadoctor).



# NEWS & Events

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND Charles Regional Medical Center is here for you. For the latest information, check our online calendar at [umms.org/charles/community/classes-events](https://umms.org/charles/community/classes-events).



## AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

- Monday, June 28, 12:30–6:30pm
- Monday, Aug. 23, 12:30–6:30pm

The event, to be held at the American Legion Post 82 in La Plata, is jointly sponsored by University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, La Plata Lions Club and La Plata United Methodist Church. Preregistration is required.

**Please call 1-800-GIVELIFE today to make your appointment to donate blood so that others may live.**



## PREDIABETES/TYPE 2 DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP FOR ADULTS

- Wednesday, July 28, 2–3pm
- Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2–3pm

The Center for Diabetes Education sponsors a support group open to adults with diabetes or prediabetes and their loved ones. Meet others who are also on the journey with diabetes or prediabetes, and get tips on how to balance life, food, activity and blood sugar. Please contact us with any questions.

**To RSVP and learn how to join, please call 301-609-5444 or email [diabetescenter@umm.edu](mailto:diabetescenter@umm.edu).**



## BRAIN INJURY & STROKE SUPPORT GROUP

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center offers a FREE support group

for survivors of stroke or traumatic brain injury and their caregivers. The group meets once a month on the first Monday of each month from 4–5pm. Each hour-long session consists of a variety of activities, education materials, guest speakers, question and answer period, and time for socializing.

**If you have any questions or would like to join a meeting, please call 301-609-4890 or email [kelly.crabtree@umm.edu](mailto:kelly.crabtree@umm.edu) for specific meeting information.**



## Care Packages FOR NEW MOMS

GIFTS OF THOUGHTFUL ITEMS AIM TO REDUCE SOCIAL DISTANCING SADNESS.

MARYLAND DIAPER BANK (MDB) has partnered with University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center's Birthing Center to deliver their Mommy Postpartum Boxes. MDB is a nonprofit organization that provides basic diaper needs to stimulate health, growth and good hygiene for babies in Maryland.

"We decided to do something different this year to help moms and babies during the pandemic," said Shelly Tucker, executive director of MDB.

Social support from family and friends during the vulnerable transition into motherhood is reduced because new moms and babies must stay isolated to avoid possible exposure to COVID-19. This raises the risk of postpartum depression.

"We normally provide diapers to families through our local partners," Tucker said. "This time, we reached out to UM Charles Regional's Birthing Center, and I am so thankful they decided to move forward with this partnership."

"This is a great way to show that the entire community cares about mommies and babies both during and after pregnancy," said Monique Smalls-Dillard, MSN, RN-CE, UM CRMC, nurse manager for women's services. "Our moms absolutely love the gift boxes."

Each postpartum box contains self-care items such as face masks, journals, pens, healthy snacks, gum, lip gloss and a keepsake. These gift boxes are in addition to the care packages provided by the medical group.



To learn more about the Maryland Diaper Bank, visit [marylanddiaperbank.org](https://marylanddiaperbank.org) or call 240-844-2307.



**University of Maryland  
Charles Regional Medical Center**  
5 Garrett Ave  
P.O. Box 1070  
La Plata, Maryland 20646



# *Better Breast Health*

**It's All About Awareness, Education, and Focused Care**

Breast health is about more than breast cancer, and UM Charles Regional Medical Group — Breast Health is dedicated to helping southern Maryland women monitor and maintain breast health at every stage of life. We're here for you, fully-equipped and fully-committed.

**Look closer for local breast health services at  
[UMCharlesRegional.org/BreastCare](https://UMCharlesRegional.org/BreastCare)**



5 North La Plata Court, Suite 103, La Plata, MD 20646  
**301-609-6363** | Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.