

# checkup

**Bergen  
Volunteer  
Medical  
Initiative**

DOING MORE FOR MORE PEOPLE

*you give us hope*

STORIES OF INSPIRATION



## DEAR FRIEND

As we close out 2020, we are exhaling (through our masks) a sigh of relief. We always expect challenges at BVMI, but temporarily closing our doors due to a pandemic was something we couldn't see coming. Through it all, our staff and volunteers held on, shifted gears and learned new ways to provide medical care through telehealth. Our patients stepped up and gave it a try.

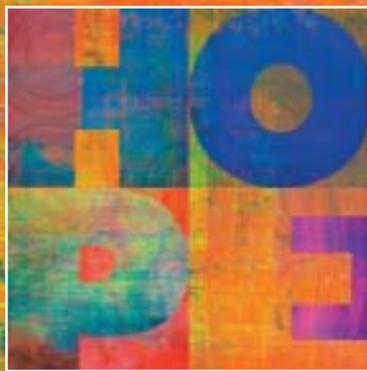
Together, we made it through the 2020 crisis, and we carefully reopened BVMI's clinic doors. Thanks to our amazing donors, we survived. Our supporters understood how much COVID-19 threatened the health and livelihood of our patients, and their families. The pandemic was a great equalizer. It made us all realize how much we need each other.

The One Big Thing we held on tightly to this year at BVMI was hope. Hope that our patients could learn how to protect themselves against the virus. Hope that our own team would remain healthy. Hope that our donors could and would keep giving, even as our annual fundraising gala went "virtual." It worked.

While COVID-19 remains a challenge for 2021, we're ready. We'll continue using telehealth, alongside in-office visits when possible, to serve more people. We plan to add more clinic hours and expand our case management program. We can't shy away from the unknown, so we will continue to carefully serve our patients. They need our help **AND** our hope.

*Amanda*

Amanda Missey, President/CEO  
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*help  
and hope  
join hands*

## *a mother's strength*

It takes a strong woman to handle more issues in one year than most people deal with in a lifetime. "Celia" is a BVMI patient and survivor of domestic violence. She's raising three children on her own. She lost her two jobs in late March due to the COVID-19 pandemic – which meant she couldn't pay her rent or provide enough food for her family.

BVMI is grateful that we can extend a lifeline in times like these. Yes, we provide primary healthcare for Celia. That includes connecting her with mental health support from our licensed social workers, aided by Spanish-language interpreters. But she sorely needs other types of assistance, too. For example, BVMI's Case Manager Rosa Flores-Campos has helped Celia receive fresh produce and grocery gift cards, and connected her with the Center for Food Action.

Celia's stress level has been overwhelming, especially during the pandemic. "I can't sleep, knowing I need electricity and access to the internet so that my children can do their schoolwork from home," she said. Rosa is helping Celia seek out rental and energy assistance. She is also committed to helping her apply for permanent resident status. This would open the door to other types of assistance until Celia can get fully back on her feet again.

Considering all Celia and her children have been through, she's already standing tall. We'll do our best to keep her healthy as she gets closer to much brighter days.



## *with him every step of the way*

Over these many months of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've learned that telehealth can be a useful tool – and it can save lives. BVMI patient Errol was having symptoms of COVID-19, while managing his diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. When his wife Oudia called to tell us that he was sick and hallucinating, with signs of memory loss, we decided to send him to the emergency room. An examination confirmed low oxygen levels. Errol also tested positive for COVID-19 and contracted pneumonia in both lungs. Still, he remained hopeful and was able to return home a week later.

BVMI's medical team was able to manage Errol's home care remotely, but it wasn't easy. Over six weeks, he was readmitted to the hospital three more times. Mary Granholm, our nurse practitioner, managed to source the expensive medications he'd need at home, even delivering one round herself.

"It's been a difficult year, and I didn't know if I would make it," said Errol. But regular telehealth appointments with BVMI's Dr. Josef Machac, Certified Diabetes Educator Holly Homa, and a mental health professional have renewed his hope.

"BVMI has been with me every step of the way," said Errol. "Everyone responds quickly to my calls. Before BVMI, I didn't have any healthcare. I don't know what I would have done without them." Oudia is grateful too. "If there was a survey, I'd give BVMI 10 out of 10!" she said.



## *why we help...*

"We support BVMI because it fulfills the critical mission and need of providing healthcare to those that otherwise could not afford it. Giving allows us the honor and the privilege of exercising our duty to give back to society."

KAREN AND RICH BALTER

"BVMI truly represents a 'Culture of Caring,' and the patients it serves have no other way to receive excellent, preventive, ongoing healthcare."

ROBERT B. ZURIER, MD

"I volunteer and donate to BVMI because it helps the working poor. The volunteer experience was what I promised myself when I retired. The interaction with the patients who are doing their best to help themselves was excellent. BVMI is an exceptional organization."

JANET COOK, RN

## *thank you*

**We are so grateful to these and all our other generous and committed donors**

# NO-GO GALA

Together at home

The BVMI 2020 NO-GO Gala: Together at Home was a great success thanks to you! More than 300 guests joined the virtual gala and because of your support, 500 diabetic and pre-diabetic BVMI patients will continue to have access to excellent healthcare!

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## MISSION

Powered by passionate volunteers, BVMI meets the medical needs of low-income, working, uninsured adults in Bergen County by providing free, comprehensive, patient-centered primary healthcare.



Lynn Diamond Healthcare Center

75 Essex Street, Suite 100 ■ Hackensack, NJ 07601

201-342-2478 ■ [bvmi.org](http://bvmi.org)



# THANK YOU

FOR PROVIDING HELP AND HOPE  
TO OUR BERGEN COUNTY NEIGHBORS

## THE WEINSTEINS: HELPING FULFILL DREAMS

Bernard "Bernie" Weinstein's long career has led him to places like Bellevue Hospital, Westchester County Medical Center, Pace University Graduate Center, and Bon Secours Charity Health System. After his third attempt at "retirement," his wife Eileen read about Dr. Sam Cassell, who was intent on creating a new health clinic for working people in Bergen County who lacked access to medical insurance. "I was intrigued," said Bernie. "I made a few calls, agreed to attend a meeting, and helped plot some market information. Next thing I knew, I had a new volunteer job title: Administrator!"

Within four years, BVMI found the right location and enough money to open its doors. Bernie's work on site negotiation and business planning helped. "It was a wonderful process," said Eileen. "Bernie later became Board Chair and then headed the Business and Finance Committee. He shared lots of experience, and brought people together."

The Weinstains have been generous to BVMI – most recently with a charitable gift annuity through the Community Foundation of New Jersey. "Once the simple details were explained, it was a no-brainer," said Bernie. "And I'm glad the 'healthy skeptic' in me asked those tough questions way back when – because today, even facing a pandemic, BVMI's financial picture is solid."

Eileen and Bernie enjoy life: golfing, swimming, biking and advocating for our work. "People are well served at BVMI," said Eileen. "We're impressed with how fulfilled the medical volunteers are, too."

"I'd love to see BVMI acquire its own building someday," added Bernie. "That could allow them to double or triple the number of patients." It's a lofty goal. But BVMI itself started with a dream – and the help of people like the Weinstains.



SAMPLE GIFT ANNUITY RATES FOR ONE LIFE

AGE	RATE
70	4.7%
75	5.4%
80	6.5%
90	8.6%

**TAKE THE 2020 LEGACY CHALLENGE!  
JOIN THE DR. SAMUEL A. CASSELL  
LEGACY SOCIETY**

**Help us secure the future of BVMI while making an impact today.  
For every new planned gift, BVMI will receive \$1,000.  
To get started, contact Amanda Missey, BVMI President/CEO  
201-518-8484, amissey@bvmi.net**

## WELCOME NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS



*"We decided to become Legacy Society members because of the devotion, hard work and excellence of BVMI's leadership. Our commitment is to ensure that BVMI is around to survive, thrive and serve long after we are here to bear witness."*

- KAREN AND  
DARRYL WEISS, MD



*"Joining the Legacy Society is truly a declaration of our profound support of BVMI. It is also a permanent caring statement of our concern for BVMI's financial future."*

- BENITA AND  
KENNETH HERMAN, EdD

# THANK YOU!

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND YOUR COMMITMENT TO BVMI!

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