



## COVID-19 THE LONG HAUL

One year after COVID-19 was first diagnosed in New Hampshire, tens of thousands of Granite Staters have been diagnosed with the virus. Medical professionals continue to learn more about the disease, including the long-term effects. Recovery from COVID-19 is quick for some. For others, lingering symptoms continue for weeks and even months. The team at CMC is at the forefront of providing ongoing care and support for patients recovering from COVID-19. 🏠



## Stronger by the Breath

*Pulmonary Fitness Program helps patients recovering from COVID-19*

When Walumba Katanga arrived at the CMC Emergency Department, he had already been diagnosed with pneumonia and had just tested positive for COVID-19. That was May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. The next thing he remembers, it was month later and he was in the Intensive Care Unit.

“I woke up and all of my body was weak—my legs, my head, my mouth. I had a catheter for dialysis, I couldn’t move my legs, and I was hungry.”

Waking up was the first step in a long recovery for the 59-year-old. Katanga was eventually moved to

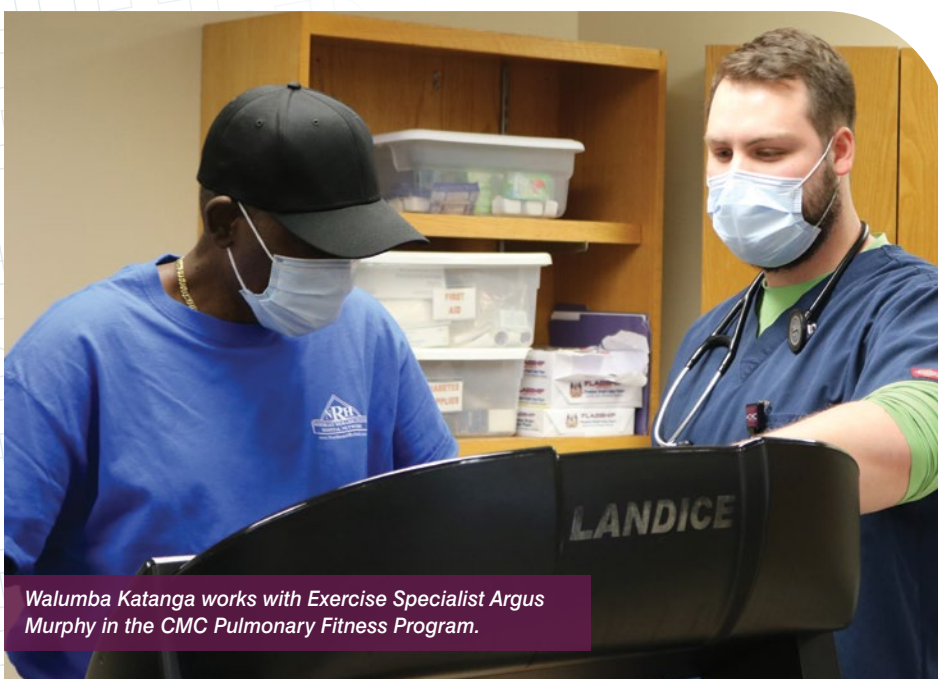
a step-down unit and learned how to eat again. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, he was discharged to a rehabilitation hospital where he regained full use of his kidneys—something he was told might not happen. He went home on July 29<sup>th</sup> where he started physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

But by Thanksgiving he had a setback and was hospitalized for severely high blood pressure. In addition to that, he continued to struggle with shortness of breath, needed an oxygen tank, and used a cane to walk. He was referred to CMC’s Pulmonary Fitness Program.

“When Walumba came to us he had a pronounced physical limp,” recalls CMC Exercise Specialist Argus Murphy. “He had to pick up his leg every time he was going to use it. He rarely does that now.”

Pulmonary fitness helps patients with chronic pulmonary conditions build strength and endurance.

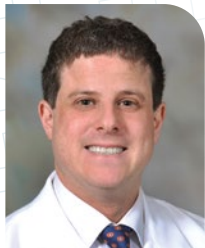
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*Walumba Katanga works with Exercise Specialist Argus Murphy in the CMC Pulmonary Fitness Program.*

## COVID-19 and the Heart

*Long-lasting effects can occur even in healthy patients*



Ido Preis, MD, FACC

People who have certain cardiac conditions, like coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, and congestive heart failure, are at a significantly

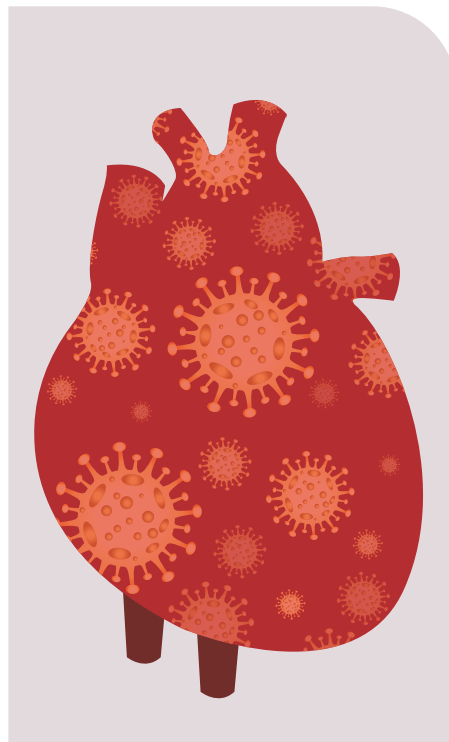
higher risk for complications from COVID-19.

Many of these patients also have other conditions that contribute to potential complications, like obesity, hypertension, diabetes, tobacco use, and lung disease. As we enter year two of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it's becoming increasingly clear that the virus can have long-lasting effects on the heart—even in otherwise healthy people. Dr. Ido Preis, cardiologist at CMC's New England Heart & Vascular Institute and director of the Sports Cardiology Clinic, offers insight on what doctors are looking for in patients who have recovered from COVID-19.

We know that COVID-19 can affect the heart in a multitude of ways. Sometimes, the effects on the heart are obvious, as patients develop heart failure, heart attacks, and arrhythmias, all of which can have long term effects. Other times the effects of the infection itself make the heart work harder. This can become a problem especially if the patient's heart was not completely healthy to begin with. We also know that in some cases COVID-19 increases the

body's tendency to form blood clots, which can lead to clotting of arteries or stroke.

Patients have reported a range of long-term symptoms from COVID-19 including palpitations, fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pain, or erratic heart rates. I have even seen



this in very healthy, young, athletic patients. These lingering symptoms from COVID-19 are still somewhat of a mystery, leading some to describe this as a "long haul" illness. Patients should talk with their doctor if they continue to or begin to experience these symptoms about two to

three weeks after recovering from COVID-19. An evaluation or testing may be needed. In some patients we see clear cardiac dysfunction, in others however, the effects can be more subtle and require more advanced cardiac testing like MRI scanning to diagnose. It can also be difficult to weed out what is causing these symptoms: heart injury, lung injury, or general deconditioning.

In the most severe instances, the virus can directly invade the heart, which can lead to the body's immune system provoking an inflammatory response that damages the heart muscle. This is known as myocarditis. Myocarditis can happen even in healthy, young, athletic patients. At our Sports Cardiology Clinic, one of our concerns is that acute myocarditis in athletes can even lead to heart rhythm disorders. In some cases, the condition can lead to sudden death.

It's unclear how long or permanent these effects are. This is a new topic and research is still ongoing. Some treatments are available that focus on symptom relief. Generally, we tend to see improvement over time, and anticipate most patients will fully recover. We will be studying this for a long time to come. ■■

# Where heart meets health.

## The First Step

Helping COVID-19 patients on their journey to recovery



Ken Varrato takes his COVID-19 recovery step by step at CMC Outpatient Rehab.

Ken Varrato was in a coma for a month in a Boston hospital. Every night, his nurse would place the phone by his ear while his wife talked to him. “She would talk and sing and remind me of the promise I made to come back.”

It was, in fact, the third time in his life that Ken had been in a coma. Each time he remembers hearing his wife’s voice, which he credits with getting him through COVID-19. “I wonder how many people might have survived if they just heard from a loved one every night.”

That support is just one thing that makes Varrato strong. He’s also a martial arts instructor and he is fiercely stubborn. “I believe mind set has a lot to do with people recovering.”

Varrato was diagnosed with COVID-19 on July 9<sup>th</sup>, his wedding anniversary. He was hospitalized for two months—nearly half of that time on a ventilator—and suffered a stroke. His family

was told more than once to say their goodbyes, “but my family refused to believe that I would die.”

After the hospital, Varrato spent another month at inpatient rehabilitation where he learned to walk and regain use of his left side. He then had several weeks of in-home physical and occupational therapy before being referred to CMC Outpatient Rehabilitation.

“Coronavirus treatment is by no means simple,” says Victor Carbone, director of CMC Rehabilitation Services. “It contains layers of recovery that can last far longer than recovery from other illnesses.”

Long-term complications from COVID-19 can include muscle weakness, diminished heart and lung capacity, pain, balance, endurance, swallowing and speech difficulties, and difficulty walking. All of this can cause a loss of function and independence.

“From the start of the pandemic,” says Carbone, “our therapists have been researching and preparing for how to help patients through these physical challenges and get them back to the life they knew.”

Varrato has been working extensively with physical therapist Liane St. John. Recently, he moved his left foot on his own for the first time since coming off the ventilator. His martial arts training helps a lot, especially with balance and focus. “Liane pushes me, then I push harder, then she has to hold me back,” he chuckles. “I still

have a long way to go and every day I get stronger. But, just like I tell my students, ‘a journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step.’ You have to see where you are today compared to a few weeks ago. That’s what therapy does for you. PT, OT, speech therapy, they’ve all helped me.”

### HOW THERAPY HELPS COVID-19 RECOVERY

#### EXERCISE TRAINING

- Strengthening breathing muscles
- Upper & lower body strengthening
- Aerobic exercise & reconditioning
- Balance & body awareness
- Functional activity stimulation

#### EDUCATION

- Relaxation techniques
- Energy conservation
- Activity modification

#### MANUAL THERAPY

- Torso and chest wall mobility
- Diaphragm stretching/release

#### COMMUNICATION

- Cognition
- Voice recovery
- Swallowing

# Medical News

## Game Changers

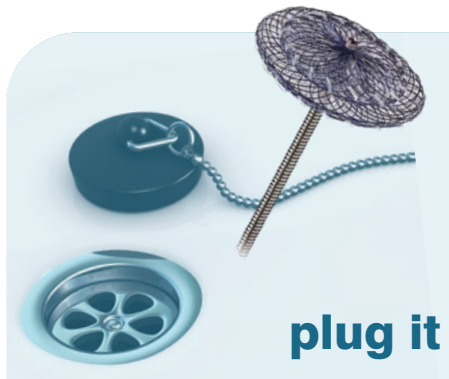
### *In heart & vascular care*

Every minute of your life, four chambers and four valves beat/open about 75 times and pump five quarts of blood throughout your body—your heart is one impressive muscle! Our heart and vascular experts are constantly exploring new frontiers of minimally invasive care and treatment options that can reduce both discomfort and recovery time. These pint-sized gadgets feature some of the most impressive, recent advances that can be game changers for our heart and vascular patients by helping them thrive in their daily lives.



When a coronary artery has been 100% blocked for a long time, the severe calcified plaque buildup prevents blood from traveling down the vessel to the heart muscle. In some people this is the source of significant chest pain (angina) that limits enjoyment of life.

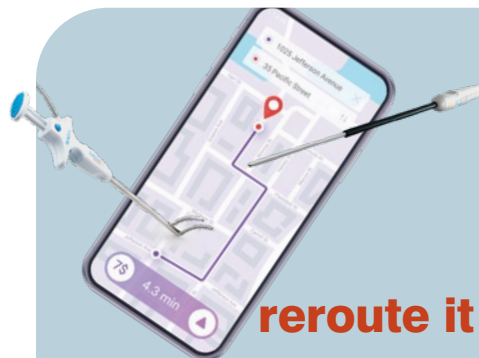
Chronic total occlusion percutaneous coronary intervention (CTO PCI) is an innovative procedure to repair that blockage. This procedure is available to CMC patients, but is performed by less than two percent of interventional cardiologists in the U.S. In order to restore blood flow, two catheters may be placed through an artery in the wrist or groin to reach both ends of the blockage. CTO PCI is similar to choosing an alternative route rather than traveling in the traffic jammed lane.



A patent foramen ovale (PFO) is a small opening or hole between the upper chambers of the heart. This hole typically closes on its own during infancy. For about 25%\* of us, however, the PFO stays open. For the vast majority of us, this PFO causes no problems whatsoever. However in a small number of people who have had a stroke and are otherwise healthy, this PFO can increase the risk of recurrent stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA).

An interventional cardiologist can repair a PFO by inserting a device attached to the end of a long, flexible tube called a catheter. The catheter is inserted into the leg and guided to the PFO where the device is placed and plugs the hole.

\*According to the American Heart Association



Patients with atrial fibrillation (AFib), an irregular heart rhythm, have a range of treatments available. These may include medication or ablation. For others, a surgical approach known as the Maze Procedure may be appropriate.

During this procedure, the cardiac surgeon uses special instruments to create a pattern on the heart that reroutes or redirects the heart's electrical signals so that the heart beats in normal rhythm. ❏

For more information on these and more cutting-edge technologies, visit [CatholicMedicalCenter.org/heart](https://www.CatholicMedicalCenter.org/heart)

# Where heart meets health.

## Let's Get Together

*Online classes, support groups keep people connected*

The calls started coming as soon as New Hampshire's stay-at-home order took effect. "I recall the concerned messages I received from families who were preparing for birth," says CMC's Perinatal Education Coordinator & Lactation Counselor Christine McKenney, RN, BSN, CCBE, IBCLC. "It was important for them to have support in a time of such uncertainty."

So McKenney did what so many other businesses and schools were doing—she moved childbirth education classes online. "I often share a quote from Theodore Roosevelt with parents in class, 'Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.' My mission last spring was to do just that!"

At CMC's Wellness Center, Wellness & Risk Reduction Specialist Kim Lowell could no longer teach in-person classes. "We have some pretty dedicated folks who've been coming to classes for a long time and then everything just stopped. I reached out to a few of them and floated the idea of trying Zoom classes. Before I knew it, I had 20 people who were also stuck at home and alone."

Lowell worked out the kinks by doing a few strength classes with a small group. "Our age group is anywhere from 60-80 so we did a training session on how to Zoom.

We got everyone comfortable with it. The response was huge. It was a way for all of us to stay connected."

Before the pandemic, breast cancer patients and survivors found kinship and support in the BeWell Cancer Survivorship Program. CMC Breast Care Center Medical Director Jessica Ryan, MD, FACS, wanted to keep that support going, but she wanted to do more than send them a meeting link. She developed "Tea Talks."

The once-monthly sessions are held via Zoom and feature a speaker on a topic that's relevant to breast cancer patients and survivors. For each one, participants are sent a package with herbal tea and a moisturizing face mask.



"Women get a chance to step away from the stress and feel really cared for," says Dr. Ryan. "Since we're gathering virtually, they're also comfortable and safe in their own homes."

Online offerings have made classes and support more accessible than ever. No more weather cancellations or limits due to space. Nobody has to drive or worry about parking. Lowell notes, "On one snowy day this winter our class was full. Normally we would have cancelled." And while McKenney misses the community of in-person classes, "I'm grateful to creatively support, encourage, and empower families during this special time in their lives." ■■

# Zoom with us!

### CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

11 class types for expecting moms, families, & siblings as well as support for new parents.

### FITNESS CLASSES

Classes six days a week include yoga, barre, strength, & half hour power.

### TEA TALKS

Once-monthly "Tea Talks" with education and peer support.

To find out more, visit: [CatholicMedicalCenter.org/classes](https://CatholicMedicalCenter.org/classes)

# Medical News



## Your Voice Matters!

*Join the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) and make a difference*


CMC's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) is a diverse volunteer group of patients and families who work together with CMC staff to improve the healthcare experience. The insights provided by patient voices can result in changes that make it easier and better for all. We meet once a month to discuss issues that impact hospital functions from the patient perspective.

Our accomplishments include bringing in valet parking and a training program called "Language of Caring," which coaches caregivers on compassionate and effective

communication. PFAC members serve on hospital committees and, prior to the pandemic, we met with patients in the hospital to help determine if their needs were being met. We hope to resume these visits in the future when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. We also participate in staff orientations by sharing stories of our experiences with hospitals and doctors.

During COVID-19 we began meeting remotely and more frequently to help the hospital in pandemic planning. We explored many issues and pursued new initiatives. Children's

handmade greeting cards for patients were encouraged and delivered by the hundreds. With the need for visitor restrictions, we explored ways to enable family to visit patients remotely. With staff wearing masks and other protective gear, we suggested adding a personal photo to their ID badges so patients could see the "face behind the mask." Our work is interesting, challenging and immensely rewarding.

If you are inspired to add your voice to the Patient and Family Advisory Council please contact the Office of Patient Experience at 603.663.6069. 

# Where **heart** meets health.

## Know Your Medications

If you had to seek medical care while on vacation, or from someone other than your own doctor, would you be able to tell them the names and dosages of your medications? Would you be able to provide information on any medication allergies you might have?

This information is important and helps medical providers give you the right care at the right time, avoiding the risk of a medication error injury. Be sure to carry a list of your current medications in your wallet so that you have easy access to it, if needed. Ask your primary care provider or pharmacist for a medication card if you don't already have one. If you do have one, check it regularly to make sure it's up to date. There are also many apps available so that you can easily access your list on your phone. Simply search for medication list or medication management in an app store. 📱



## Heart & Hands Scholarship

*CMC partners with New Hampshire Catholic Schools*

CMC is once again partnering with the Manchester Diocese Catholic School Office to recognize student service and leadership through the Heart & Hands Scholarship.

Two scholarships are available to students entering grades 7-12 at any of the Diocesan Catholic Schools in New Hampshire.

A \$1,500 scholarship will be granted to one student in grades 7-8 and a

\$2,500 scholarship to one student in grades 9-12. Applications are open now through May 1st for the 2021-22 school year. Students will be asked to answer a number of questions about community service and how they envision building a better community. Find out more information and get the application by visiting [catholicnh.org/schools/visitors/scholarships](https://catholicnh.org/schools/visitors/scholarships). 📱



# Medical News

WELCOMING...



We're excited to add these talented providers to the CMC family! To learn more about them, please visit [CatholicMedicalCenter.org](http://CatholicMedicalCenter.org) and use the **Find A Doctor** tab!



**Joyce-Marie Kennedy, MS, PA-C**  
New England Heart & Vascular Institute (Nashua)



**Daniel Neidorf, APRN**  
Intensive Care Unit



**DD Travers, APRN**  
Healthcare for the Homeless



**Kendra McKible, MPH, PA-C**  
NH Gastroenterology



**Crystal Sanders, APRN**  
Urgent Care



**Allison Higgins, APRN**  
Bedford Center Internal Medicine & Pediatrics



**Heather Newell, APRN**  
Family Physicians of Manchester



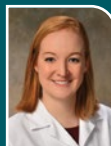
**Ashlynn Fogg, APRN**  
Amoskeag Family Practice



**Jennifer Nohrden, MD**  
Urgent Care



**Christopher Bates-Withers, MMS, PA-C**  
Intensive Care Unit



**Christina Holub, FNP-C**  
Optimization Clinic



**Brock Billadeau, DO**  
Hospital Medicine (MCH)



**Zachary Stevens, DO**  
Hospital Medicine



**Keith Rogers, MD**  
Hospital Medicine (MCH)



**Lauren Goodwin, APRN**  
Goffstown Family Practice



**Alisha Powell, PA-C**  
New England Heart & Vascular Institute—Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery



# Where **heart** meets health.



**Jade Durgin, PA-C**  
New England Heart & Vascular  
Institute—Cardiovascular &  
Thoracic Surgery



**Christopher Calhoun, MD**  
Goffstown Family Practice



**Max Hallett, DO**  
Hospital Medicine



**Samantha Harrington, PA-C**  
NH Gastroenterology



**Patricia Uhlig, PA-C**  
New England Heart & Vascular  
Institute—Cardiovascular &  
Thoracic Surgery



**Mark Sullivan, PA-C**  
New England Heart & Vascular  
Institute—Cardiovascular &  
Thoracic Surgery



**Patrick Dwyer, DPM,  
FACFAS, CWS**  
Wound Care Center



**Kate Gagnon PA-C, MPAS,  
CWS**  
NH Gastroenterology



**Rachel Wyninegar,  
APRN**  
Optimization Clinic



**Mason Cross, PA-C, MPAS**  
New England Heart &  
Vascular Institute



**Taylor Mosher, MSN, APRN,  
FNP-C**  
Highlander Way Internal  
Medicine



**Daniel Ray, MD, MS, FCCP,  
FAHPM, HMOC**  
Palliative Care



**Isabel Brewster, CNM**  
Women's Wellness &  
Fertility Center



**Carter Brown, PA-C**  
New England Heart &  
Vascular Institute



**Adam Gilman, MSN,  
PMHNP-BC**  
Behavioral Health

## **"Stronger by the breath"** *continued from front page*

These days, “we’re seeing a lot of post-COVID patients, especially the ones who were very sick,” says Lorna Marshall, the Pulmonary Fitness Program supervisor. “They’ve done very well. Walumba was the extreme. He went from his body completely shutting down to now talking about going back to work.”

Shortness of breath and weakness are common long-term effects of COVID-19. They’re also symptoms that are exceptionally difficult for people who never experienced lung problems before COVID-19.

“When you become short of breath you become anxious,” explains Marshall. “That anxiety keeps you from being active and doing every day things. Teaching patients techniques like pursed lip breathing and how to use their diaphragm empowers them to take control of their breathing and remain calm.”

The Pulmonary Fitness Program meets twice a week for an hour at a time. Patients are also provided online educational modules that cover topics like nutrition, hand hygiene, and adaptive equipment.

Katanga made tremendous gains in the eight-week program.

“The first day I had him do ten minutes on the elliptical at a low level,” recalls Murphy. “Now he’s doing 35 minutes at a much higher intensity. He’s the strongest person I’ve had in resistance training.”

He’s abandoned the cane, too. “With Argus’ help, I started to walk on my right leg,” says Katanga. “When I came home (from the hospital) I went through 15 oxygen tanks. Now, no more. I feel stronger now.” 🇺🇸

# Philanthropy

## Local Entrepreneurs Hope \$15 Million Gift Will Inspire Others

Grace and Ken Solinsky have made a \$15 million charitable gift to support the new building on the hospital campus. Grace is also one of our volunteer pet therapists and visits patients with her Golden Retriever, Kai.

Eager to make a difference in the community and in health care, local entrepreneurs Grace and Ken Solinsky have made a substantial charitable gift to Catholic Medical Center. The \$15 million gift will serve as the cornerstone of CMC's forthcoming capital campaign, which supports construction of a new building on the hospital



Artists' rendering of the Ken and Grace Solinsky Center.

campus. This building will be named the Ken and Grace Solinsky Center, in honor of their historic donation.

"I am truly humbled that the Solinskys have decided to make a transformative investment in the future of health care in Manchester and beyond by supporting CMC," said CMC CEO Joseph Pepe, MD. "The Ken and

Grace Solinsky Center will help improve access to care and bring more high-quality, innovative services to patients all across New Hampshire."

The Ken and Grace Solinsky Center, scheduled to break ground in 2022, will house an expanded Emergency Department, world-class headquarters for the New England Heart & Vascular Institute, additional operating rooms and additional private patient rooms.

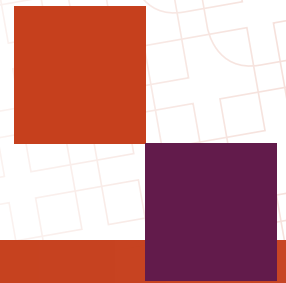
"As business leaders, Grace and I recognize how a project like this benefits the community," said Ken Solinsky. "By contributing to the capital campaign, we can make a lasting difference for the community and for our wonderful, former employees. We hope that other leaders will recognize this opportunity and join us in supporting the campaign and advancing health care in Manchester."

CMC's building project will transform the property next to the hospital with new clinical facilities and a new Rite Aid store. The stand-alone pharmacy opened in November, 2020. Project updates are available at [CatholicMedicalCenter.org/BuildingWithHeart](https://CatholicMedicalCenter.org/BuildingWithHeart) 

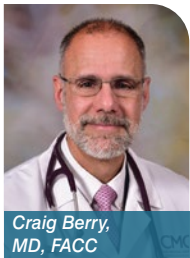


Grace and Ken Solinsky with their Golden Retriever and therapy dog, Kai.

# Where **heart** meets health.



## Donating through a Donor-Advised Fund



Craig Berry,  
MD, FACC

Craig Berry, MD, FACC, a cardiologist with CMC's New England Heart & Vascular Institute in Nashua, explains why he gives to CMC through a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF).

The Berry Family Donor Fund allows me to give more by getting the most tax benefits out of my charitable donations. It allows me to:

- Claim tax benefits when I place assets into the DAF, rather than when I actually give to a nonprofit organization (plus, investment growth in the DAF is tax-free)
- Donate non-cash assets, such as shares in a private company, securities or real estate
- Give more by avoiding capital gains taxes
- Choose nonprofits to donate to in the future, without penalty or restriction

Setting up a DAF is easy. Now, I just contact my fund representative and instruct him to release funds to the charity of my choice.

I choose to give to CMC because I'm proud of the work we do here and I want to help the mission of providing health, healing and hope to all. Many of my patients would have to travel to Boston to get the care we can offer in Manchester, Nashua and throughout New Hampshire.

CMC relies on the generosity of neighbors like you to help fund the critical care and services we provide. Will you join us today by making a donation? Thank you for making a difference. 🇺🇸

## What is a Donor Advised Fund?

A DAF is a simple, flexible and tax-efficient way to support your favorite charities. Think of it as a personal charitable savings account. The donor makes contributions and takes an immediate tax deduction. The funds are invested and managed by a nonprofit known as a sponsoring organization. Donors tell the sponsoring organization which nonprofits they'd like to donate to from their accounts. 🇺🇸

## Your Support Touches Lives

Name:

Address:

Phone:  Email:

### By Credit Card:

Visa  Mastercard  AmEx  Discover

Card #:

Exp. Date:  CVC:

Cardholder's Name:

### By Check:

Check is enclosed

Make check payable to "**Catholic Medical Center.**" If your gift is for a particular purpose or department, please note it on the memo line of your check.

### Give Online:

[CatholicMedicalCenter.org/donate](https://CatholicMedicalCenter.org/donate)

Enclosed is my gift of: \$

Please direct my gift to CMC's:

- Greatest Need
- New England Heart & Vascular Institute
- Program of my choice:
- Please do not publish my name in print or online

### Please return by mail to:

CMC Philanthropy Office  
100 McGregor Street  
Manchester, NH 03102

All gifts are tax deductible. For information about planned giving or leaving a legacy gift in your will or estate plan, please contact **Jennifer Pitre**, Vice President of Philanthropy, at **603.665.2569** or **Jennifer.Pitre@cmc-nh.org**.

I would like to make this gift in honor/memory of:



CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER

100 McGregor Street  
Manchester NH 03102

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# Thank you & farewell

Dr. Joseph Pepe, thank you for your dedication and leadership over the last 31 years. Your humor, friendship, encouragement and intelligence inspire us all to live out CMC's mission, every day.

You're truly the heart of CMC!

We are sad to say goodbye but wish you all the best when you retire June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Godspeed to you and your family.



## your thoughts

We welcome your comments and encourage your ideas about future stories in Healthy Living News. Please contact us at [CatholicMedicalCenter.org](http://CatholicMedicalCenter.org) or e-mail [info@cmc-nh.org](mailto:info@cmc-nh.org).

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