



Atrium Health

Carolinas Rehabilitation

Atrium Health Carolinas Rehabilitation Breaks Ground on New State-of-the-Art Hospital

On September 24, 2020, several hundred guests celebrated the groundbreaking for the new replacement hospital, Carolinas Rehabilitation - Charlotte. The virtual event was streamed on social media with celebratory remarks from Atrium Health's President of the Greater Charlotte Region, Ken D. Haynes, President of Carolinas Rehabilitation, Robert Larrison, Jr., FACHE and Dr. William Bockenek, CPE, Chief Medical Officer at Carolinas Rehabilitation and Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine at Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center. The team shared renderings of thoughtfully designed spaces that will provide better care for patients with challenging medical, physical and cognitive needs. This innovative space further advances the current comprehensive rehabilitation services provided to Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center, recently ranked as a Best Regional Hospital, and will provide access to critical services beyond the Southeast region. This state of the art facility will further support the national standing of Carolinas Rehabilitation, which has been listed in the top 25 of rehabilitation hospitals for the past seven years by U.S. News & World Report.



Carolinas Medical Center

“For 70 years, Carolinas Rehabilitation has served the most vulnerable in our region, so I can’t think of a more fitting tribute than to break ground during our platinum anniversary on our new world-class rehabilitation hospital that will extend access to the most sophisticated rehabilitation programs and services throughout the Carolinas and Southeastern United States,” says Robert G. Larrison, Jr., FACHE, president of Carolinas Rehabilitation.

The new 150,000-square-foot hospital provides 70 inpatient beds, a state of the art gym and private treatment rooms for physical, occupational and speech therapy, a center for independent living, aquatic therapy, a 9,300-square-foot outpatient physician clinic (with 10 exam rooms, 4 treatment rooms and 4 neuropsychology testing rooms), a pharmacy, inpatient and café food services, and spiritual care to serve our inpatient and outpatient community. The design inspires hope and healing, facilitates independence and empowers our patients and their families through compassion, education and high-quality care.

Carolina Rehabilitation's comprehensive therapy gym is designed for shared use by our inpatients and outpatients and will house the latest technology. In addition to a main gym, other therapeutic spaces include an outdoor therapy garden, center for independent living, activities of daily living suite and aquatic center. Several quiet gyms and treatment areas are co-located on inpatient units so patients can focus on rebuilding their health in an environment with less distractions and lower stimulation.

The design of our inpatient units was based on an innovative 'open core' layout which includes 16-foot wide central corridors, distributed team workstations for patient-to-caregiver connectivity and private patient

rooms designed with maximum adaptability. The inpatient rooms are standardized and identical in layout, enabling cross training of care teams for increased flexibility in staffing.

Integrated technology improves the experience for patients and families while enhancing the efficiency and collaboration of caregivers. Although the design creates clear separation of public and private spaces, both environments will benefit equally from large windows that provide plentiful access to natural light and scenic views. With community and therapy spaces on each unit supporting comprehensive therapy and day activities, patients and their families will be able to connect, inspire and foster a sense of belonging throughout their

rehabilitation journey. The entire building takes full advantage of the natural areas to the creek and other adjacent green spaces. The long-term campus plan will accommodate an expanded therapy park in the future, which will further advance our world-renowned Adaptive Sports and Adventure Program (ASAP).

Every aspect of the facility was designed to promote the holistic health and wellness for both patients and our clinical care team and will integrate state-of-the-art therapeutic interventions with compassion, empathy and inspiration for the highest levels of care.

Look for more updates on the replacement hospital in the next edition of our newsletter. ■

Dr. William Bockenek, Director of the Program for Academic Leadership (PAL) Within the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP)



Paving the path for the next generation of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) physician leaders is part of the culture at Atrium

Health Carolinas Rehabilitation (CR). Dr. William Bockenek, Chief Medical Officer at Carolinas Rehabilitation and Professor and Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center, has been the leader of the Program for Academic Leadership (PAL) over the past three years. PAL, the primary national forum for developing future PM&R academic leaders, is focused on education, networking and mentorship.

As part of the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP) and

supported by the Foundation for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Roosevelt Warm Springs Foundation, and Nielsen Foundation, PAL was established over 20 years ago to further develop academic leaders in physiatry. The goal of the program is to provide an administrative framework and skill sets to early career academic faculty and enhance their leadership abilities within departments and institutions to support the field of PM&R. Dr. Bockenek brings prominent national leaders in to speak with PAL participants and addresses logistics, processes, politics and personnel issues common in academic medicine. PAL participants attend sessions modeled after a "flipped classroom" approach. This includes hands-on problem-solving workshops, small and large group sessions, expert panel discussions and one-on-one mentorship.

"It is my honor to be the current Director of the Program for Academic Leadership. The three-year course load includes a yearly interactive meeting and two practice improvement projects completed by each participant at their respective institutions, with each project presented at the annual AAP meeting. There is a strong emphasis on mentorship and networking with senior academic PM&R national leaders, many of whom are former graduates of the PAL program. We have experienced great success with this program over the past twenty plus years, with countless graduates eventually becoming residency/fellowship program directors and/or chairs of departments. The PAL participants are the future of academic PM&R," says Dr. William Bockenek, CPE.

CR has many ties to the PAL program both current and past. Dr. Kelly Crawford, Brain Injury Program Director at CR, is currently in the program.

Graduates from the program include:

- Dr. Vishwa Raj, Professor, Medical Director of Carolinas Rehabilitation, Vice-Chair of Clinical Operations, Department of PM&R, Chief of Cancer Rehabilitation at Atrium Health Levine Cancer Institute

- Dr. Vu Nguyen, Professor, Vice-Chair of Academics and Residency Program Director, Department of PM&R

Former CR faculty and residents:

- Drs. Keneshia Kirksey, Amanda Harrington, William Scelza and Jeffrey Johns

Candidates must be nominated by their PM&R academic department or division chair. If there isn't a PM&R department, a nomination can originate from a member of the AAP Board of Trustees or AAP Committee Chair in addition to their current Chair (non-PM&R).



For more information about the PAL program, contact Dr. Bockenek at William.Bockenek@AtriumHealth.org or the AAP. ■

Atrium Health Pineville Rehabilitation Hospital Ranked Among Best in North Carolina

In September 2020, Newsweek announced the results of its national survey that ranked America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers based on quality of care, quality of service, quality of follow-up care, and accommodation and amenities relative to in state competition.

Thousands of doctors, healthcare professionals and administrators completed an online survey that resulted in ranking facilities in the 20 states with the highest number of physical rehabilitation centers, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Congratulations Atrium Health Pineville Rehabilitation Hospital.



**BEST
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REHABILITATION
CENTERS
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Research Spotlight: Shanti Pinto, MD



“Traumatic brain injury causes long-lasting physical, cognitive and emotional impairments; yet, the severity of the injury is often

unrecognized as many individuals outwardly appear ‘normal.’ Research into the long-term functional outcomes of brain injury is critically important to improving the medical and rehabilitative care provided to this underserved population.”

– Dr. Shanti Pinto

We are honored to have Dr. Shanti Pinto on our clinical and research staff at Atrium Health Carolinas

Rehabilitation. Dr. Pinto began her tenure as Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Medicine in 2017. One of her first academic lectures to the residents and faculty highlighted the cost-efficacy of using routine Doppler ultrasound for diagnosis of deep vein thrombosis at admission to inpatient rehabilitation. From that first lecture, it was clear that she's enthusiastically committed to pursuing as well as sharing knowledge. She shares freely and is currently focused on mobility and dual task function following brain injury.

Dr. Pinto's papers and abstracts cover topics relevant to brain injury medicine, concussion management,

epidemiology and exercise. She continues to make and publish important contributions with several notable achievements, including:

- Howard Hughes Medical Institute Fellowship (2010-2011)
- 2015 Excellence in Brain Injury Medicine UPMC PM&R Resident Award
- 2017 Best Paper Award from the Association of Academic Physiatrists
- 2019 James T. McDeavitt Teaching Award for excellence in teaching PM&R Resident Physicians at Carolinas Rehabilitation
- 2020 Best Paper Award at ISPRM/AAP 2020 for her study “Mild Traumatic Brain Injury is Associated with Increased Dual Task Cost During Ambulation”

- Invited participant NIH funded 2020 Training in Grantsmanship for Rehabilitation Research grant writing workshop (TIGRR)

The greater rehabilitation community values Dr. Pinto as a forward thinking and innovative clinical scientist. She's been invited to speak at major conferences for several national organizations, including the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, Association of Academic Physiatrists, TBI Model Systems, and American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She's also a reviewer

for the American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and PM&R: The Journal of Injury, Function and Rehabilitation. An active leader, she's involved in several professional associations such as the ACRM Brain Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group, the Chronic Brain Injury and Disorders of Consciousness Task Forces and the Program Committee of the AAP.

Additionally, Dr. Pinto is primary investigator (PI) on the Richard S. Materson New Investigator Research Grant from the Foundation for PM&R

(awarded July 2019). She serves as PI for an industry sponsored trial with Revance Therapeutics on daxibotulinumtoxin, an injectable for the treatment of upper limb spasticity in adults after stroke or traumatic brain injury. As PI for the Carolinas Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Follow-Up Site, Dr. Pinto received a subaward through the TBI MS Data and Statistical Center/HHS/ACL/NIDILRR.

For interest to engage in research efforts with Dr. Pinto, please email her at Shanti.Pinto@AtriumHealth.org. ■

Therapy Garden at Carolinas Rehabilitation - NorthEast Dedicated to the Life and Memory of Kathleen Boncimino, MD (September 19, 1968 – July 14, 2019)

It can sometimes seem the best among us are taken away far too soon. One of the saddest times for us came when Dr. Kathleen (“Kathy”) Boncimino revealed her new diagnosis of metastatic colon cancer. As she shared the news, it was clear that she was ready for the forthcoming challenges associated with her diagnosis and treatment. Throughout her battle, Kathy remained true to her nature: positive, upbeat and brave. She had an enormous heart and shared her goodwill with everyone around her. On July 14, 2019, after battling for a year with chemotherapy and additional treatments, Dr. Boncimino passed away peacefully at home in the company of her husband Frank and her three children.

Dr. Boncimino began her career at Carolinas Rehabilitation - Charlotte in April 2012, after moving from New Jersey with her family. In July 2013, she assumed the role of founding medical director for the new Carolinas Rehabilitation - NorthEast facility. Kathy brought a wealth of experience and knowledge as she



was dual-boarded in both internal medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation and also held a master's degree in public health. She was clearly the “right person” for the job. Dr. Boncimino had a deep understanding of the responsibility she carried as medical director. Her “northern directness,” keen growth and development insights, and administrative skill set resulted in success on the first day of operations.

Loved and respected by all, Dr. Boncimino fulfilled many

important roles as daughter, wife, mother, doctor and friend with the utmost grace, dignity, intelligence and compassion. Her passing was a tremendous loss to Carolinas Rehabilitation, our medical staff and the community she served. To honor her memory, the therapy garden at Carolinas Rehabilitation - NorthEast rehabilitation hospital was dedicated in her name.

Kathy, you will be missed. ■

