



Advocates in Action

St. Mary's Health System is deeply grateful to Senator Peggy Rotundo for helping to secure crucial support in the state budget for behavioral health. Her advocacy, especially after the Lewiston mass shooting tragedy, highlights the urgent need to improve access to mental healthcare.

St. Mary's is the third-largest provider of acute behavioral health services in the state, serving patients from all counties of Maine. As more people need our services, we must take action to ensure everyone has access to the care they need.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Senator Rotundo and her colleagues, the final budget included funding to

help us expand our services. This includes starting a much-needed Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for patients who can be diverted from inpatient care to an outpatient program like PHP that provides 20 hours a week of intense counseling and treatment. This program will improve accessibility to those who still need intense follow-up to psychiatric emergency care.

St. Mary's and our partners are committed to building a strong and caring community. By working together and investing in behavioral healthcare, we promise to support those in need and ensure they get the care and kindness they deserve.

Unrestricted Gifts Address Immediate Healthcare Needs

Unrestricted giving allows St. Mary's Health System the flexibility to distribute funds where they are most needed and can have the greatest impact. These gifts help support cutting-edge equipment, technologies, programs and services that enhance patient care.

We thank our donors for trusting us with their gifts to support these recent purchases.



Code Carts Ensure Rapid Emergency Responses

With your generous support, we launched a critical initiative to enhance patient care: the Code Cart Exchange Program. We purchased three essential code carts to ensure that lifesaving equipment and medications are always available within our inpatient, outpatient and emergency departments.

Maintaining and restocking these vital carts posed significant challenges for our dedicated staff, often impacting their ability to provide immediate patient care. Your donations have transformed this process. With multiple fully stocked carts now available for immediate exchange, our teams can swiftly respond to any medical crisis and significantly reduce risks that could impact patient outcomes.



“Without the carts being restocked promptly, readiness for subsequent emergencies was compromised,” says Tristen Pingree, BSN, RN, quality manager at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center. “We are so grateful for this purchase, and we are extremely excited to get the code cart exchange program implemented.”



Bulkamid Advances Stress Urinary Incontinence Treatment

Donor funds supported our Bulkamid procedure, which uses a revolutionary water-soluble agent for treating stress urinary incontinence (SUI). Unlike traditional methods that pose risks of erosion or toxicity, Bulkamid is a safer, minimally invasive alternative. This innovative procedure, facilitated by a newly acquired cystoscope, allows precise and effective urethral bulking without the complications of urinary retention.

Your support provides countless women with a reliable solution to SUI, enhancing their quality of life with confidence and comfort. “It is so nice to hear patients say, ‘I don’t have to wear a pad anymore’ or ‘I can run again without leaking,’” says Michelle Ramirez, DO, urologist at St. Mary’s Center for Family Urology. “And it is even better when that happens without postoperative complications and with returning to work and normal activities sooner.”

Ambu® aScope™ Enhances Patient Safety and Surgical Efficiency

Donor funds helped support the Ambu® aScope™, a versatile disposable gastroscope transforming our surgical capabilities. The Ambu® aScope™ is a versatile, single-use device that helps our physicians perform primarily colon or sigmoid resections more efficiently and safely. The Ambu® aScope™ is always on hand when our doctors need it. Its compact size means less clutter in the operating room, and its single use ensures the highest standards of hygiene for every patient. This innovative tool is not only improving the quality of care we provide but also helping us manage costs more effectively.





Remembering Regis Lepage

“Well, it was a blast. I always hated to leave a party. This one was exceptional in so many ways.”

In his own words from his handwritten obituary, longtime supporter Regis Lepage, 69, bid farewell to this world on December 24, 2023, after a courageous battle with ALS.

Regis' contributions to St. Mary's Health System as a board member, volunteer and philanthropist left a lasting impact on the institution and community.

Born in Lewiston, Regis grew up with a family steeped in St. Mary's history. His grandfather was a physician here when the hospital was founded, and his mother and three aunts all attended St. Mary's School of Nursing. Both his father and brother served on the board.

Regis became involved with St. Mary's on the Finance Committee in the mid-80s. He served on the hospital's board for 18 years, ultimately as vice chair. During the system transition, Regis was instrumental in maintaining that vital relationship between St. Mary's and Covenant Health.

In his later years, Regis advocated for access to mental health services at St. Mary's and beyond. Having grappled with his own mental health struggles since childhood, he was determined to provide hope for others.

“I was taught to always give back and try to pass my good fortune forward,” Regis wrote in his obituary.

He helped secure a naming gift for the Carlton & Lucille Sedgeley Adult Behavioral Health Center, raised funds for the Infusion Center, advocated for access to behavioral health programs, chaired several committees and participated in capital fundraising campaigns.

“When he believed in a mission, he was unstoppable,” says Carolyn, his loving wife of 40 years. “He had an incredible ability to rally people around causes by helping them understand the impact it would have on others.”

She fondly remembers his caring spirit and curiosity. Whether flying across the country on ski adventures, competing nationally in drag racing or helping to raise much-needed support for St. Mary's, Carolyn says her husband lived his life fully with unrelenting passion and selfless love.

Regis' giving spirit, adventurous zest and compassionate philanthropy will continue impacting and inspiring others in the community he loved so dearly. St. Mary's is grateful for this generous soul who truly made the most of life's “exceptional” party.



A New Season of Growth at St. Mary's

After a period of challenges, the future at St. Mary's Health System looks brighter than ever. The tide is turning, and we're confident about what's ahead. We've been busy recruiting new primary care providers. In fact, we've seen more activity in the past few months than in the last three years. Our new marketing and compensation plans are working well, and we're attracting top medical professionals to serve you, your friends, family and neighbors.

We're excited to welcome new primary care providers (PCPs) at St. Mary's Medical Associates, Dr. Vijay Alekshmy and Nurse Practitioner (NP) April Damboise. Dr. Belinda Elisha, who has a background in endocrinology, will join St. Mary's Medical Associates this fall as a PCP.

We're also pleased to announce that Obstetrician-Gynecologist Dr. Triste M. Coulombe will practice at St. Mary's. Dr. Coulombe graduated from The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and

completed her residency at Maine Medical Center in Portland. She is board-certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and is a fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

The link between mental and physical health is well-documented, and we're committed to integrating behavioral health into our primary care settings. Join us in welcoming four new NPs who will address mental and physical health in one place: Heather Khansari Nejad, Rachel Ivanov, Elizabeth Hurd and Kendra Greene. This whole-person care enhances accessibility as most patients primarily access healthcare through their PCPs and addresses the stigma associated with mental health treatment.

Backed by dedicated supporters like you, St. Mary's is entering a new era. With a growing team and renewed energy, our toughest days are in the past. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we're building a healthier, stronger future for our communities.



Brothers Peter and Gene Geiger



Geiger Family Supports Mental Health Initiatives and the Greater Good

“I understand why someone would consider suicide,” says Gene Geiger, former CEO of Geiger, who has been diagnosed and treated for depression. “I know what it’s like to feel so helpless and hopeless that you feel like there is no point in living. There seems to be some sense that people with mental health challenges should be

able to fix themselves — and it doesn’t work like that. Sadly, our society tends to ignore, bury or be willfully ignorant of mental health issues. If we really care about the people in our community, we need to get them the professional help they need to feel well.”

“My family’s goal has always been to contribute to the greater good of our community, especially when it comes to mental health initiatives,” says Peter Geiger, current Executive Vice President at Geiger. “That’s why Geiger has been and continues to be a strong supporter of St. Mary’s.”

“If we really care about the people in our community, we need to get them the professional help they need to feel well.”

— Gene Geiger



Thank you to our Behavioral Emergency Department Sponsors



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Geiger is the world's largest family-owned and privately held distributor of promotional products. Currently owned by the fourth generation of the Geiger family, the company works with clients on a variety of marketing, promotional and motivational projects.

This year, Geiger renewed their corporate sponsorship of St. Mary's Health System in support of the Behavioral Emergency Department (BED). The BED is a crucial point of entry for individuals experiencing mental health crises. Today, the volume of patients, length of stay, patient acuity and level of severity of mental illness patients present with are at record highs.

Corporate sponsorship dollars, like those from Geiger, help supply the BED with much-needed specialized recliners that offer a safe and comfortable space for patients, durable and cleanable weighted blankets to relieve anxiety and depression symptoms and clean anti-suicide clothing for those who arrive in soiled clothing.

To learn more about supporting St. Mary's BED and joining the Geiger company as a corporate sponsor, please visit stmarysmaine.com/corporate-sponsor or call Deb Anthoine at 207.777.8828. To learn more about St. Mary's comprehensive Behavioral and Mental Health Services, please visit stmarysmaine.com/behavioral-and-mental-health or call 207.777.8700.



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– St. Mary's Foundation Newsletter –



"I've been blessed and fortunate to have been part of the St. Mary's family with such dedicated and caring individuals. Contributing to St. Mary's is a way for me to express this gratitude in ways that are important to me and others. For me, giving can be a form of expressing gratitude, caring for others and knowing that one's work is within a broader context."

Jonathan Torres, MD
Medical Director, WorkMed
Occupational Health Services

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