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for the  
Community!**

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# Reach For Good Health!

**- FALL 2023 -**

A newsletter from Redington-Fairview General Hospital

## RFGH Spearheads Study in PFAS Contamination with MaineHealth



Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are chemicals used in some consumer products, including firefighting foam, cleaning products, paper and textile coatings, and food packaging. Humans can be exposed to PFAS through contaminated water or food. Some research shows that having high levels of PFAS in your blood can increase your risk for certain health problems.

In response to the PFAS contamination in our region, Redington-Fairview General Hospital partnered with MaineHealth to spearhead a research study to

source: <https://riversideca.gov/press/understanding-pfas>

better understand the ways that people in central Maine are exposed to PFAS, and what impacts the contamination may have on people's mental health.

This 2-year, federally-funded study will form the foundation of future studies to better understand the effects of PFAS-contaminated biosolids on our physical and mental health. The project is led by RFGH's Dr. Rachel Criswell and MaineHealth's Dr. Abby Fleisch.

### Volunteer for our PFAS Research Study

RFGH is still recruiting for the study on PFAS in central Maine. If your well was tested for PFAS and you were not able to be at the enrollment drives, you may still be eligible to participate. Please contact Dr. Rachel Criswell at 207-474-6201 or [rcriswell@rfgh.net](mailto:rcriswell@rfgh.net) for more information.

### Tufts PFAS Study Volunteer Opportunity

This research study's purpose is to understand patient opinions and concerns about PFAS testing.

**Take a one-time, ten-minute electronic survey** →

Eligibility: Must be over 18 years old and live in Maine

To learn more, contact [isabella.bennett@tufts.edu](mailto:isabella.bennett@tufts.edu)



# RFGH Providers Recognized for Teaching Excellence

**Congratulations to these RFGH Providers recognized by Tufts University School of Medicine Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC).**



**Pameela Bisram, MD**  
Redington OB/GYN



**Gina Gomez, MD**  
RFGH Hospitalist



**Michael Lambke, MD**  
Skowhegan Family Medicine

The Tufts University School of Medicine clerkship began placing third year Maine Track students at urban and rural hospital sites within Maine in May of 2011. LIC students participate in the comprehensive care of patients over time, thus developing continuing learning relationships with these patients' clinicians, and meeting the year's core clinical competencies across multiple disciplines simultaneously.

"Due to your exceptional teaching qualities, dedication, and positive attitude toward students, you have been identified as particularly deserving of recognition and appreciation by the students at Tufts. You serve as an important role model for the next generation of physicians who are training in an increasingly complex environment." said Laura Baecher-Lind, MD, MPH, Dean for Educational Affairs, Tufts University School of Medicine.

## Let's Go! Sites of Distinction

**Congratulations to these RFGH practices that have been recognized as a 2023 Let's Go! Healthcare Site of Distinction:**

**Norridgewock Health Center, Redington Family Practice,  
Redington Pediatrics, and Skowhegan Family Medicine**



These healthcare practices have achieved distinction for their commitment to excellence in obesity prevention. Let's Go! focuses on educating primary care practice teams on obesity and providing materials to help practice teams work with patients and their families to improve healthy eating and physical activity. In collaboration with Let's Go!, the providers and office staff at these practices are prioritizing obesity prevention.

# Welcome New Providers!



## Paraschos Archontakis Barakakis, MD

RFGH Hospitalist

Paraschos Archontakis Barakakis, MD is board-certified in Internal Medicine. A graduate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki School of Medicine and the University of Thessaly School of Medicine, Greece, he completed his training at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Jacoby Medical Center and the University Hospital Southampton, UK, and served in the Hellenic Air Force as a general practitioner.



## Yrene Holmes, DO

RFGH Emergency Department

Yrene Victoria R. Holmes, DO is a board-certified Family Medicine and Emergency Medicine physician. A graduate of Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Holmes completed a residency in Family Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and was fellowship-trained in Emergency Medicine at Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians.



## Jessica R. Pérez, MD

RFGH Emergency Department

Jessica Pérez, MD is board-certified in Emergency Medicine. A graduate of Ross University School of Medicine, she completed her Residency in Family Medicine at the University of Connecticut and a Fellowship in Emergency Medicine at MaineGeneral. Dr. Pérez is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians.



## Michael Wack, MD

Redington Orthopedic Surgery

Michael A. Wack, MD, FAAOS is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Dr. Wack earned his medical degree at the University of Illinois, where he also completed his residency in Orthopedics.



# DAISY Award



## RFGH is pleased to announce our first ever DAISY Award recipient, Kelly Baker

Kelly is a registered nurse in our Oncology Department. Her nomination describes numerous situations where she took extra time out of her day to provide her patients with an important peace of mind. Whether by sorting pills from an oral chemo regimen, cleaning hearing aids, or shaving a patient's head, Kelly is described as being a "rockstar" in all areas of care.

Kelly will receive a number of benefits from the DAISY Foundation for being an honoree, and will receive a designated parking spot here at RFGH for the next 3 months. Congratulations to Kelly on this amazing honor!

A display honoring Kelly and our nominees is set up in the lobby. There, you can read Kelly's full nomination and also nominate a nurse for our next recognition ceremony in November.

RFGH would also like to recognize our other nurses who were nominated for this award during the 2nd quarter:

- Jestel Libby, OR RN
- Christopher Knowles, ED RN
- Pamela Schmidt, ED RN
- Josh Scholz, ED RN
- Kelley Strout, Stress Testing RN

## Congratulations to all!

RFGH has partnered with Purdue University Global to bring the DAISY Award recognition program to the hospital. The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses is an ongoing recognition program that honors and celebrates the skillful and compassionate care that nurses provide every day.

The award was created in memory of J. Patrick Barnes who died at 33 of ITP, an autoimmune disease. The Barnes Family was awestruck by the clinical skills, caring, and compassion of the nurses who cared for Patrick, so they created this international award to say thank you to nurses everywhere.

RFGH is proud to join the thousands of other healthcare organizations and nursing schools around the world who also participate in this program. Nominations can be completed by any employee, patient, or family member. For questions about the DAISY Award, email [DAISYaward@rfgH.net](mailto:DAISYaward@rfgH.net).





# Advance Health Care Directives

by Brittney Dunphy, CHE, RFGH Community Health Education

If you could no longer make your own health care decisions, would your loved ones know what you want? Many people think that their loved ones would know what to do and know your wishes, but this may not be true. According to the National Institute on Aging, research shows that you are more likely to get the care you want if you have conversations about your future medical treatment and put a plan in place. It may also help your loved ones grieve more easily and feel less burden, guilt, and depression.

So, who needs an advance directive? The fact is someone can experience a medical crisis at any age, so advance directives are not just for older adults or people who are very sick. The great news is; you can change or update your advance directive at any time if your wishes change.

## To get started on your own advance directive:

- Start thinking about what you want most at the end of your life.
- Talk with your doctor about what end of life care looks like if you're unsure about what you may want.
- Choose someone you trust to make your health care decisions for you when you can't make them yourself. This does not have to be a spouse or your children.
- Attend RFGH's Advance Directive Workshop on November 28. More information is below.

## Community Health Education Classes

For more information contact Brittney Dunphy, RFGH Community Health Educator, at 858-2318 or [bdunphy@rfgH.net](mailto:bdunphy@rfgH.net)

### Diabetes Information

**November 14, 4:30-5:30pm  
in RFGH Conference Room 4**

Want to learn more about the basics of diabetes? Join Haylie Kennedy, RN, Diabetes Care and Education Specialist for this in-person class.

### Working with People Who Use Violence Webinar

**November 21, 12:00-12:30pm via Zoom**

People in our community, even those close to us, may be using violence against their partner. RFGH partners with Family Violence Project to look at the belief systems and what resources there are for those who use abuse.

### Advance Directive Workshop

**November 28, 5:00-7:00pm  
in RFGH Conference Room 1**

This in-person workshop will teach you about how planning and Advance Health Care Directive can help you and your family. During this workshop you will be able to create your own Advance Health Care Directive and receive guidance from a Registered Nurse. A free meal will be available for those who attend. Space is limited.

### Financial Abuse Webinar

**December 19, 12:00-12:30pm via Zoom**

RFGH partners with Family Violence Project to look at and discuss financial abuse, its prevalence, and the barriers it created for domestic violence survivors.



# TIPS FOR A SPOOKY & SAFE HALLOWEEN!

## It's Never Safe to Drink and Drive

Drivers should be extra cautious on Halloween, as more pedestrians are out at night on the hunt for candy, and more drivers are heading to and from parties. No one should mix drinking and driving, and no one is immune to the effects of drunk driving. Remember: It's never safe to drink and drive.

## Be A Safe Storage Super Hero!

What do YOU have planned for Halloween this year? Help keep the holiday fun and safe by keeping medications out of reach. Cannabis should also be stored safely to help avoid accidental ingestion. Remember, if kids can reach it, they can eat it. **Dispose of unwanted or expired medications on Drug Take Back Day, Saturday, October 28.**

# The Great American Smokeout is November 16

Let the Great American Smokeout be your day to start your journey toward a smoke-free life. Did you know? Getting help through counseling and medications doubles or even triples your chances of quitting successfully. Visit [QuitLink.com](http://QuitLink.com) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to learn more.

Prevention efforts supported by the Maine CDC





# All About Squash

by Tricia Sprengel, MS, RD, LD, RFGH Director of Nutrition Services

During the autumn and winter months many varieties of locally grown winter squash are available at your supermarket. Squash is inexpensive, versatile, and easy to prepare. Winter squash tastes rich and sweet, is very filling and is a great substitute for more starchy carbohydrates such as potatoes. Try adding a little maple syrup during cooking and even your pickiest eaters will love it!



Even though most people identify squash as vegetables, they are actually considered fruits because they contain the seeds of the plant. Squash are divided into two categories - summer and winter squash. Winter squash have hard, thick skins and seeds, and the flesh is firmer than summer squash and requires longer cooking. Winter squash is so named because it can be stored through the winter. Their thick tough shells make them excellent for storage in a cool dry place for up to 6 months!

Though all varieties of squash are good nutrition choices, winter varieties tend to be more nutrient-dense, containing very high levels of beta-carotene (which your body readily converts to Vitamin A) and more vitamin C, iron and riboflavin than summer squash!

One cup of winter squash provides only 75 calories (about half the calories of potato) and more than 200% daily value for vitamin A and nearly half of the recommended daily value for vitamin C.

## Quinoa Stuffed Acorn Squash

Acorn squash has a mild, sweet and nutty flavor that's perfect for baking or roasting and because of its compact size, it can be halved and stuffed. This vegan recipe for quinoa stuffed squash is high in protein and can serve as either an entrée or a side dish. It is special enough for family and guests at your Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays meals.

### Ingredients:

- 2 medium acorn squash (2 to 2 ½ pounds each)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup red quinoa
- 2 cups vegetable broth, low sodium
- 1 teaspoon mild curry powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup loosely packed parsley leaves, chopped

### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Rinse squash under cold water and pat dry. Cut each squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Place squash on a baking sheet, cut side up. Whisk together in a cup 2 tablespoon of olive oil with 2 tablespoons of maple syrup, brush the inside flesh of the squash with this mixture. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and roast for 45 to 60 minutes, until fork tender.

Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a sauce pan over medium heat, add the onions and sauté for a few minutes until soft. Add the quinoa, curry powder, cinnamon and cayenne pepper and stir 1 minute until the spices are toasted. Add 2 cups of broth and bring to a boil, turn the heat down to low and cover with a lid. Cook for 20 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed. Uncover and stir in the dried cranberries, walnuts, the remaining maple syrup mixture and half of the chopped parsley.

Stuff the squash halves with the quinoa and garnish with the remaining parsley. Serve warm.

Nutrition: Calories 500, Fat 17g, Protein 11g, Carbohydrates 75g, Fiber 10g, Sodium 150mg



46 Fairview Avenue  
Skowhegan, ME 04976

# On-going Support Groups

## Road to Wellness

Every Wednesday, 3:00-4:00pm  
Via Zoom

RFGH's free virtual community support group for adults (18+) who are 50lbs or more overweight and looking to achieve a life of wellness. To sign-up, contact Brittney Dunphy at (207) 858-2318 or [bdunphy@rfggh.net](mailto:bdunphy@rfggh.net)

## Circle of Strength

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, 5:00-6:00pm  
RFGH Conference Room 4

RFGH's free support group for those who have been affected by cancer. Those who attend will receive a free meal. To sign-up contact the RFGH Oncology Department at (207) 858-2129.

**To stay up to date on classes and events, visit [www.rfggh.net/community/calendar-of-events](http://www.rfggh.net/community/calendar-of-events)**

**For more information about this newsletter, please contact Carol Steward at 207.474.5121, ext. 2319.**

Redington-Fairview General Hospital publishes the opinions of expert authorities in many fields; but the use of these opinions is no substitute for medical and other professional services to suit your specific personal needs. Always consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

RFGH is an independent, critical access community hospital, located in Skowhegan, Maine. RFGH has provided quality, comprehensive health services to the residents of Somerset County since 1952. A member of the Maine Hospital Association, RFGH offers community-based primary care, pediatric care, surgical and specialty services, rehabilitation, community health education, and 24-hour emergency medical services.

The RFGH family includes: Redington Medical Primary Care (RMPC), RMPC Norridgewock Health Center, Somerset Primary Care, Redington Family Practice, Skowhegan Family Medicine, Redington Pediatrics, Redington Cardiology, Redington Endocrinology, Redington Gastroenterology, Redington General Surgery, Redington Neurology, Redington OB/GYN, Redington Orthopedic Surgery, Redington Podiatry, RFGH Rehabilitation & Fitness Services, Somerset Sports & Fitness, and Somerset Public Health.