

MAIMO MEDNEWS IS THE PROVIDER E-NEWSLETTER OF MAIMONIDES HEALTH

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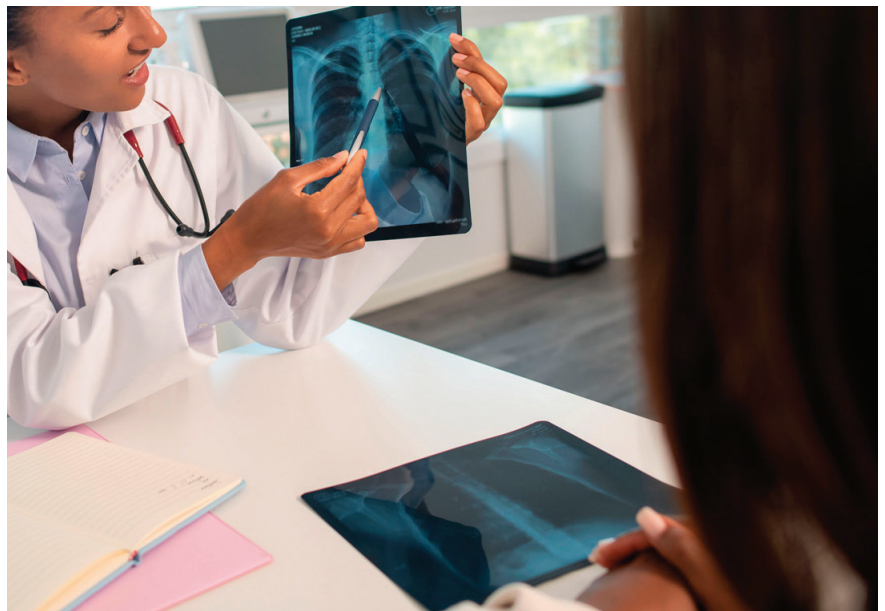
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We welcome your feedback, please email [marketing@maimonidesmed.org](mailto:marketing@maimonidesmed.org).

## PATIENTS BREATHE EASIER WITH THE HELP of Maimonides' Pulmonologists



Respiratory viruses have put a [significant strain on the healthcare system](#) for nearly three years. More patients than ever need pulmonary care as a result of COVID-19, but Maimonides is staying ahead of the curve.

Our patient-centered approach to medicine naturally leads to improved clinical outcomes—but there's always room for improvement. As a result, Maimonides has recently undertaken expansion efforts to bolster the [Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine Department](#).

### **Pulmonologists at Maimonides Have Skills and Experience Treating Many Different Symptoms and Diagnoses**

Physicians in Maimonides' Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine Department have extensive experience and training that benefits patients with all sorts of lung concerns. "We provide a comprehensive evaluation and treatment for patients with lung problems ranging from cough to pre-lung transplant assessment," explains [William Pascal, MD](#), Division Director of Pulmonary Medicine.

The department embraces technology, utilizing many diagnostic tools and procedures in their practice.

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Patients can come to one place for many different screenings and procedures from low-dose CT, comprehensive sleep studies, [pulmonary function testing](#) (PFT), [endobronchial ultrasound](#) (EBUS), and more.

“We also offer [lung cancer screening routinely](#),”

Dr. Pascal shares. “The newest addition to our outpatient pulmonary staff is [Dr. Odai Sinokrot](#) who will be heading our Lung Cancer Screening Program along with our thoracic surgery department.”

### **Maimonides’ Newest Pulmonologists Give the Department an Edge and Patients Peace of Mind**

[Ravi Patti, MD](#) joined Maimonides after an accomplished medical school experience, beginning his residency and then pulmonary and critical care fellowship right here at Maimonides. He’s honed his practice, advancing his career in the process.

“I was a resident at Maimonides before beginning my pulmonary and critical care fellowship,” Dr. Patti said. “Now, working independently as an attending is a different experience.”

Most of Dr. Patti’s patients are seen in outpatient settings like the chest clinic or [Maimonides Doctors Multispecialty Pavilion](#). There, patients may also see Odai Sinokrot, MD, for cancer screenings, rare lung diseases, and other specialty care.

“I get to provide care that addresses some race and gender disparities,” Dr. Sinokrot explains. “The work we do significantly reduces the impact that healthcare disparities would otherwise have on patients with lower socioeconomic status — especially for patients who need lung cancer screening, or who have severe end-stage lung disease and rare lung diseases.”

### **Many Different Patients Benefit from Pulmonary Evaluations with Highly Skilled Pulmonologists**

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has increased awareness of the work pulmonology specialists do, there are many other patients who need their help.

“Doctors should consider referring any patient with chronic cough, shortness of breath or any ongoing respiratory symptoms suspected to be caused by a primary lung problem,” Dr. Pascal urges. “The conditions we receive the most referrals for include cough, asthma, pulmonary hypertension, COPD, and more. We also see many

patients experiencing shortness of breath, interstitial lung diseases, lung cancer and sleep disorders like obstructive sleep apnea.”

Preventive medicine is also a priority for the Pulmonary & Sleep Medicine Department. Patients who smoke have access to a comprehensive smoking cessation program. It utilizes nicotine replacement and behavior change modification to give patients their [best shot at quitting](#).

### **The Pulmonology & Sleep Medicine Department A Truly Collaborative Environment for Both Patients and Providers**

Maimonides’ approach to patient care is great for all parties involved. Physicians have the opportunity to learn from leaders in medicine, while patients get top-notch care that’s genuinely life changing.

“Pulmonary and critical care has always been close to my heart,” shared Dr. Patti. “We have one of the best critical care teams and learning from them has been such a wonderful experience.”

Dr. Sinokrot agrees. “The Maimonides Pulmonary department is a very tight knit and wonderful department with great leadership. I have been very warmly welcomed and feel right at home here!”

Excellent patient care is a priority for this highly collaborative and supportive team. It’s no wonder their work ranks Maimonides [among the best hospitals in the nation for COPD and pneumonia care](#), according to *US News & World Report*.



### Talking Up Maimonides' Swallow & Speech Program

Maimonides is expanding patient care and rehabilitation services across multiple disciplines. One of these offerings includes the [Swallow & Speech Program](#), led by Luis Riquelme, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S.

"[Maimonides speech-language pathologists](#) (SLPs) work with adults and children who have a variety of communication and swallowing/feeding disorders," Dr. Riquelme shared. "Patients can get treatment while they're hospitalized, or through our outpatient clinic."

This new addition to the [Maimonides Bone & Joint Center](#) is in the midst of a transformation to provide better speech and swallow services. Dr. Riquelme highlighted several priorities for the direction of this dynamic service:



- **Expanding pediatric SLP services.** In collaboration with the [NICU and all pediatric units](#), the Swallow & Speech Program is expanding the presence of SLPs to treat our youngest patients.
- **Collaborating with [ENTs](#) to treat voice disorders.** Adding a voice specialist to the SLP staff is a priority to streamline evaluation and care for patients who struggle with conditions that affect their voice.
- **Providing alaryngeal voice treatment.** The new Assistant Director of SLP, Alexandra Soyfer, MS, CCC-SLP, provides treatment to improve voice and swallowing function for [patients who have head and neck cancer](#). She's the only alaryngeal voice specialist in Brooklyn.

- **Strengthening collaboration with [our neurology team](#).** About 89% of people who have Parkinson's disease develop a speech, voice, or swallowing disorder. Patients with other neurological diagnoses also experience these complications. Partnering with neurology allows Maimonides SLPs to treat patients with progressive neurological disorders earlier and more effectively.

Other specialists should refer patients for SLP services when they are experiencing coughing, choking, sensation of "leftover" food or drink in their throat after swallowing, or if they have difficulty swallowing pills, a history of respiratory congestion or pneumonia, or other concerns about swallowing. Patients who experience difficulty expressing and understanding speech or who have an unclear voice and speech may also benefit from SLP treatment.

To refer your patients for an evaluation, email [SLPREF@maimonidesmed.org](mailto:SLPREF@maimonidesmed.org), or call the outpatient Swallow and Speech Center at (718) 283-7024. 📞

#### MedNews Survey

#TeamMaimo, we're looking for your input!

**[Please take our 3-minute survey.](#)**

What do you think about this e-newsletter?

Your input is vital to ensuring future issues are relevant and topical.

Take a minute to voice your opinion: **[TAKE SURVEY NOW](#)**







## Sandy Truong and Danh Ong Had Their Birth Plan in Place – Covid Had Other Ideas

In spring 2021, Sandy Truong and Danh Ong came to the [emergency department](#) at Maimonides in a whirlwind.

Their family had tested positive for Covid-19, including Sandy, Danh, his mother Khmet Tran, and three other family members. Troubling for any family to experience — and many families have over the past couple years — the situation was even more dire: Sandy was well into her pregnancy at this point.

When her fever began to reach 104 degrees on her seventh day of infection, Danh knew it was time to take her to the hospital.

“Up until this time, we were at home, no symptoms, no nothing,” he said. “Everything was great. We both were healthy as hell, but then she caught that temperature. After I parked my car, we walked to the ER. She walked maybe less than two blocks and she said, ‘I can’t breathe.’”

Upon testing in the emergency room, Sandy’s oxygen levels were so low that she was admitted to [the ICU](#) that same day.

### A Terrifying Crossroads

But she wasn’t the only family member in the ICU — she would be joining Danh’s mother, Khmet, who had been admitted for other issues the prior week, and also tested positive for Covid at the hospital. Khmet was no stranger to Maimonides, having received surgical treatment and chemo for uterine cancer a few years before this, with oncologists [Albert Palileo, MD](#), [Yiqing Xu, MD](#), and Christina Lao, NP. When Covid hit the family, her cancer had declined, but she was still undergoing radiation therapy.

Things moved quickly after Sandy’s ICU admission. The next day, she was intubated. Her oxygen levels continued to drop, and were affecting the baby. [Vijaya Bayya, MD](#), Sandy’s obstetrician, explained to Danh that they would need to perform an emergency Cesarean section along with [extracorporeal membrane oxygenation \(ECMO\)](#), in which a patient’s blood is pumped and oxygenated by an external machine. [Paul Sanders, MD](#), cardiothoracic surgeon at Maimonides, led the ECMO treatment process throughout the C-section and afterward.

“The last thing I remember in the hospital room before giving birth was the nurse discussing my situation with the doctors,” Sandy said. “They were saying my oxygen wasn’t getting any better. Next thing I knew, I woke up, already gave birth and was recovering in the NICU.”

Baby Katherine was born on March 24, just a couple days after Sandy was admitted to the ICU, and would spend the next six weeks in the NICU. Meanwhile, Sandy and Khmet were both still unconscious and intubated, fighting Covid on the same floor of the ICU. Danh got into a routine over the next week, first visiting his mother, then baby Katherine, then his wife, every day.

Khmet had been due to be discharged around March 30, but Danh had a gut feeling her condition was still declining after a turn for the worse just after the time the baby was born.

“I got a chance to show her a picture of my daughter before she went into a complete vegetative state,” he said. “She didn’t really get to talk, but when I spoke to her and showed her the picture, her eyes just opened up. I don’t know if that means she acknowledged it, but I’m really hoping it does.”

On March 31, Danh was preparing to go visit them again as he had every day for the past week — a period of time he could only describe as surreal.

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## CASE STUDY

But before he arrived, he got a call with the news that his mother had passed away.

“The day before she passed away, she was kind of waiting for everyone to say bye to her. Before she went, she was waiting for Sandy. I had to explain to her that Sandy was still in a coma and couldn’t say bye to her.”

### One Door Closes, Another Door Opens

The night before his mother’s funeral, Danh received the news that Sandy was finally awake and conscious again.



“Waking up everything felt surreal,” Sandy said. “I had this out-of-body experience. I knew I gave birth, but my mind still wouldn’t register it [because I wasn’t conscious] through the whole thing.

I just felt cheated a little bit, not going through the whole birth experience.”

Although she was confused upon waking about the timeframe of the situation, and even about where she was, the ICU staff did their best to explain it all and make her comfortable while she waited for Danh to return to the hospital.

Danh waited for his wife to regain consciousness before ever holding Katherine, so Sandy was able to be the first one to do so.

On April 6, Sandy was discharged from the ICU, followed by baby Katherine a month later. One of the most challenging times of their lives was coming to an end, although the family was still devastated that Khmet couldn’t return home with them, or meet her granddaughter.

Danh remains thankful, however, for the years he got to spend with his mother after her cancer diagnosis.

“Believe it or not, the doctor who did her surgery [Dr. Palileo] said that a lot of patients that had her exact symptoms didn’t live past a year. He blessed us with three years, which was great.”

According to Danh, being able to see his daughter is what kept him going through this incredibly challenging time.

“All I could do was hang on,” Danh said. “It was unbearable some days. To be honest, it was the staff’s support that actually helped me make it through this. They kept telling me, ‘Oh, she’s doing great. She’s getting better,’ every single day. Everyone that was involved in this case was very, very helpful. I’m really happy the proper support was there.”

### Maimonides’ Hallmark – Seamless, Remarkable Collaboration Between Departments – Gets Patients Through Darkest Days

The ICU and NICU staff guided him through each of his family members’ progress, good and bad, and rooted for the family through it all. The [Heart & Vascular Institute](#) delivered their part, keeping Sandy alive during the worst of Covid — reflecting the individualized approach and seamless collaboration between different departments that have become hallmarks of patient care at Maimonides.

“My husband pointed out who took care of me on the floor—everyone was just so happy to see that I recovered,” Sandy said. “They said, ‘You’re the miracle story of the floor!’”



“And even at the NICU when I visited my daughter afterwards, you know, they were always asking how I was and [saying how glad they were] that I recovered.”

Today, Katherine is thriving. She will turn two years old in March 2023. She is reportedly “obsessed” with yogurt and loves the show “Gabby’s Dollhouse.”

Here is our social media story on the family: <https://fb.watch/hUb3xUlljL/>



# Maimonides Doctors Multispecialty Pavilion's Physician Concierge Services Brings Convenience to Providers

Maimonides [Doctors Multispecialty Pavilion](#) brings more than 35 medical specialties together in one convenient place, designed with patients in mind. You might already be aware of some of its unique services, like on-site laboratory testing and easy registration for any patients of Maimonides doctors.

### The Service's Advantages Include Expedited Appointments and Easy Communication Between Providers

Another new resource the facility offers, the Physician Concierge Service, provides easy referrals for physicians in the community whose patients need [specialized medical attention](#). Benefits of the program include quick identification of best-match specialists and expedited appointments for referred patients based on their medical history and present concerns.

It also allows for a facilitated patient information exchange between Maimonides doctors and referring doctors from around the community, and a highly informed resource to answer questions and provide information about the Multispecialty Pavilion.

"I've met with many doctors in the community — close to 200 — who are happy to hear about the service we now offer and most utilize the service afterwards," said Amy Walker, liaison manager for the Physician Concierge Service. "[Expedited appointments](#) are the most common request. This requires some medical reports, history, etc. to warrant the urgency, and the ability to communicate directly with primary care providers through the Concierge Service allows for a patient to be quickly scheduled with a specialist."

### Helping Connect Patients to Specialized Care When They Need It Most

Walker shared some examples of Concierge Service successes, like a diabetic patient who would have run out of medications without the expedited endocrinologist appointment afforded by this resource.

Additionally, the service allows doctors to refer patients to specialists knowing that their [insurance](#) will be accepted for that doctor's care. When patients have had insurance mismatches, the Concierge Service can find alternative doctors to suit patients' needs in the meantime.

MDP's Physician Concierge Service continues to integrate Brooklyn's community primary care physicians and patients with the expert specialized care provided by Maimonides doctors, furthering convenient access to high-quality care. The Physician Concierge Service team looks forward to guiding the trajectory of this unique resource as it evolves to meet patient needs even more fully and efficiently. ■■■



## Annual Pediatric Hematology Oncology Holiday Party Makes Its Post-Covid Return



Maimonides Cancer Center held its annual Pediatric Hematology Oncology Holiday Party this year on Thursday, Dec. 15. Patients, families, doctors, nurses, and other care team members alike were all so excited for the return of this celebration for this incredibly special community after [a two-year pandemic hiatus](#).

Guests of honor included both current and former hematology oncology and chronic blood disorder [patients](#), who all created holiday gift wish lists. All of these were fulfilled thanks to the generosity of Maimonides staff and community groups including the [New York City Fire Department \(FDNY\) Borough Park \(Engine 282 Ladder 148\)](#), [Hearts Connected LLC](#), [Toys for Hospitalized Children](#), and many other partners.

“The [joy of this holiday celebration](#) is incredibly important to us here at Maimonides,” said [Ludovico Guarini, MD](#), Associate Chair of Pediatrics and Director of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. “Watching these survivors and their families smile, laugh, and enjoy life is what you hope for when first diagnosing a patient.”

Special recognition goes to our pediatric hematology oncology clinical [care team](#), who go above and beyond to support our patients’ happiness and well-being not just during the holiday season, but every single day — in addition to their lifesaving work. 🎄

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## Cutting the Ribbon on MMC's New Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit



This past month, Maimonides Medical Center cut the ribbon on its new Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU), marking a major new addition to its renowned cardiac services. The new unit features modernized, advanced equipment, and will help serve the more than 1,000 patients per year who undergo cardiac procedures at our [Heart & Vascular Institute](#).

The upgrades strengthen Maimonides as a nationally recognized destination for cardiac care, in the top 1% of U.S. hospitals for heart attack survival and the top 3% for heart failure survival, as well as one of [America's 50 Best Hospitals for Cardiac Surgery](#). The new CTICU emphasizes not only clinical excellence, but also improves patient experience, comfort, and privacy, and adds amenities so that families and visitors are able to comfortably be present for loved ones in the CTICU.

Patient procedures supported by the [CTICU](#) include [heart surgery](#); cardiac bypass surgery; valve replacement/repair; aortic aneurysm repair; minimally invasive heart surgery; [transcatheter aortic valve replacement](#) (TAVR); left ventricular assist device implantation (LVAD); convergent atrial fibrillation ablation (a-fib); and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured a short speaking program including [Maimonides Health CEO Ken Gibbs](#), Director of Cardiothoracic Surgery [Dr. Greg Ribakove](#), and VP of Philanthropy Rabbi Heshy Augenbaum. The Karfunkel family, which dedicated the unit's main entrance in memory of Michael Karfunkel, a former Maimonides Board member, cut the ribbon to officially mark the unit as complete and operating. Other major philanthropic leaders dedicated the unit's fourteen patient rooms, and a new family and visitors lounge was dedicated through the generosity of the [Stavros Niarchos Foundation](#).

The \$15 million project was made possible partly with funding from community donors. Its last renovation was completed in the early 1990s.

"Maimonides is already a top destination for cardiac care, and these new and improved facilities will help us continue providing our patients top-notch care," said Maimonides Health CEO Ken Gibbs. "[New technologies](#) and monitors mean better patient care, and improved spaces mean families can support their loved ones during recovery. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our generous community donors that made this possible on behalf of the entire Maimonides family and our patients." 🌟



## Coming Home: World-Class Allergy and Immunology Expert Joins Maimonides Medical Center with a Mission

An allergist and immunologist who has served the community for many years, Mary Lee-Wong, MD, has earned a reputation among her patients as a well-respected, caring provider. She joins Maimonides Medical Center as the Medical Director of Asian Outreach for the Department of Medicine and as Chief of [Adult Allergy and Immunology](#).

### A Vision for Patient Care Informed By a Career of Leadership in the Field

"My vision for the Allergy and Immunology Division at Maimonides is to specialize in atopic disorders," Dr. Lee-Wong said. "Our division will be diagnosing and treating [allergic conditions affecting adults](#). Patients can receive individualized, patient-centered care. Diagnosis and treatments can include allergy skin testing, allergen immunotherapy, food allergy testing, as well as drug allergy testing and [drug desensitization](#)."

Dr. Lee-Wong is board certified with the [American Board of Allergy and Immunology](#) and has published many articles about allergy, asthma, and immunology. She attended SUNY Downstate Medical School in Brooklyn, where she earned her medical degree and completed residency training in both internal medicine and pediatrics. She also completed a fellowship in allergy and immunology at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, along with a master's in clinical research at Albert Einstein School of Medicine. Subsequently, she became the first female professor at Mount Sinai Beth Israel's Department of Medicine.



### Inspired By Her Own Community and Background

"I grew up in Brooklyn," said Dr. Lee-Wong. "My parents were immigrants who came to the US. As an immigrant family, we faced many challenges. These struggles made me want to make a difference not just in

my community, but also in the world. I appreciate how fortunate I have been to have had the training to become a physician and I am eager to return to my community to make a difference. I chose to come to Maimonides Medical Center because of their commitment to our community. Maimonides is committed to providing the absolute best medical care to their patients."

As President of the [New York State Allergy Society](#), she is a leader and expert in her field. Dr. Lee-Wong is sensitive to each patient's unique situation and adapts her consultations and treatment options appropriately to accommodate individual patient needs and concerns.

"Giving outstanding care to my patients is my focus and priority," she said. "I am so excited to be joining the Maimonides team."

For appointments with Dr. Lee-Wong, patients may call 718-283-7500 or [schedule online](#). 📞

## NEW PROVIDERS

### January 2023

**Moin Sattar, MD**, Medicine, Endocrinology and Metabolism, 718-283-5923

**Sowmya Josyula, MD**, Medicine, Primary Care, 718-283-6973



## Featured Podcast



### **Maimo MedTalk:** **When I'm 65: Everything You Should Think About in Your Golden Years**

[Jennifer Breznay, MD](#), Program Director, [Geriatrics](#), reviews the basics every adult who reaches age 65 should start thinking about.

[Listen Here](#)





**This month, several members of Team Maimo have been busy not only in terms of their work at the hospital, but also in their roles within the community, as industry leaders and public health informants.**

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### **NY1 Features Dr. Becker to Explain Importance of Cancer Screenings**

[Kevin Becker, MD](#), Chief of Hematology Medical Oncology at Maimonides Cancer Center, was featured on NY1 on Monday, Dec. 19, to remind viewers in our community of the importance of routine cancer screenings, which can lead to earlier diagnoses and, consequently, a much higher chance of successful treatment and remission, and reduced need for more invasive therapies.

Read the summary from NY1 [here](#). 📺

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### **Gennie Sanchez, Senior VP of Supply Chain, Earns Business Leadership Distinction**

Gennie Sanchez was distinguished this past month as a *Crain's New York Business* 2022 Notable Asian Leader, reflecting her major positive impact on Maimonides' supply chain operations, her 19-year career in the field, and her drive to uplift Asian Americans in the workplace and support minority- and woman-owned businesses and enterprises.

Read the full feature [here](#). 📺

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### **Dr. Agha Talks RSV with BBC**

[Dr. Rabia Agha](#), Director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Disease, spoke with the BBC for an article this month about the recent outbreaks of RSV and other serious pediatric respiratory infections, and what Maimonides has been doing to help patients, like doubling the capacity of our pediatric ICU. Read the full article [here](#). 📺