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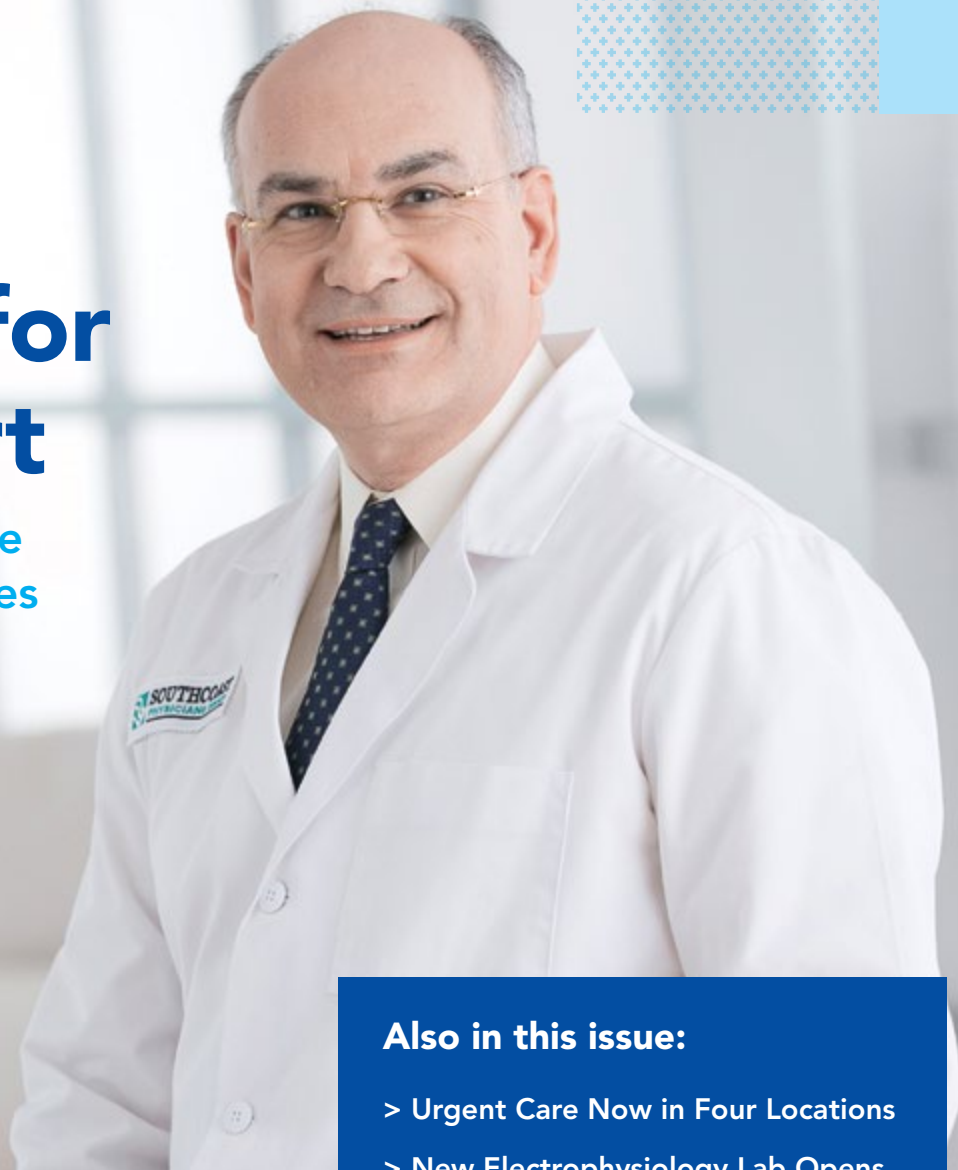
Charlton Memorial Hospital

| St. Luke's Hospital

| Tobey Hospital

The Best for Your Heart

Southcoast delivers the
latest in cardiac services



Also in this issue:

- > Urgent Care Now in Four Locations
- > New Electrophysiology Lab Opens
- > Supportive Care Services
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SCH-009

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From the CEO

New Services Make Healthcare Better and Easier



The world seems to move a little faster every day, and as it does, our need and desire for convenience, access and reliability increase. Many of us have come to rely on the responsiveness and customer focus of organizations like Amazon and Apple and think of them as the “gold standard” for meeting our needs. And we have come to have those same customer service and convenience expectations in more areas of our lives, including healthcare.

We want a healthcare experience that not only provides clinical excellence, but offers access, convenience, communication, compassion, simplification and the availability of technology to support it all. At Southcoast, we have introduced some great new services to provide you with that complete healthcare experience, with even more to come in the near future.

We now have Urgent Care centers in four locations: Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Seekonk and Wareham. Not only do our centers provide you with prompt service for non-emergency issues like bumps and bruises, sore throats and coughs, and more, but they also allow you to check wait times and save your spot online to minimize the time you spend in our waiting rooms.

MyChart, Southcoast’s online patient portal, provides you with access to your test results as soon as they are ready, important health information like blood pressure and cholesterol levels, the ability to request prescription refills or email

your physician for non-urgent issues and more — all from your computer or smartphone! If you have a Southcoast physician or have received services at any of our locations, you can sign up for a MyChart account.

And now you can download the Southcoast Health app, which will provide easy shortcuts to Urgent Care wait times and the “save my spot” function, MyChart, Find-a-Doctor, bill pay and more convenient features.

It’s all part of making healthcare easier and better for you.

Best of health,

Keith A. Hovan
President & CEO, Southcoast Health

Our New Mobile App Puts Southcoast Health at Your Fingertips

Download it for free today!

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store



Close to Home

Four locations for quick care when it's not quite an emergency

For quick, convenient medical care close to home, Southcoast Health Urgent Care has exactly what you and your family need to feel better fast. We are your source for immediate non-emergency care. You can even shorten your time in our waiting rooms with our Get in Line Online feature (see "Get in Line Online").

Now, we have four convenient locations open 8 a.m.–8 p.m. Monday–Friday, and 9 a.m.–5 p.m. on weekends:

- > **NEW! Seekonk**
Seekonk Square
39 Commerce Way
- > **Dartmouth**
Hannoush Jewelers Plaza
435 State Road
- > **Fairhaven**
208 Mill Road
- > **Wareham**
Wareham Crossing
2421 Cranberry Highway

Get in Line Online

Spend less time in the waiting room

Now, when you seek services at Southcoast's Urgent Care Centers you can wait in the comfort of your own home until it's your turn to be seen.

Just visit southcoast.org/urgent-care to find the closest center, check its current wait time and click "Save My Spot" to get in line electronically. You can also view the wait times for other locations and choose to save your spot elsewhere if it is more convenient. The system works for same-day appointments only.

To learn more about Southcoast Urgent Care, visit southcoast.org/urgent-care.

Awards

Accolades for Patient Safety

Three organizations recognize Southcoast

Southcoast's list of patient safety honors grew by three. Over the past several months, Southcoast was honored to receive these awards:

- > **Healthgrades 2017 Patient Safety Excellence Award**, placing Southcoast among the top 10 percent of hospitals in the nation for its excellent performance four years in a row.
- > **2017 Women's Choice Award** as one of America's Best Hospitals for Patient Safety, which identifies the country's best healthcare institutions based on robust criteria that consider female patient satisfaction and clinical excellence. Southcoast received this award for the second year in a row.
- > **"A" grade in the April 2017 Hospital Safety Score** by Leapfrog, which rates how well hospitals protect patients from preventable medical errors, injuries and infections within the hospital.



Southcoast continually receives national recognition for the quality of our care. Keep up with our awards and clinical achievements at southcoast.org/awardsmatter.

Heart Healthy

Southcoast delivers the latest in cardiac services



Christopher Abadi, MD, FACC, and Margaret Ferrell, MD, along with Iraklis Gerogiannis, MD, (below) help make Southcoast Health a destination hospital for cardiac care.

Southcoast Health was the first hospital in Southeastern Massachusetts to perform open heart surgery 15 years ago. Today, its program of cardiac and vascular care is nationally recognized for delivering exceptional clinical care and outcomes.

“We are not your typical community hospital,” says Margaret Ferrell, MD, physician-in-chief of cardiovascular services. “We are quickly becoming a destination hospital for patients seeking advanced cardiac services.”

While Southcoast still performs more than 300 open heart surgeries a year, it also offers patients a wide range of treatments — from preventive and wellness initiatives to the most sophisticated, minimally invasive surgeries available.

“What really sets us apart is that we offer comprehensive cardiovascular services,” Dr. Ferrell says, including a sophisticated arrhythmia program staffed with full-time electrophysiology physicians. “We offer a broad range of cardiovascular services to address nearly every patient need.”

Dedicated to heart care

The Harold and Virginia Lash Heart and Vascular Center, which opened in 2014 at Charlton Memorial Hospital, has a hybrid operating room (OR). The hybrid OR, which looks like a futuristic operating theater, is the centerpiece of

Southcoast’s structural heart program. Vascular surgery and endovascular procedures (using balloons and stents) are performed in that setting. The latest imaging equipment and other technologies allow physicians of different disciplines to collaborate on a single patient.



Iraklis Gerogiannis, MD

Downstairs from the hybrid OR, a new electrophysiology lab opened in February to accommodate advanced, minimally invasive procedures for irregular or abnormal heartbeats (see “State-of-the-Heart” on page 6).

The breadth of treatments offered by Southcoast Health allows a team of physicians to tailor a personal plan of care for each patient. Iraklis Gerogiannis, MD, chair of cardiothoracic surgery, believes that oftentimes the best care for patients is less invasive care. “This is the future,” he says of robotic surgical techniques, which he introduced to Southcoast in 2012. Today, he performs not only cardiac artery bypass surgery, but minimally invasive valve replacement and arrhythmia procedures, in conjunction with electrophysiologists, to minimize patient risk and recovery times.

Nationally Recognized Heart Care

Southcoast has been recognized as one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Care for six years in a row by Healthgrades (2012–2017), the leading online resource for healthcare consumers. Southcoast is one of just four hospitals in Massachusetts to receive this distinction in six consecutive years. In addition, Healthgrades has awarded Southcoast the Cardiac Care Excellence Award for 11 years in a row (2007–2017).



"We do these procedures in very close cooperation," Dr. Gerogiannis says. "Here, they go home the day after surgery because the surgical wounds are small and pain is reduced."

Looking to the future

Southcoast has access to technology that not only is unusual for a community hospital, but in many cases is "rare in the country," says Dr. Gerogiannis. This allows more patients to be treated close to home.

For example, for the past several years, Dr. Gerogiannis has used miniature pumps inserted through a small incision to temporarily support the functioning of the left side of the heart following serious cardiac surgery or heart attacks. This allows the diseased heart to recover more easily and gives the cardiac team time to assess the patient's condition and prepare for additional treatment, if necessary.

Over the next few years, he expects to implant pumps that will remain permanently in the heart, as well as pumps that support the right side of the heart, which pumps blood to the lungs.

According to Dr. Gerogiannis, these new techniques and technology allow the heart team to "take care of patients who are sicker while trying to be less invasive," which means smaller surgical incisions and faster recovery.

Innovative prevention

Dr. Gerogiannis believes that prevention is the best treatment and plans to help educate the community about lifestyle changes that can keep a heart healthy — exercise, healthy eating and not smoking. But sometimes

heart trouble has nothing to do with lifestyle. It can also be a byproduct of cancer treatment.

"Survivors of early-stage breast cancer can be more likely to die of cardiovascular disease than of the cancer itself," says cardiologist Christopher Abadi, MD, FACC, who is the medical director of Southcoast's Echocardiography Labs.

For that reason, Dr. Abadi is heading a new Cardiac Oncology program for Southcoast. It uses a new technology called strain imaging that allows for earlier detection of a

decrease in heart muscle function, which can be caused by certain chemotherapy drugs or radiation protocols. If not recognized early, it can lead to congestive heart failure.

Strain imaging equipment is now in place at Southcoast's clinic in Middletown, R.I., Southcoast Cardiology Services at the Truesdale Health clinic in Fall River, and the Southcoast Cancer Center in Fairhaven. Cancer patients can receive cardiac assessments at any of these locations.

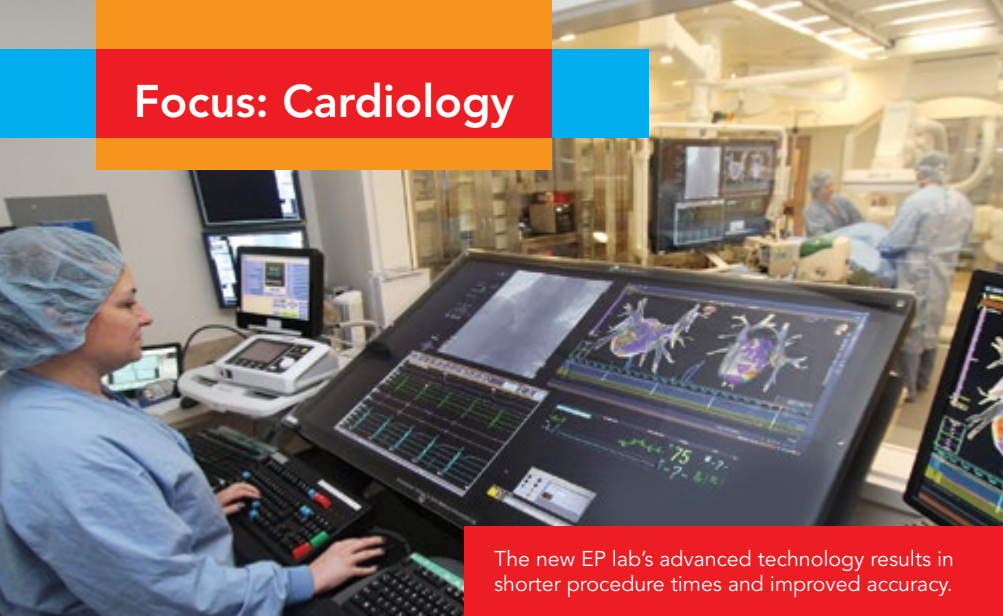
Committed to growth

Over time, Dr. Gerogiannis expects Southcoast may need to expand its facilities further to accommodate growing cardiac care programs.

The system has become a training center for physicians from other states, who come here to learn the leading clinical cardiac treatments and use the latest medical equipment.

"This is an outstanding, modern and comprehensive program," Dr. Gerogiannis says. "Our great strengths are our extremely dedicated staff, our utilization of evidence-based, multidisciplinary care, our investment in cutting-edge technology and, most importantly, our commitment to our patients. Every single patient who has cardiac surgery at Southcoast Health gets our personalized attention directed toward their unique needs. Southcoast is truly defining what it means to be patient focused."

Learn more about Southcoast's cardiovascular services at southcoast.org/heart.



The new EP lab's advanced technology results in shorter procedure times and improved accuracy.

Fast Facts About the EP Lab:

- > The lab's new, state-of-the-art mapping system was recently approved by the FDA.
- > Southcoast is one of just 30 health systems in the United States to use the new mapping system.
- > The lab's advanced imaging technology reduces radiation exposure by up to 80 percent.

State-of-the-Heart

New electrophysiology lab offers most advanced technology available to treat AFib

A \$4 million, 3,800-square-foot electrophysiology (EP) lab that offers the latest technology for treating heart arrhythmias is the newest addition to the Harold and Virginia Lash Heart and Vascular Center at Charlton Memorial Hospital.

Opened in February, the lab addresses a critical need in cardiac care for this region. Atrial fibrillation (AFib), the most common form of heart arrhythmia, involves irregular beating of the upper chamber and afflicts as many as 6 million Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2012, Southcoast's hospitals discharged more than 700 AFib cases, the second highest number of all the Commonwealth's health systems, and a number that is expected to rise as the population ages.

Advanced technology

The new lab is dedicated to treating AFib, as well as ventricular tachycardia

and atrial tachycardia, conditions characterized by abnormally rapid heart rate. The EP lab is equipped to perform complex procedures that use catheters to destroy the tissue that beats irregularly and restore a regular heart rhythm.

In the lab, physicians use a new mapping system that helps them locate the abnormal electrical signals 10 times faster. The lab is also equipped with more cameras, giving physicians better views of catheters. The result is shorter procedure times and improved accuracy and success.

"With this state-of-the-art lab — utilizing advanced technology that is not found in most hospitals — we will be able to continue to provide outstanding outcomes for our patients but with less radiation and greater precision," says Ramin Davoudi, MD, director of electrophysiology for Southcoast. "Better equipment will not be found anywhere else in this country or, for that matter, the world."

With two EP labs now at Charlton, patients will experience shorter waits for the cutting-edge treatments available at Southcoast.

Treating the whole patient

Even with the latest equipment and techniques, AFib can reoccur if underlying causes — such as weight, stress and sleep apnea — are not addressed. Electrophysiologist Nitesh Sood, MD, directs the Atrial Fibrillation Wellness Program, where nurse practitioners help AFib patients for their quality of life.

Patients then can learn to manage sleep apnea, improve their diet and exercise appropriately.

"It has been proven beyond a doubt that mental health and physical health improve patient outcomes," Dr. Sood says. "It's more than just performing a surgery and procedure. It's taking care of the patient as a whole. That's what makes us different."

For a web-exclusive extended version of this article, visit southcoast.org/health+.

To learn more about the Atrial Fibrillation Wellness Program, visit southcoast.org/heart/afib.

A Family Approach

Southcoast's Supportive Care Services cares for patients facing serious illness — and their loved ones

A joint report released by The National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP Public Policy Institute estimates that 34.2 million Americans annually provide unpaid care for a loved one age 50 or older. It's a powerful statistic that drove the Southcoast Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) to redefine its Supportive Care Services program. Today, the program not only provides supportive care for any patient coping with a serious illness, but it also is committed to giving caregivers the empathy and guidance they deserve.

"We treat each patient as part of a unit — which includes the family," explains Sharon Jones, president and CEO of Southcoast VNA. "There are always physical issues for the patient experiencing a serious or end-of-life diagnosis. But for both caregiver and patient, there are also emotional, psychological, social and spiritual matters. So we're here to help each patient experience the best quality of life and enjoy their time with their family."

Exceeding expectations

VNA's Supportive Care Services includes palliative care for patients diagnosed with a life-threatening disease and seeking curative treatment, as well as hospice care for patients who are focused on comfort and quality of life.

"Supportive Care encompasses a spectrum of services, which always begins by engaging the patient in a discussion about what matters most to them," says Robin Pelletier, RN, director of Supportive Care Services. "In that way we can ensure that the patient receives care consistent with their preferences."

Palliative care and hospice care can take place in a patient's home, nursing home, skilled nursing facility or the hospital. In all instances, the VNA Supportive Care Services



team aims to manage symptoms associated with an illness or disease and, if pertinent, the symptoms related to treatment, including:

- > Pain
- > Nausea
- > Fatigue
- > Constipation
- > Weight loss
- > Weakness
- > Shortness of breath
- > Difficulty sleeping
- > Mental or emotional symptoms (e.g., confusion, depression and anxiety)

An expert team of palliative and hospice care specialists handles Southcoast VNA's Supportive Care Services. The team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, certified hospice nurses, social workers, chaplains, bereavement counselors, home health aides and specially trained volunteers.

Every person is unique

Whether a patient is in active treatment or focused on the quality of their life, medical decisions, treatment choices and medications can always be blended with complementary alternative therapies. Depending on individual preferences, therapies include Reiki, therapeutic touch and massage. "This is an important part of caring for the whole person," says Pelletier.

To learn more about Southcoast Supportive Care Services, call **800-698-6877** or visit southcoast.org/vna and search for "Supportive Care Services."

Cancer Programs

The following programs are offered free of charge to cancer patients and their caregivers.

Breast Cancer Support Group

For patients with a breast cancer diagnosis. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fairhaven**

☎ Call Andrea Prigaro, LICSW, at **508-973-3074** for details.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call Susan Domingue, LICSW, at **508-973-7810** for details.

Caregiver Support Group

A support group for caregivers of patients with cancer.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call Susan Domingue, LICSW, at **508-973-7810** for details.

General Cancer Support Group

A support group for patients with any cancer diagnosis. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call Susan Domingue, LICSW, at **508-973-7810** for details.

Look Good/Feel Better

Sponsored by the American Cancer Society, this program for female cancer patients addresses makeup, skin and nail care, and ways to deal with hair loss, including the use of wigs,

turbans and scarves. Volunteer beauty professionals meet with small groups, and participants get free makeup kits to use during and after the workshop. Please RSVP at least five days before each Look Good/Feel Better event.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fairhaven**

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call **800-227-2345** or email maureen.kwash@cancer.org.

Lung Cancer Support Group

A support group specifically for patients with a lung cancer diagnosis. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call Susan Domingue, LICSW, at **508-973-7810** for details.

Multiple Myeloma, Leukemia & Lymphoma (MLL) Support Group

This group is intended for patients with a diagnosis of multiple myeloma, leukemia or lymphoma. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fairhaven**

☎ Call Andrea Prigaro, LICSW, at **508-973-3074** for details.

Post-Treatment Group

A support group for patients with any cancer diagnosis, who are no longer in active treatment. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fairhaven**

☎ Call Andrea Prigaro, LICSW, at **508-973-3074** for details.

Under 50 Breast Cancer Support

A support group for patients under 50 years old with breast cancer. Loved ones are welcome to attend.

> **Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care, Fall River**

☎ Call Susan Domingue, LICSW, at **508-973-7810** for details.

Childbirth Classes

Southcoast offers a variety of childbirth classes to suit every new family's needs. Pre-registration is required for all classes. Please call during the 16th week (10 to 12 weeks for multiples) of pregnancy to ensure placement in the class you need. Not all classes are offered at all locations.

Many health insurance companies cover the cost of classes. Be sure to contact yours to ask about coverage. Call the following numbers for information on classes offered at each location.

☎ Charlton: **508-973-7308**

☎ St. Luke's & Center for Women's Health: **508-973-5445**

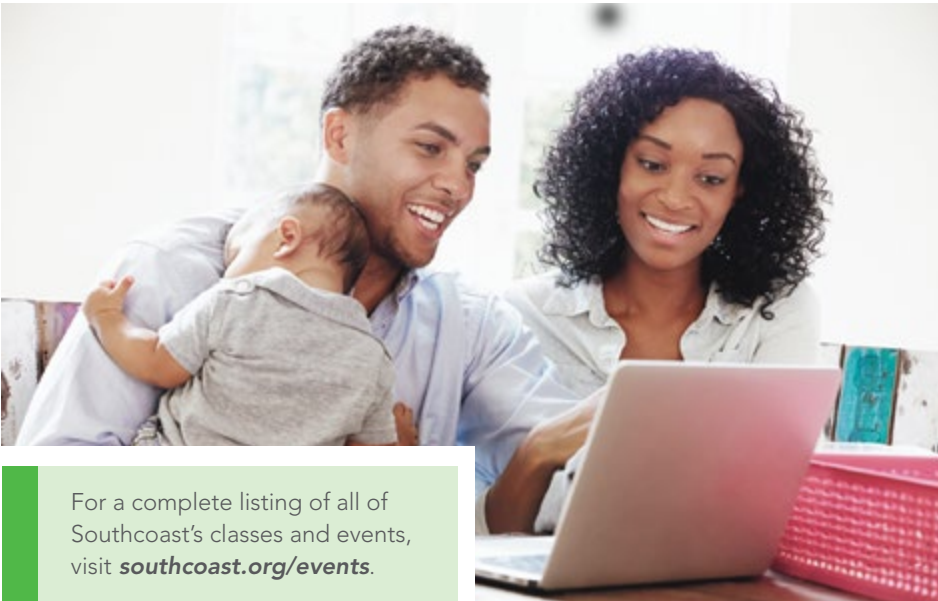
☎ Tobey: **508-273-4545**

Birthing Boot Camp

The same content as in our Prepared Childbirth Series but in a condensed, all-day class. Two \$6 vouchers for lunch provided. A tour of the Family Centered Unit, infant care and car seat safety are included in this class. Please register at 18 to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

\$125/mother and companion

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital**



For a complete listing of all of Southcoast's classes and events, visit southcoast.org/events.

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

> **St. Luke's Hospital**

☎ Call Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-973-5445** for details.

> **Tobey Hospital**

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, or Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-273-4545** for details.

Childbirth Classes for Young Parents

This class is designed for teen parents ages 13–17. Class content includes the stages of labor, relaxation techniques, labor positions and medication choices. A hospital tour, infant care and car seat safety are included. Scheduled to meet due date needs. Call for dates and times.

\$50/mother and companion

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital**

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

Childbirth Education

Topics include what to expect as the due date approaches, preparing for labor and birth, relaxation techniques, pain management, the role of the support person and a tour of Tobey

Hospital's Family Centered Unit. \$100/mother and companion.

> **Tobey Hospital**

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, or Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-273-4545** or email familyeducation@southcoast.org.

Education Programs

Infant and Child CPR for Families and Friends

This course teaches adult, child and infant CPR for families/friends. Pre-registration required. *Please note that this does not provide a CPR certification and classes are usually held at the Center for Women's Health in Dartmouth.

\$40/person, \$60/two people.

> **Center for Women's Health**

☎ Call Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-973-5445** for details.

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital**

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

Safe Sitter

A nationally recognized program designed to prepare adolescents ages

11 to 14 to babysit. Topics include babysitting as a business, safety of the sitter, developmental stages of children, behavior management, preventing problem behavior, injury prevention, basic first aid, choking, infant and child rescue, and CPR for infants and children. \$65 per student in advance to hold spot.

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital & St. Luke's Hospital**

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

Exercise & Fitness

Cardiac Rehabilitation

An ongoing, structured exercise and education outpatient program for individuals recovering from heart attack, heart surgery, heart disease or who are high risk. Covered by most insurances.

> **Narragansett Mills, Fall River**

> **St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford**

> **Tobey Hospital, Wareham**

☎ Call Stephanie Campbell at **508-973-5435** for details.

Medical Fitness Program

Individualized exercise program for those with cardiovascular disease, congestive heart failure, cancer, diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, high blood pressure, chronic orthopedic conditions and those who are overweight. A doctor's prescription is necessary in order to participate. \$60/month for three times a week and \$40/month for two times a week.

> **Narragansett Mills, Fall River**

> **St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford**

> **Tobey Hospital, Wareham**

☎ Call Stephanie Campbell at **508-973-5435** for details.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Structured exercise and education program with oxygen saturation monitoring during exercise. For individuals with pulmonary diseases including asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and COPD. Covered by most insurances.

- Meets year-round
- Physician referral required

> **Narragansett Mills, Fall River**

> **St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford**

> **Tobey Hospital, Wareham**

☎ Call Jessica Nicolossi at **508-973-5435** for details.

New Parent / New Baby

Baby Café

A friendly and comfortable drop-in session for pregnant and breast-feeding mothers to learn more about breast-feeding. Peer support and one-on-one help from specially trained health professionals is available, including professional lactation support. No registration required.

> **Center for Women's Health**
Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

☎ Call Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-973-5445** for details.

> **Healthfirst Family Care Center, Fall River**

Wednesdays, 10 a.m.–noon

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

> **Southcoast Obstetrics & Gynecology, New Bedford**

Thursdays, 4:30–6:30 p.m.

☎ Call Dr. Uma Hari at **508-973-2208** for details.

Breast-Feeding Basics

For families that are planning to breastfeed or exploring infant feeding options. Topics include the benefits of breast-feeding, techniques and positions, and the important benefits of contact with your baby. Expectant mothers and their partners are encouraged to attend before the birth of the baby. Please register at 18 to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital**
June 5, July 10, Aug. 7, Sept. 11
6–8:30 p.m.

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, at **508-973-7308** for details.

> **St. Luke's Hospital, Knowles Auditorium**

☎ Call Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-973-5445** for details.

> **Tobey Hospital**
First Thursday of the month

☎ Call **508-273-4545** for details.

Breast-Feeding Support Group

A place to come for physical, mental and emotional support for breast-feeding and new mothers. The group will be facilitated by a nurse who is an Internationally Board-Certified Lactation Consultant. No registration required. Drop-ins welcome.

> **Rosebrook Medical Office Building**
First and third Friday, 10 a.m.–noon

☎ Call Julie Grady at **508-273-4060** for details.

Newborn Care Class

This one-time class offers a hands-on approach to learning the basics of caring for your newborn. Registration is required.

> **Tobey Hospital**

June 6, Aug. 1
6–8:30 p.m.

☎ Call Gina Kiser, RN, or Patty VanDenBerghe, RN, at **508-273-4545** for details.

Support Groups

Bereavement Support Groups

Southcoast offers ongoing support groups at many convenient locations and times for adults and children grieving the loss of a loved one. All are free of charge.

Adult Support Groups

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital, Multi-Purpose Conference Room**
(use main entrance)

Second Tuesday of the month
5:30–7 p.m.

> **Tobey Hospital, Stillman Library**
(use main entrance)

Third Tuesday of the month
1–2 p.m.

☎ Call Judith Anderson at **508-973-3200** for details.

Widow & Widower Group

> **Somerset Library, Shipyard Room**
Fourth Tuesday of the month
3:30–5 p.m.

☎ Call the Bereavement Manager at **508-973-3227** for details.

Crohn's & Colitis Support Group

This group provides support to people living with Crohn's Disease and/or Colitis. Family members are also welcome. Sponsored by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America.

> **Tobey Hospital, Cranberry Room**

☎ Call Melissa Bessey at
781-449-0324 for details.

Ostomy Support Group

For people with ostomies, their family members and friends. Meetings usually include an educational topic, and time for questions, discussion and sharing among group members in a confidential, non-threatening environment.

> **Charlton Memorial Hospital, Mooney Room** (enter through the Centers for Cancer Care entrance, Prospect Street)

Fourth Friday of the month, 2–3 p.m.

☎ Call Sheri Furtado at **508-679-3131 x 27509** for details.

> **St. Luke's Hospital, White Home Living Room**

Third Wednesday, 3–4 p.m.

☎ Call Lisa Cyr at **508-973-5550** for details.

Pregnancy & Infant Loss: Parents Enduring Grief

Our mission is to provide parents who have experienced the loss of a baby with a safe haven where they can come to journey through their grief, mourn their loss without judgment, and honor and celebrate the life of their baby, all while being supported by other parents who have experienced similar circumstances of loss.

> **St. Luke's Hospital, Library Conference Room**

Third Wednesday of the month, 6:30–8 p.m.

☎ Call Kelly Aguiar, MSW, LCSW, at **508-973-5509** for details.

New Treatment for Varicose Veins

A Health+ Web Exclusive

Varicose veins are not just a cosmetic problem — they may be indicators of chronic venous insufficiency (CVI).

In this web exclusive, David Gillespie, MD, RVT, FACS, explains how vascular surgeons at Southcoast's Vein Center are using a new system, VenaSeal, to treat thick, ropy veins that have been diagnosed with CVI. Read it at southcoast.org/health+.



David Gillespie,
MD, RVT, FACS

Weight Loss Programs

Optifast Information Sessions

Learn about the Optifast weight-loss program, which combines lifestyle education, meal replacements, medical management, and individual and group counseling.

Cost varies depending on program type (full or partial) and amount of Optifast products ordered. All weight management information sessions and weekly meetings will be held in Fall River, North Dartmouth and Wareham.

☎ Call the Weight Management Team: Stacy Medeiros, Susan Oliveira or Jana McDuffy at **508-525-3114** for details.

Three Cs for Success

Losing weight and keeping it off involve Commitment, Challenge and Change. This 12-week program teaches healthy food choices, behavior change and appetite

awareness. Participants will meet individually with a Registered Dietitian prior to starting the program to discuss their individualized, calorie-controlled meal plan, then meet weekly for 12 weeks in a group setting. Information sessions take place in Fall River, North Dartmouth and Wareham. Please call for dates.

☎ Call **508-525-3114** for details.

Weight Loss Surgery Information Sessions

Learn about the option of weight loss surgery and have all your questions answered. Sessions take place monthly in Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham. An online seminar is available at southcoast.org/weightloss.

☎ Call **508-973-8610** or **508-273-4900** for more details.

Weight Loss Success

Southcoast's Weight Loss Surgery Program looks beyond surgery to promote weight loss and health

Rayford Kruger, MD, FACS, is the Medical Director of Southcoast's Weight Loss Surgery Program, located at Tobey and Charlton Memorial hospitals. Here, he discusses the program, which includes not just surgery, but also a variety of educational programs and a support network designed to increase patient success.

Health+: How does the Weight Loss Program work?

Dr. Kruger: The program treats patients who are morbidly obese or significantly overweight, which is defined as being 100 or more pounds overweight. We have surgical procedures that allow them to lose the weight safely and improve their health by resolving obesity-related health conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and sleep apnea. Our procedures are now done laparoscopically, or minimally invasively, which reduces risk of this surgery to that of other common procedures, while minimizing scarring and improving recovery time.

The program is nationally known and is now the largest in New England, serving more than 700 patients per year through our certified centers at Tobey Hospital in Wareham and Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River.

H+: What does the program offer in addition to weight loss surgery?

Dr. Kruger: Our program is a multidisciplinary approach to surgery, involving behavioral health, nutrition and medical therapy to treat obesity. We also have medical weight loss plans and surgical weight loss plans. The medical plans are supervised by our nutritionists and incorporate healthy eating and activity counseling.

H+: What are some important keys to weight loss success?

Dr. Kruger: Success in the surgical realm, which is where I specialize, really lies in patients finding a local program that they connect with and follow.

Getting ready for surgery takes about four months in our program, involving discussions with dietitians, behavioral health and education.



Rayford Kruger, MD, FACS

“About 95 percent of patients undergoing our procedures lose significant weight, and a majority of them keep it off long-term.”

We like to see patients frequently after surgery to monitor vitamin levels, weight and any issues they might be having. That's why having a local program is so helpful — because people are more likely to follow up if they don't have to drive an hour or more away. About 95 percent of patients undergoing our procedures lose significant weight, and a majority of them keep it off long-term. There really is no better program.

For an extended version of this interview with Dr. Kruger, visit southcoast.org/health+. To learn more about Southcoast's Weight Loss Surgery Program, visit southcoast.org/weightloss.