

CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 1, 2026

When every minute matters
Mather's new emergency department is ready for anything

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EMERGENCY

**EMERGENCY
WALK-IN ENTRANCE**

Northwell
Mather Hospital
Frey Family
Emergency Department

**A helping hand for
breast cancer patients**

PAGE 6

**Hernia surgery: faster,
safer, less invasive**

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FROM MATHER HOSPITAL

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The brand-new Frey Family Emergency Department is bigger, faster and better than ever. What's new: latest life-saving technology, new private rooms, a new adjacent helicopter landing pad and more.

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News & notes



FOR EMERGENCY CARE: SAVE THIS NUMBER

Call 833-315-2035 for a Northwell ambulance.

Scan the QR code to save the number in your contacts.



Meet the 2025 Nurse of Excellence

Denise Driscoll, NP, assistant vice president of behavioral health at Mather Hospital, has received the distinguished 2025 Nurse of Excellence Award from the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council. Driscoll (right, in photo) is a change agent, said the council, which underscored her role in helping develop and implement a wide range of initiatives at Mather, including crisis intervention programs and innovative mental health services.



“Denise’s leadership and innovative spirit have been pivotal in advancing our behavioral health services,” says Tara Matz, RN, MSN (left, in photo), chief nursing officer and vice president for nursing at Mather Hospital. “Her initiatives have significantly enhanced patient care and highlighted the essential role of mental health support.” Read more about Driscoll’s projects on page 5.

Caring for the caregivers

More than 63 million Americans were family caregivers in 2025. If you’re one, you know how challenging the role can be. Mather Hospital’s Caregivers Center can help. Located in the main lobby of the hospital, the center offers emotional and practical support — from a space to recharge (below, in photo) to expert guidance and resources. Assistance can include referrals to community services, help with navigating health care and family challenges, support in understanding advance directives and end-of-life issues and more. Our goal: to help you feel confident and cared-for as you help your loved one.



For more information, call 631-253-8806 or scan the QR code.



Your gift matters

Help Mather Hospital continue to deliver exceptional care with a gift through the John T. Mather (JTM) Foundation. When you make a tax-deductible donation through the JTM Foundation, you’re helping ensure that Mather Hospital has the latest technology and the most experienced doctors so it can continue to grow its award-winning service to the community.



There are many ways to show your support, including online gifts, estate plans, stock transfers and qualified charitable distribution (QCD) or IRA rollovers.

To find out more, scan the QR code or go to matherhospital.org/giving.



News & notes

New hope for depression

A promising remedy for people suffering from depression that hasn't responded to other treatments is now available at Mather Hospital: esketamine.

The psychiatric medication (brand name Spravato) comes in a nasal spray and works on depression differently than oral antidepressants, which typically elevate feel-good hormones like serotonin, norepinephrine and/or dopamine, says psychiatrist George Lasker, MD, PhD. Esketamine targets glutamate, a neurotransmitter that plays a role in regulating mood. The treatment is administered under supervision in Mather's infusion center.

"Esketamine is fast-acting," says Dr. Lasker. "It can significantly reduce depressive symptoms in a short period of time. For many patients with treatment-resistant depression, it can be life-changing."



Call 631-883-5977 or scan the QR code for more information on esketamine or to make an appointment with a behavioral health expert.



An easier way to get a colonoscopy

If you're between 45 and 75 years old and don't have major medical issues or gastrointestinal symptoms, you may be able to schedule a routine colonoscopy without a pre-screening doctor visit. Mather Medical Group's direct access colonoscopy program is designed to make it easier for people to get the test, which is the most effective way to screen for and prevent colon cancer. With about 107,000 new cases of colon cancer each year and numbers rising in the under-50 group, screening is more important than ever.



Call 631-735-6832 or scan the QR code to see if you qualify for a direct access colonoscopy.

Mom mental health watch

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are on the rise, affecting one in five women in the U.S. These conditions — which can present during pregnancy or days or months after delivery — are highly treatable and with the right support most individuals experience significant improvement," says psychiatrist Jessica Cosgrove, DO. That's why Dr. Cosgrove, a specialist in reproductive psychiatry and a member of Northwell's Katz Institute for Women's Health, and the perinatal health services team at Mather Hospital are offering expanded specialized perinatal psychiatric services.



Call 631-502-4511 to make an appointment or scan the QR code for more information.



CONGRATS AND KUDOS

A sampling of awards and accomplishments



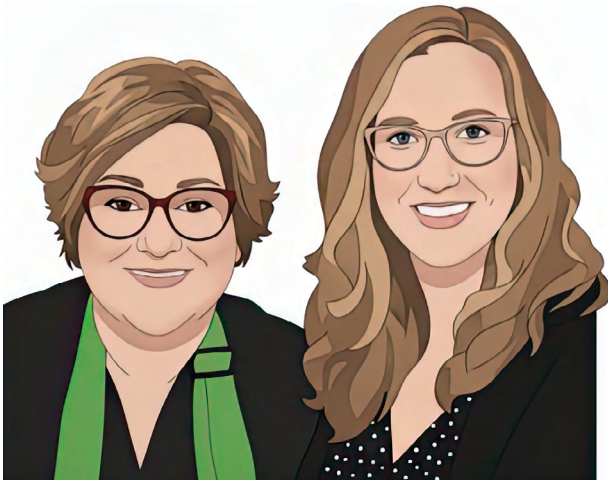
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded Mather Hospital a five-star rating for patient safety and experience. Only 10% of the 4,609 hospitals nationwide analyzed by CMS earn this highest possible rating. This is the third straight five-star rating for Mather.



Mather Hospital received the Healthgrades 2025 Outstanding Patient Experience Award for the fifth consecutive year, recognizing its commitment to patient-centered care. Healthgrades also recognized Mather Hospital as one of America's 250 Best Hospitals for 2023-2025 for its strong clinical performance. "Mather Hospital is elevating the standard for quality care nationwide," says Brad Bowman, MD, chief medical officer and head of data science at Healthgrades. "Healthgrades commends Mather Hospital for their ongoing leadership and commitment to providing the best possible care for all patients in its service area."



The American Heart Association recognized Mather Hospital with a Gold Level designation for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment backed by research-based guidelines.



Denise Driscoll, NP, and Erin Dainer, MD

Meeting a growing need

Mather's new Rapid Access Center helps patients struggling with mental health get the help they need

More than 53 million Americans are living with mental illness. And upwards of 2.5 million Americans have been diagnosed with opioid use disorder. The growing need for care for these conditions prompted Mather Hospital to open its Rapid Access Center in January 2025. The center, part of the hospital's outpatient behavioral health services, offers care for people 18 and older who have a mental health or substance use disorder.

We asked **Erin Dainer, MD**, chair of the department of psychiatry at Mather, and **Denise Driscoll, NP**, the hospital's assistant vice president for behavioral health, to explain this unique model of care and the impact it's had so far.

Q: What is the mission of the Rapid Access Center?

Erin Dainer, MD: The center is designed to offer more coordinated services to those in need. Thanks to public and private funding, we were able to expand existing services and start this new center right in our outpatient Behavioral Health Services building at 100 Highlands Blvd.

It was Denise who had a vision of creating one place where patients could receive all types of psychiatric services without waiting months for an appointment. That's what led to its creation. We are not a walk-in center, but our goal is to help people get timely treatment when they call for an appointment — within the same week or even that

same day. A social worker, nurse practitioner and psychiatrist work together to evaluate a patient and assess their needs. We can start them on medication if they need it or even offer initial supportive therapy.

We work with each patient for three to four sessions and then refer them to the appropriate follow-up care or service.

Q: How do patients find their way to the Rapid Access Center?

Denise Driscoll, NP: We started with patients from our own emergency room or those who needed more help after a hospital stay. We want to make sure we set them up with the right outpatient clinic or service. Patients also are referred by their primary care physicians.

We're also seeing patients who've heard about our services and call in looking for help. (The number to call is 631-503-0911.) We ask a few screening questions and make them an appointment with the nurse practitioner or social worker. Some people need medication; others are looking for a therapist. Sometimes, people don't know what they need, and we can help them figure that out. We don't want any patient to fall through the cracks.

Q: What do you think is working well so far?

Denise Driscoll, NP: We're preventing patients from getting lost in the system and helping them get connected with the services

they need. Patients with mental health needs can often feel alienated because of the stigma involved, and we offer a place where they can feel accepted and supported.

We have a "no wrong door" approach. This means that everyone is served, no matter their needs — we can help navigate you to the right resource or service. We had a patient with a history of substance abuse who was looking for mental health treatment. Even though he had been in recovery for many years, he was rejected by other providers because of his substance use history. We were able to work with our chemical dependency clinic to provide mental health services for this patient.

Q: How is the Rapid Access Center connected to other outpatient behavioral health services?

Erin Dainer, MD: Our outpatient behavioral health services include many different levels of care for adults and adolescents dealing with various mental health disorders, eating disorders and substance use disorders. We offer full-day programs for adults and adolescents who need intensive treatment for acute psychiatric symptoms but do not require inpatient care.

The Rapid Access Center is in the middle of it all. We work with all the different teams and programs to ensure that our patients get to the right place and get the help they need.





Diagnosed with breast cancer?

Mather Hospital's patient navigators can help make appointments, offer advice and smooth your journey

The news was the last thing Lori Rossi-Soricelli, a four-year breast cancer survivor, wanted to hear: Her annual surveillance breast MRI showed something suspicious, and she needed to come back in for a biopsy.

Rossi-Soricelli's mind was racing when she got the call — but the familiar voice on the other end of the line reassured her. It belonged to Ruth Moloney, RN, one of the nurse navigators at Mather Hospital's Fortunato Breast Health Center. Moloney had held Rossi-Soricelli's hand through her first breast biopsy in 2021. She'd sat beside Rossi-Soricelli when doctors delivered the news of her diagnosis, and with another navigator had helped support her through her treatment and recovery. "The first thing Ruth said to me was, 'This does not have to be cancer again,'" recalls Rossi-Soricelli. Moloney, who is a

certified breast care nurse, explained that because of Rossi-Soricelli's history, doctors needed to check any abnormality, just to be sure. And if they did find cancer, it would be very early and therefore easier to treat.

The logistics were already taken care of: Moloney had coordinated details between the imaging center and care team and the appointment for the biopsy was set. "Ruth knew I was scared," said Rossi-Soricelli. "Before she hung up, she told me if I was struggling or just needed to talk, she was a phone call away. That meant the world to me."

Rossi-Soricelli's experience at the Fortunato Breast Health Center reflects its commitment to easing every part of a patient's cancer journey. The center provides advanced imaging, the most up-to-date surgical technologies and a new state-of-the-art lymphedema screening program. But

it prides itself most on its personalized, coordinated and compassionate approach to breast cancer care. Nurse navigators like Moloney and others form the backbone of that care. They are certified breast cancer nurses dedicated to helping support and guide patients and their loved ones through every step of the breast cancer journey. And their care starts on day one.

Each year, every one of the approximately 100 breast cancer patients treated at Mather Hospital is followed by a nurse navigator from diagnosis through survivorship, and longer if needed, says Marianne Kiernan, RN, the center's assistant manager, who was recently named the 2025 Certified Breast Care Nurse of the Year by the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation. "There's so much a new patient needs to know," Kiernan says.

That's where the nurse navigators step in — there are six on staff and they're all RNs. "We see ourselves as advocates, educators, clinical experts and facilitators for our patients,"

Can navigation improve outcomes?

The personalized care offered through nurse navigation programs offers more than convenience and support: Studies suggest it also helps improve cancer care outcomes. A recent review of research showed that patient navigation reduces the time to diagnosis and treatment and improves treatment adherence. Helping patients start and stick with their prescribed plan directly contributes to better results. Navigation programs also play a vital role in enhancing access to care, particularly for low-income cancer patients.

"It was so comforting to have someone with me who I knew and who knew me so well." — Lori Rossi-Soricelli



Kiernan says (see “Six ways patient navigators can help,” below).

Sometimes patients have the same navigator through their entire treatment; other times they work with more than one, as was the case with Rossi-Soricelli. After her biopsy in August 2021, she underwent a lumpectomy in October and radiation

therapy to treat her cancer. During that time, nurse navigator and certified breast care nurse Stephanie Crispino, RN, managed her appointments and checked in weekly to see how she was feeling, physically and mentally.

Fast forward to this past fall. After Moloney set up Rossi-Soricelli’s biopsy, Crispino was the one in the

room — sitting by Rossi-Soricelli’s side, rubbing her back and talking her through the procedure. “It was so comforting to have someone with me who I knew and who knew me so well,” says Rossi-Soricelli. The next day, Crispino called with good news. The biopsy was negative — no cancer detected.

SIX WAYS PATIENT NAVIGATORS CAN HELP

1. Navigators coordinate your care.

Because breast cancer is highly individualized, no two patients have the same treatment plan. A team of clinicians from multiple specialties — such as surgical, medical and radiation oncology, radiology and plastic surgery — will determine treatment, says Alexandra Capece, DO, a breast surgical oncologist who operates at Mather Hospital. That can mean multiple appointments with doctors in different departments; navigators prevent the scheduling from becoming overwhelming and help track appointments.

Navigators also can

smooth transitions from one phase of care to another, says Michael Borrero, MD, plastic and reconstructive breast surgeon. “This can take some of the mental burden off the patient and their family members and decrease anxiety regarding their treatment,” he says.

2. They are your person to call.

Navigators act as a single point of contact for your care. “Knowing you always have someone to reach out to with questions or concerns — and that you won’t be transferred from person to person for answers — is a tremendous comfort to patients,” says Dr. Capece.

3. They do the logistical legwork.

That can include obtaining insurance authorizations, gathering medical records and helping recommend the best surgeon, oncologist or other specialist for your needs. “We handle the next steps so when patients are home, the only thing they have to worry about is taking care of themselves,” says nurse Marianne Kiernan.

4. They educate and empower you to make informed decisions — and they do it in language that is clear and concise.

Sometimes there’s a gap between what providers say and what patients understand, says Kiernan. Navigators can simplify complex

information and break down the medical jargon to help you better understand what is happening with your health and the ins and outs of treatment options.

5. They help you access resources.

Nurse navigators work to remove barriers that may prevent or delay cancer treatment. They can connect you to financial advisors and childcare assistance, for example, as well as help resolve obstacles like lack of transportation and language barriers. Northwell can provide breast cancer nurse navigators who are fluent in Bengali, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese; the system plans to add navigators in

additional languages in the future.

6. They are there for you — for all of it.

While the practical support helps improve breast cancer care, Rossi-Soricelli says the emotional support is invaluable: “I believe people are put in your path for different reasons. Having Ruth and Stephanie in my corner from the start and still now is something I will never take for granted,” she says of her nurse navigators. “They made me feel more like a friend than a patient.” For patients who’d like to talk with others on the breast cancer journey, navigator Crispino suggests Live, Love and Laugh Again, a breast cancer support group she leads.

Care you can count on

Since 2009, the Fortunato Breast Health Center at Mather Hospital has earned accredited status from the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), a quality program administered by the American College of Surgeons. Patients receiving care at a NAPBC-accredited center receive a high standard of care and have access to information on clinical trials and new treatment options, genetic counseling and patient-centered services, including psychosocial support, rehabilitation services and survivorship care.



Due for your mammogram? Call 631-230-1952 to make an appointment or scan the QR code to learn more about the Fortunato Breast Health Center.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: MATHER HAS YOU COVERED

The new **Frey Family Emergency Department** is bigger, better, faster and equipped with the latest life-saving technology

Opening day at the new Frey Family Emergency Department (ED) at Mather Hospital in September was exciting — especially for John Driscoll.

The 61-year-old environmental consultant felt lousy but thought he just had Covid, until he became short of breath and his pulse dropped so dramatically that he called an ambulance.

Mather's new ED was ready for him. A nearly four-year transformation from floor plan to construction site to care space resulted in a facility that's even better equipped than the old one for just such emergencies, says Adam Wos, MD, the hospital's chair of emergency medicine. Among the capabilities that can make a difference for patients like Driscoll: embedded cardiac catheterization (cath) and electrophysiology labs.

"In the ambulance, the paramedics noted that the patient had an abnormal EKG, which they sent ahead to us. The ED doctor activated our cardiac cath lab team right away," Dr. Wos says.

"It was very comforting that when I arrived, there were 15 people waiting for me," recalls Driscoll. "They knew from the EKG done in the ambulance that I'd had a heart attack." He was swiftly taken to the cath lab, where he received three cardiac stents.

Says Dr. Wos, "The American Heart Association has a goal of performing cardiac intervention within 90 minutes. We did it in 39."

"I got fantastic care," says Driscoll, who was discharged three days later. "Everyone was very professional and empathetic. I was impressed with the facility and how integrated the care is at Mather."

Offering the community this kind of elevated care in the ED is the point of the expansion, says Dr. Wos. "I'm thrilled that we are able to work in this beautiful space and give our patients a more private healing environment that meets or exceeds their expectations," he says.

For other improvements that are already making a difference, read on.

1 GREATER CAPACITY

"For a community hospital like Mather, the emergency room is the front door to the institution," says Mather President Kevin McGeachy, FACHE. That door opens to 29,000 square feet — more than twice the size of the ED's earlier space. The expansion allows the facility and its employees to better support the delivery of modern medical care, he says.

Before, "there were not a lot of private treatment areas, and there was more of what I'd consider a cubicle treatment space, where stretchers were separated by curtains," he says. By expanding into adjacent land, the new larger space has more private rooms and space to move patients through the ED quickly and efficiently.



2 LESS WAITING

Just like a supermarket with regular versus express checkout lanes, the ED uses a “split-flow” patient system called Super Track to filter patients based on how serious their health issues are. People are assessed in one of three triage rooms. Those with less complex cases are moved to one of 10 recliners, each located in a semi-private area. There, the goal is rapid diagnosis, treatment and discharge from the ED.

“It’s designed to get a patient from the waiting room to diagnosis or to be ready for discharge as fast as possible,” says Sanjey Gupta MD, MBA, Northwell’s interim senior vice president and executive director of emergency medicine. This is a speedy and effective way of dealing with problems like ankle injuries or headaches, which can be treated relatively simply.

More complex patients with issues such as chest pain or trauma are moved to one of 26 private rooms. There, they have easier and swifter access to more specialized care, such as embedded operating rooms for emergency surgery and a cardiac

catheterization laboratory for immediate heart care.

The hospital’s new helicopter landing site just outside the ED also speeds admissions, says Dr. Gupta. Its proximity helps expedite patient hand-offs to the ED, reducing transport time.

3 READY FOR ANYTHING

The ED’s 26 private treatment rooms can accommodate a variety of needs and are designed to operate fully during power outages or natural disasters. They include negative pressure rooms, used for both isolation and infectious disease cases such as Covid-19, tuberculosis or measles.

Five rooms are equipped for dialysis care, and are able to continue treatment even during a power outage. In fact, thanks to emergency generators, the entire ED is able to function at 100% during power outages and weather events.

“When the power goes out, people who depend on machines at home typically head to the emergency department,” says McGeachy. “We want to be able to continue to

function and care for these folks during outages.”

The space also has a dedicated trauma bay with two private rooms and a private pediatric critical care room with equipment to care for a sick newborn or child.

An enlarged and dedicated behavioral health area features a lounge area and six private rooms with the ability to separate adults and teens. The behavioral care space has natural light for a calmer therapeutic environment. Consultants are available for mental health care 24 hours a day.

4 SPEEDIER IMAGING

In addition to boasting embedded catheterization and electrophysiology labs, the new ED has an X-ray machine and CT scanner right at hand. This kind of proximity can boost ED efficiency and reduce diagnosis time when patients come in with trauma from a fall or car accident or another critical condition, such as pulmonary embolism (a blood clot in the lung), aortic dissection or stroke, Dr. Gupta says.

For stroke patients in particular, “time is neurons,” he says. “Minutes and seconds can make a difference to a patient’s long-term outcome. We don’t want to delay the care.” Once completed, images can be uploaded both to Mather’s system as well as other online portals, providing easy access for future providers after the immediate emergency is stabilized.

Having imaging so close by has a welcome side effect: It increases collaboration among staff, says Dr. Gupta, because face-to-face interactions help build relationships. “The success of any emergency department is always based on great teamwork,” he says. “You want to know the people you’re working with — the best care comes from those relationships. Now, rather than calling somebody on a phone, you can see that person working in CT. When something needs to be expedited, when you have that relationship built, that’s a huge benefit.”



The Frey Family Emergency Department by the numbers

\$78
MILLION
INVESTMENT

5%
ANTICIPATED INCREASE
IN PATIENT VISITS IN
FIRST FULL YEAR

29,000
SQUARE FEET

4
AMBULANCE
BAYS,
UP FROM 1

45
BEDS,
UP FROM 41

4 NEW
DOCTORS

3 NEW
NURSES

55,000
PATIENT ANNUAL
CAPACITY

5 AWARD-WINNING ELDERCARE

Thoughtful design makes the ED easier for older patients to navigate, which is increasingly important as the population ages. Throughout the ED are non-slip floors, wider doorways, handrails, raised toilets, stronger lighting and analog clocks; two chairs by every bedside accommodate family members or caregivers comfortably. Larger rooms also allow for more space for interdisciplinary teams trained in geriatric care, including physicians, nurses and social workers.

Mather received Level 1 Gold Certification for Geriatric Care from the American College of Emergency Physicians in 2024. With its new ED, the hospital hopes to be recognized as a Pediatric Innovator by the New York State Always Ready for Children Pediatric Recognition Program, and to earn another Lantern Award from the Emergency Nurses Association, Dr. Vos says.

“It has been an incredible journey from the blueprints to the opening,” says Stacey Hartcorn, RN, MSN, a certified emergency nurse and director of patient care services in

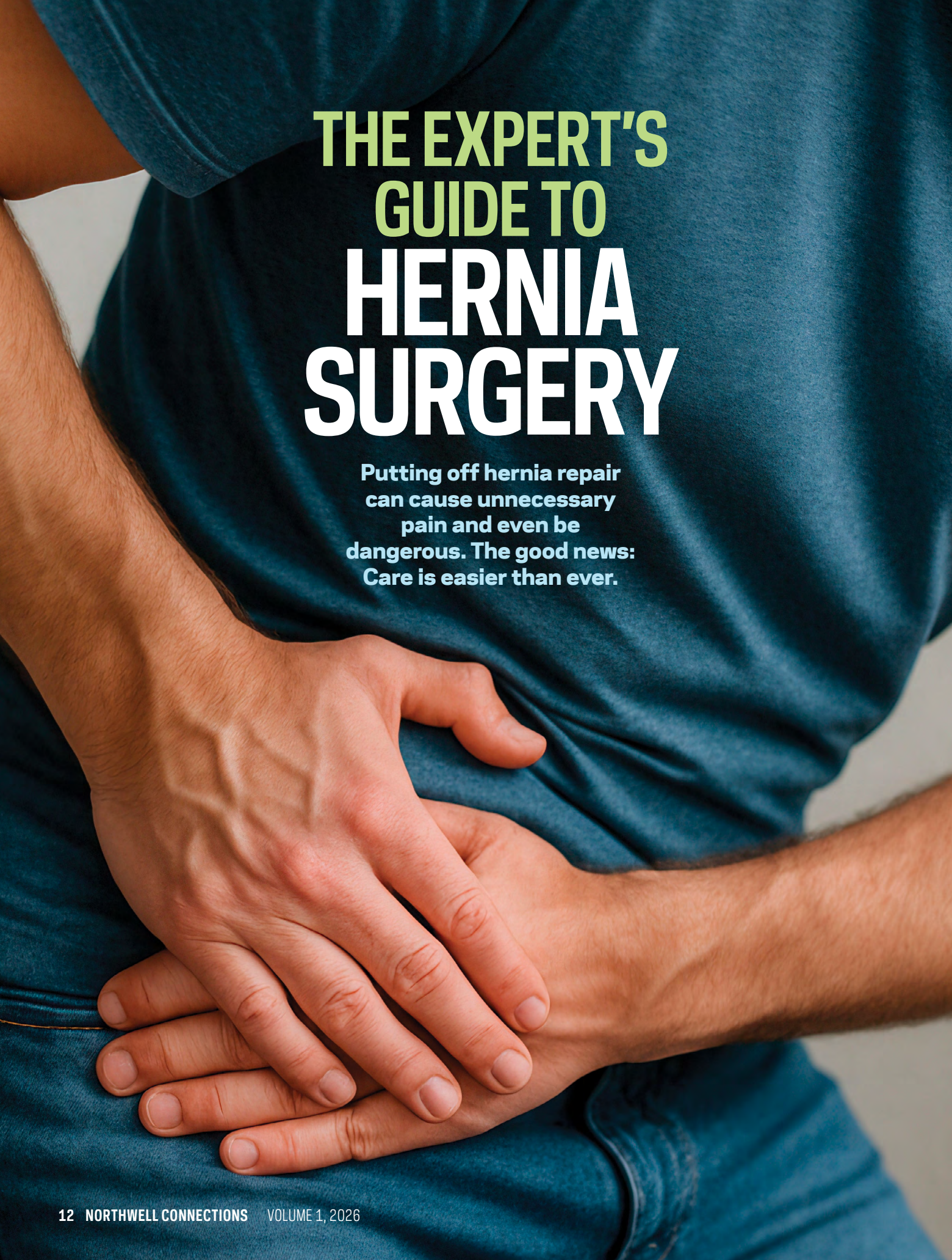
Mather’s emergency department.

“Our goal was to reduce wait times, improve patient flow, enhance geriatric and mental health care, speed up diagnosis with onsite imaging and better integrate with both hospital and regional emergency systems,” she says. “We’ve done that with an ED that’s efficient, comfortable and future-ready.”



To see a virtual tour of our new Emergency Department, scan the QR code.





THE EXPERT'S GUIDE TO HERNIA SURGERY

Putting off hernia repair
can cause unnecessary
pain and even be
dangerous. The good news:
Care is easier than ever.

Flavio Malcher, MD, FEBS-AWS, has repaired thousands of hernias during his career as a general surgeon. But it's the patients who came to him only after suffering unnecessarily for years who have stayed with him.

"What strikes me is the fear some patients have that prevents them from getting hernia treatment right away," says Dr. Malcher, system chief of abdominal core health at Northwell Health. "They may be afraid, think hernias are too complicated to repair or not take hernias seriously."

But hernias deserve respect and care, because all but the smallest can cause discomfort or pain — and in some cases can even lead to dangerous complications. Today's surgeons combine specialized knowledge and advanced surgical techniques to treat hernias quickly, effectively and with a minimum of disruption to a patient's life.

Dr. Malcher, a hernia repair specialist and past president of the American Hernia Society, is very familiar with the problem that is treated thousands of times each year at Northwell's 28 hospitals and in more than 1.5 million surgeries in the United States annually. He leads a system-wide surgical program at Northwell focused on high-risk and complex hernia repair, and he has a few things he wants you to know to ensure you get the care you need to feel better — fast.

A HERNIA CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

A hernia occurs when organs or tissue push through a weak spot in muscle — the problem can affect men, women, children and even babies. Hernias can occur from the groin (the most common) up to the diaphragm, and even through an incision from a previous surgery. Common symptoms include a soft bulge at the site, and discomfort, pressure or dull pain, though you may not feel anything at all. You should always check with a doctor if you notice a hernia, since they generally require treatment — and if you notice that your hernia has changed color or become numb, experience sudden or severe pain or have symptoms like fever, nausea

or vomiting, you should get medical attention right away, since those can be signs of a "strangulated" hernia, a medical emergency.

SURGERY IS OFTEN THE BEST SOLUTION

A hernia won't heal on its own, not even if you change your diet or exercise routine, and while it may start small, it generally gets bigger over months or years. As it grows, a hernia can interfere with an active lifestyle; something as minor as a cough or sneeze can ratchet up the feeling of pressure or pain. And if the blood supply to the tissue squeezing through the muscle wall gets cut off, the protruding tissue can die, leading to a serious, potentially fatal infection or bowel obstruction.

The bottom line: Most hernias

"If you have a hernia, a repair can make a tremendous difference in your quality of life."

— Flavio Malcher, MD



eventually require surgery, says Dr. Malcher, and sooner is better than later. "It's important to catch them early, when they're easier to repair."

Who should do the operation? General surgeons at every Northwell hospital are experts in the art of hernia repair — these operations are among the most common in the U.S. When a hernia requires multispecialty collaboration or a highly specialized approach, a surgeon may work with Northwell's complex hernia team to provide an extra layer of care.

What makes a hernia complex? Size, for one thing. Defects bigger than four centimeters — about the size of a walnut — are considered moderately large; hernias over about seven centimeters are large.

But smaller hernias can be complex too, says Dr. Malcher. "You can have a defect that's just three centimeters

or so where a lot of tissue has pushed through the hole, like a mushroom," he says. "In that case, repair may require special techniques." A hernia may also be considered complex if it has come back after a previous repair, if it (or surrounding tissue) is infected, or if a patient has a health condition like obesity or uncontrolled diabetes. In all such cases, Northwell's complex hernia team can work with your surgeon, Dr. Malcher says. "It's a one-stop shop that provides comprehensive analysis and tailored care."

REPAIR HAS GOTTEN EASIER

In the past, hernia surgery meant a large incision and weeks of recovery time. But over the past decade, advances in robotic-assisted surgery have changed the game.

"The surgeon sits at a console during

surgery and controls robotic arms," says Dr. Malcher. "The doctor uses these arms to make tiny incisions and then insert surgical instruments and a scope with a camera. The approach gives the surgeon stability and 3D vision, and the robotic arms can move in ways human hands can't, so the repairs are very precise."

All this means there's less bleeding and reduced infection risk; typically, patients go home the same day or the next day.

But robotic hernia surgery isn't for everyone, says Dr. Malcher. Very large hernias may require traditional open surgery. Surgeons may also use open surgery when a lot of skin or scar tissue must be removed, or when patients need reconstructive surgery.

MESH CAN HELP

Surgical mesh is often used during hernia repair to help strengthen tissue



— think of it like a bit of netting or screen. Once the surgeon has pushed the herniated tissue back into place, he or she may insert mesh while stitching the muscle back together. Then, during healing, tissue grows into the mesh, making the repair more durable. “It builds much stronger scar tissue,” Dr. Malcher says.

Mesh significantly improves long-term results. Groin hernias repaired without mesh have a recurrence rate of about 25%, says Dr. Malcher — but with mesh, the recurrence rate drops below 5%. “We’ve known for more than 50 years that mesh really decreases hernia recurrence,” he says.

Unfortunately, surgical mesh has gotten a bad rap over the years, partly because its use for certain other conditions had unacceptable complication rates — mesh is no longer used for transvaginal repair of pelvic organ prolapse, for instance. While that’s generated some confusion among people considering surgery, it’s important to realize that the material continues to be widely and safely used in many other procedures (including other pelvic floor surgeries!). And studies have shown that the risk of complications from modern mesh products in hernia repair is very low, Dr. Malcher says. “Stories on the internet tend to focus on bad

Think you have a hernia?

If you’re worried you might have a hernia, call 631-450-6545 to make an appointment with Mather Hospital surgeons Mohamad Abouzeid, MD, or Joseph Bornstein, MD, who perform traditional and robotic surgery. “Robotic surgery has revolutionized how we perform hernia operations at Mather,” says Dr. Abouzeid. “The result is that patients are having better outcomes, less pain and faster recoveries.” Scan the QR code for a video that explains the surgeons’ compassionate care philosophy.



outcomes,” he says. “We don’t hear from the majority of patients who do very well with mesh.”

PRE-OP AND POST-OP CARE IS KEY

In the past decade, surgeons have realized that pre-op prep greatly increases the likelihood of successful hernia repair. Some of the most important ways to “pre-optimize” your health before hernia surgery include losing weight if you are obese, making sure diabetes is controlled and quitting smoking or tobacco use. The surgeon may also order several imaging tests for planning purposes.

After surgery, most people can resume non-strenuous activities

almost immediately — walking typically doesn’t put a strain on the surgical site and can speed healing. Your doctor may have you do specific exercises to start to re-engage the core muscles, and, if you had a complex repair, physical therapy may be helpful.

YOUR FIX MAY NEED A REFRESH

Improved technology and techniques have reduced the risk of early hernia recurrence, but even the most successful repair may eventually need a refresh, Dr. Malcher says. “When you get a new knee or hip, the orthopedic surgeon doesn’t tell you that it’ll last forever,” he says. “With a heart valve, the surgeon usually tells you to expect it to last 10 or 15 years — it’s the same with a hernia.”

If you start experiencing a return of symptoms, talk with your doctor, he says. “Don’t wait for a recurrence to become large and make it a more complicated repair.”

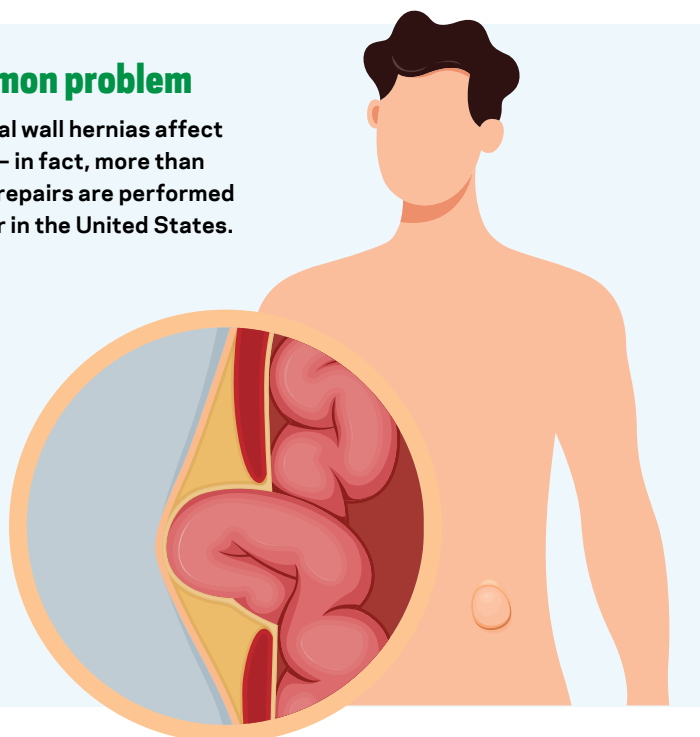
THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

The field of hernia repair is constantly advancing: For instance, self-gripping meshes that attach like Velcro are being developed, as are new absorbable meshes that last long enough to trigger the formation of scar tissue that helps reinforce the repair, then break down. And techniques are becoming ever less invasive.

“If you have a hernia, a repair can make a tremendous difference in your quality of life,” Dr. Malcher says. “No matter how big or complex your hernia is, we can help.”

A common problem

Abdominal wall hernias affect millions — in fact, more than 1 million repairs are performed each year in the United States.





Mather's cardiac catheterization team has helped the hospital win numerous cardiac care recognitions.

Good for the heart

If you're looking for excellent care for your heart, you don't have to look far. In 2025, for the second year in a row, Mather Hospital received the Healthgrades Coronary Intervention Excellence Award; it was also recognized as one of Healthgrades top 100 hospitals for coronary intervention. In another recognition, the hospital received the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines Coronary Artery Disease NSTEMI Gold award and STEMI Receiving Center Gold award, acknowledgments of excellence in treating those two types of heart attacks. The hospital's performance also contributed to Northwell earning the AHA's 2025 Mission: Lifeline Systems of Care Regional Award for meeting heart attack treatment quality standards. "Our team in the catheterization lab deserves kudos for its outstanding work diagnosing and treating heart issues, which helped us earn these recognitions," says Mather President Kevin McGeachy, FACHE.

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