



**Mount  
Sinai**

# inside

A PUBLICATION OF THE MOUNT SINAI HEALTH SYSTEM

July 31 - August 20, 2017

## Two Physicians at Mount Sinai’s Cardiac Catheterization Lab Receive Top Safety Rating

For the 19th consecutive year, The Mount Sinai Hospital’s Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory or its interventionalists have received the highest two-star safety rating from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) for percutaneous coronary interventions (PCI), also known as angioplasty. PCI—one of the most common procedures for patients with coronary artery disease—opens blocked arteries and restores normal blood flow to the heart.

Mount Sinai’s exceptional ratings appeared in the NYSDOH’s recently released report on the risk factors associated with PCI at 62 hospitals across New York State from December 1, 2011, through November 30, 2014. The NYSDOH report is designed to help patients make better decisions about their care based upon a statistical review of each hospital’s data. The NYSDOH began publishing PCI safety ratings in 1995. Mount Sinai consistently has the largest number of total cases in New York State.

At Mount Sinai Heart, Samin K. Sharma, MD, and Annapoorna S. Kini, MD, were among only three

*continued on page 3 >*



Samin K. Sharma, MD, second from right, and Annapoorna S. Kini, MD, right, with members of their team at the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory.

## A Transformation for Mount Sinai West



From left: Brian Meade, PE, Senior Project Manager, Planning Design and Construction; Leah Borenstein, RN, MPA, Director, Perioperative Services; and Evan L. Flatow, MD.

As the Mount Sinai Health System evolves to meet New Yorkers’ changing health care needs, Mount Sinai West is completing Phase One of a three-year plan that will vastly expand its surgical capabilities. The initiative, which began in November 2016, will enable an increase in the types and number of complex elective surgical procedures performed at the hospital, especially in the areas of Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, and Head and Neck Cancer. The project is a key part of the transformation currently under way at the seven hospital campuses across the Health System—all efforts aimed at strengthening Mount Sinai’s ability to better serve patients.

“A large portion of Orthopedics, including hand, shoulder, and elbow surgery, along with some joint replacement and spine surgery, have already moved here from other Health System hospitals, laying the groundwork for making Mount Sinai West a center of excellence for Orthopedics,” says Evan L. Flatow, MD, President, Mount Sinai West. “Next year, we will be adding Head and Neck Cancer, as well as a movement disorders neurosurgical program, which will

*continued on page 3 >*

# New Book Celebrates Cancer Patients' Poetry and Prose

There was a standing-room-only crowd at the recent launching of a new book, *The Write Treatment Anthology*, at Mount Sinai Downtown-Union Square. But it was not just any literary crowd. These were cancer patients and survivors, along with family members, friends, and Mount Sinai Health System staff. After gentle prompting, some of those who were sitting gave up their chairs for those not feeling well enough to stand for very long.

"A sold-out crowd for a literary event," marveled Emily Rubin, who leads Mount Sinai's two Writing Workshops, and who was a co-editor of the anthology. The book, published on Amazon.com through grants and crowdfunding, includes essays, short stories, and poems that 23 cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers have written since the workshops formed in 2011. Seventeen excerpts from the book were read at the event held on Thursday, June 15.

"We are so excited about this accomplishment—a published book, filled with the stories of our cancer patients," said Alison Snow, PhD, LCSW-R, and Assistant Director, Cancer Supportive Services at Mount Sinai Downtown Cancer Centers.

The workshops are held on Mondays at Mount Sinai West and on Wednesdays at Mount Sinai Downtown-Chelsea Center and follow a well-worn, comforting routine: Ms. Rubin brings prompts to spur the imagination, like quotes, cards, or photographs, then participants write for about a half-hour, aiming to create a short finished product.

"It's all inspiration for us to write together," Ms. Rubin said at the event. "And as we write, the room fills with sighs and groans and



Emily Rubin, left, co-editor of a new anthology of work from Mount Sinai's Writing Workshops, with Alison Snow, PhD.

laughter, tears, and silences heavy with thought. We think and we write, we imagine and we create, and then we read what we've written. The stories and poems bring beauty and light to these dark places where we end up going."

Since the workshops began, about 300 people have taken part. One group was started by Ms. Rubin after she completed treatments for breast cancer at Mount Sinai Beth Israel, and the other was formed by Susan Ribner, an author who was treated for ovarian cancer at Mount Sinai West. The two started the groups at about the same

time entirely by chance, and in an only-in-New-York coincidence, they found that they had met years before—at an aikido dojo in Chelsea. They collaborated on workshops and book readings, and after Ms. Ribner went into hospice care, she asked Ms. Rubin to take over both groups. Ms. Ribner died in 2014, and her spirit was a vibrant presence at the book launch.

One of the book's authors, former patient Isaac Read, shared his essay "Sue Ribner" at the event: "She was a gracious, very strong woman. Weeks before she died, I called her because I had not heard from the writing class in a while. She told me that she was not teaching the class anymore, but she did not tell me how bad she was. I shared with her a quote about writing that I heard on a TV show. The quote is, 'Writing is an act of faith, not an act of grammar.'"

Sales of the anthology will help fund the Writing Workshops. Copies can be purchased on Amazon.com at <http://a.co/babnF9D> or at [emilyrubin.net](http://emilyrubin.net).

## Excerpts from *The Write Treatment Anthology*



**Connie Perry**

*"We writers gather close around the table, buoyed along by our continuing bravery. Not because we have each had our cancer battles, but because we bravely face blank pages again and again."*



**Jack Robert Nix**

*"I am a soldier. I even get tattooed. it is for the bullets. electron. high beam. but I dislike the uniform. a hospital gown."*



**Jacqueline Johnson**

*"Whatever it was he was reaching for, he had the appearance of a warrior ready for anything, ready for the future."*

## › Two Physicians at Cardiac Catheterization Lab Get Top Safety Rating *(continued from page 1)*

interventional cardiologists in New York State to be awarded a two-star safety rating in two categories for their significantly lower overall mortality rates over a three-year period, performing a total of 6,280 cases between them, according to the report.

“Our long track record of success in offering the highest level of patient safety and excellence in care now spans 19 years,” says Dr. Sharma, Director of Clinical and Interventional Cardiology at The Mount Sinai Hospital, and Anandi Lal Sharma Professor of Medicine in Cardiology. “At Mount Sinai Heart’s Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, we put our patients first.”

Adds Dr. Kini, Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, and Zena and Michael A. Wiener Professor of Medicine: “The combination of skilled physicians and a team that delivers high-quality patient care, through the use of innovative and evidence-based medical protocol, has contributed to our extraordinary success.”

2012-14 NY State Department of Health PCI Report				
Data on Top Five Volume Centers in NY State 30-Day RAMR				
PCI Statistics 2012-2014	# Cases	All Cases	Non-Emergency Cases	Emergency Cases
1. The Mount Sinai Hospital	13,029	0.75**	0.44**	2.82
2. Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital	7,786	0.98	0.68	2.27
3. St. Francis Hospital	7,125	0.89	0.55	2.98
4. St. Joseph’s Hospital	5,972	1.01	0.72	2.40
5. Buffalo General Hospital	5,020	1.60*	1.09*	3.99
<b>New York State Total</b>	<b>141,971</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>2.94</b>

<http://www.nyhealth.gov> \*Risk-Adjusted Mortality Rate (RAMR) significantly higher than statewide rate  
\*\*Risk-Adjusted Mortality Rate (RAMR) significantly lower than statewide rate

During the three-year period, The Mount Sinai Hospital’s risk-adjusted PCI mortality rate for all of its cases—emergency and non-emergency—was 0.75 percent, significantly lower than the statewide average of 1.11 percent and among the top three rates in New York, while performing the largest number of procedures (13,029). For non-emergency cases over that period, Mount Sinai’s PCI mortality rate was 0.44 percent, compared with the statewide average of 0.71 percent, on the highest

volume of procedures.

“I could not be any prouder of Dr. Sharma, Dr. Kini, and our Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory team. They are true leaders in the field of interventional cardiology,” says Valentin Fuster, MD, PhD, Director of Mount Sinai Heart and Physician-in-Chief of The Mount Sinai Hospital. “Patient safety and effectiveness continue to drive this team of highly skilled cardiologists to ever greater levels of quality every year.”

## › A Transformation for Mount Sinai West *(continued from page 1)*

join the epilepsy and neuroendovascular programs here to make a Neuroscience center of excellence.”

Phase One includes a new 600-square-foot operating room and the expansion of another, the addition of three new post-anesthesia care (PACU) beds, and a completely renovated surgical reception and family waiting area, all scheduled to open in early August. The project also includes the renovation of the West 59th Street hospital entrance and lobby, and upgraded elevators to the surgical reception area.

The new reception area will streamline the surgical check-in process. It includes a bright and spacious waiting area with twice the seating capacity of the previous space, two laptop stations, two big-screen televisions, a quiet area, and two restrooms. Comfortable new seats come with individual electrical outlets for convenient phone charging. Nearby, a new consultation room enables surgeons to meet privately with a patient’s family.

“Our focus is to improve the overall patient experience,” says Leah Borenstein, RN, MPA, Director, Perioperative Services, Mount Sinai West and Mount Sinai St. Luke’s. “This really is a show stopper,” she says of the new reception and family waiting area.

According to Brian Meade, PE, Senior Project Manager, Planning, Design and Construction, Mount Sinai Health System, Phase Two is scheduled for completion next March, and will include additional operating rooms, a new 3.0 T MRI, and new staff lounges. Phase Three will add 18 private prep and recovery rooms, and is expected to be ready in October 2018. Phase Four, scheduled for completion in June 2019, will include the addition of four operating rooms and the activation of the new MRI as an intraoperative MRI, which will enable precision neurosurgical imaging in real time during surgery.

Mr. Meade says their goal is to complete the renovation for December 2019, ultimately adding six operating rooms—bringing the total to 22—and doubling the number of PACU beds to 32. Surgical support facilities for staff, upgrades to engineering systems, and an enhanced and expanded endoscopy suite are also part of the overall plan.

“Starting with convenient valet parking and the reception and family waiting area, we are designing our expansion in a patient-centered way,” says Dr. Flatow, “trying to improve the experience for patients and families going through what can be a stressful time.”

## Around the Health System

### A Home Run for Neurosurgery Research and Education

Faculty, fellows, and residents from the Mount Sinai Health System's Department of Neurosurgery recently participated in the 14th Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament. The event, held Saturday, June 3, in Central Park, helps support the Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and pediatric brain tumor research. More than 40 teams from academic medical centers in the United States and Canada turned out for the friendly competition. For those keeping score, the Mount Sinai team beat the Michigan Health System and the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, but lost to Columbia University Medical Center. Most Valuable Player awards went to Mount Sinai team members Robert J. Rothrock, MD, and Jeffrey Gilligan, MD, both neurosurgery residents; and Peter Taub,



The Department of Neurosurgery's softball players, led by Joshua B. Bederson, MD, Professor and Chair of Neurosurgery for the Mount Sinai Health System, far right, gathered in Central Park for the charity tournament.

MD, Professor of Surgery, Pediatrics, and Neurosurgery, who hit home runs. The event was hosted by Columbia University's Department of Neurological Surgery.



James C. Tsai, MD, MBA, President, New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai; and Jodi S. Sassoon, MD, Director of Anatomic Pathology and Clinical Pathology, served lunch to operating room technician Pedro Vasquez.

### Showing Appreciation to Staff

Food, fun, and appreciation were on the menu Wednesday, June 14, at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai as senior management—wearing chef's hats and festive fake moustaches—served lunch in the facility's cafeteria to 300 employees to thank them for their dedication throughout the year. Participants were treated to summer barbecue favorites, such as hamburgers, watermelon, and lemonade, and invited to enter a raffle to win gift baskets. "We truly value the contributions and hard work demonstrated by all of our employees," Christopher T. Spina, MS, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, said. "And this event gives us an opportunity to show our appreciation for what they do every single day."

### Expanding Outreach to Help Keep Women Safe

At an informational table in Guggenheim Pavilion, Mount Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI) in April educated visitors about the community outreach and educational programming it provides. For more than 30 years, SAVI has offered free, confidential therapy and advocacy to survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence (IPV). Recent funding from the New York State Department of Health has expanded SAVI's capacity to offer free workshops at community centers, schools, higher educational institutions, corporations, and organizations to increase awareness and strengthen best practices concerning prevention of sexual assault and IPV. SAVI has more than 150 active volunteers on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, who support survivors' medical and police reporting options in the emergency room. The gender-inclusive volunteer program is currently recruiting through the end of September. Those interested should email [savi@mssm.edu](mailto:savi@mssm.edu).



From left: Amanda Burden, Training and Outreach Supervisor, SAVI, volunteer Latoya Bennett, and Silva Sergenian, MA, Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program and Volunteer Coordinator.

# A Full-Time Canine Companion Joins Mount Sinai

Two-year-old Aiden Schaefer was battling leukemia, with long hospital stays, uncomfortable medical procedures, and time spent away from his twin brother, Mason, when a gentle young service dog, Professor Bunsen Honeydew, began keeping him company as part of a new program at Kravis Children's Hospital at Mount Sinai. Denise Schaefer says her son Aiden "fell in love instantly" with the friendly golden doodle. Aiden's experience "was not about the medicine or the doctors, it was about seeing Professor."

Thanks to an innovative program, Paws & Play, supported by PetSmart Charities® at Kravis Children's Hospital, the highly trained facility dog is now a full-time employee at Mount Sinai. Kravis launched the program—the first of its kind in New York State—with a grant from PetSmart Charities. Under the direction of handlers Ali Spike, MS, Certified Child Life Specialist, Toshiko Nonaka, MS, Certified Child Life Specialist, and Morgan Stojanowski, Child Life Program Assistant Director, Professor works with patients in the Blau Center for Children's Cancer and Blood Disease, the Alice Gottesman Bayer Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and inpatient units.

Working in conjunction with the doctors and nurses who care for the physical well-being of patients, Professor provides emotional support. He helps to ease the pain or anxiety that



Aiden Schaefer, far right, and his brother, Mason, snuggle with Professor Bunsen Honeydew, Kravis Children's Hospital's new full-time employee.

accompanies medical procedures, and long hospitalizations and treatments, while improving the socialization, motivation, and overall temperament of pediatric patients.

"At Kravis, we are surrounded by excellence, great love, and care for families," says Diane C. Rode, MPS, Child Life Program Director. "This is a magnificent opportunity for us to continue humanizing the health care we provide."

## Granting Wishes and Bringing Joy to Sick Children

Two members of the Mount Sinai Health System, Lorraine Rodriguez, MSN, BSN, RN, FNP, and Samantha Vasquez, LMSW, were chosen last spring to promote World Wish Day® on behalf of the Make-A-Wish® Foundation, an international organization that has granted the wishes of more than 400,000 seriously ill children. In the past few years, Ms. Rodriguez, a nurse practitioner with the Mount Sinai Epilepsy Center, and Ms. Vasquez, a social worker within the Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Division of The Mount Sinai Hospital, have referred more than 80 children to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The organization's stated goal is to grant one wish to every eligible child.

World Wish Day is an annual event that honors medical professionals, donors, volunteers, and sponsors, as well as the children and their families whose lives are touched by the granted wishes. Wishes have included visits with sports



Samantha Vasquez, LMSW



Lorraine Rodriguez, MSN, BSN, RN, FNP

or musical celebrities, serving as a firefighter for a day, or receiving a toy playhouse.

Ms. Rodriguez was honored by being featured on a Make-A-Wish billboard in Times Square and by ringing the Nasdaq Stock Market bell at the start of business, tributes that she says brought tears to her eyes. Her patients' wishes help them heal, Ms. Rodriguez adds. "When the children come for follow-up visits you see they're smiling, jumping, having hope. You can sense that sparkle in their eyes. They're happy."

Ms. Vasquez was featured in an advertisement for Make-A-Wish that appeared in *TIME* magazine. "It is not easy for kids to undergo a severe treatment like chemotherapy," she says. "When I talk to them about their wishes, they smile. It is rewarding to be able to witness that joy and hope."

# Mount Sinai Hosts 2nd International Prostate Cancer Symposium and Inaugural World Congress of Urologic Oncology

Held in collaboration with the Society of Urologic Robotic Surgeons and Endourological Society

Join the Department of Urology as it kicks off the symposium—and its 75th anniversary—with the “Beat the Dean Push-Up for Prostate Cancer Challenge,” Wednesday, September 6, 11 am - 1:30 pm, Guggenheim Atrium.

More than 110 global specialists are expected to participate in a three-day symposium that will feature an address by Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and President for Academic Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System; live 3D surgical demonstrations, including prostate, kidney, bladder, and reconstruction cases; and point-counterpoint debates.

**Thursday, September 7, 7:20 am - 5:45 pm**

**Friday, September 8, 7 am - 5:45 pm**

**Saturday, September 9, 7 am - 6:20 pm**

**Stern Auditorium**



**Course Director:**

Ash Tewari, MBBS, MCh,  
Chair, Department of Urology,  
Mount Sinai Health System

**Co-Director:**

Ketan K. Badani, MD, Vice Chair

**Associate Directors:**

Nina Bhardwaj, MD, PhD  
Carlos Cordon-Cardo, MD, PhD  
William Oh, MD

**Site Directors:**

Mantu Gupta, MD  
Michael A. Palese, MD

The event is sponsored by the Milton and Carroll Petrie Department of Urology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. For additional information and registration, visit [www.mountsinaiurologycme.org](http://www.mountsinaiurologycme.org).



## Inside Mount Sinai Enhances Its Digital Presence

*Inside Mount Sinai* invites faculty and staff, and patients and visitors, to see our new enhanced digital version. You can find articles from each issue of *Inside Mount Sinai* (<http://inside.mountsinai.org>), as well as additional postings and videos that highlight the latest information about the Mount Sinai Health System. All content is also searchable and shareable on social media.

## Mount Sinai Transformation update

For the most recent updates on Mount Sinai's downtown transformation, please go to:

<http://www.mountsinaihealth.org/locations/downtown>

## 2018 Health Care Benefits Wellness Cost Share Credit

The Department of Human Resources has announced the continuation of a wellness cost share credit for all eligible faculty and staff enrolling in the 2018 benefits plan. Eligible employees must schedule and complete a wellness visit with a primary care provider no later than Thursday, August 31. While eligible employees are encouraged to see a primary care provider affiliated with the Mount Sinai Health System, this is not a requirement, and employees may see any primary care provider they wish. To schedule a wellness visit at a Mount Sinai Primary Care practice, visit <http://intranet1.mountsinai.org/humanresources/Benefits/PrimaryCareServicesList.asp> for a list of Mount Sinai Primary Care practice locations. For Mount Sinai Health System Top Tier Physicians, go to [toptier.mountsinai.org/toptier](http://toptier.mountsinai.org/toptier). For more information, contact the Benefits Administration Office at 646-605-4620. *New hires as of June 1, 2017, will automatically receive the credit.*

**Thursday, August 31: Wellness Visit Deadline**

## Watch for Epic Upgrade in August!

Epic users will experience changes beginning Sunday, August 13, when the upgraded system will be available. Visit <http://peak.mountsinai.org> to learn more.