



Our mission: To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

The Heart of New Jersey **2024 New Jersey Heart Ball Honorees**

Physician of the Year Award

Awarded to a physician, nominated by peers or patients, who has made a sustained and positive impact on their patients' lives and is dedicated to fighting heart disease and/or stroke.

Anthony Altobelli, III, MD, FACC

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH)

Dr. Anthony Altobelli serves as the Clinical Chief of Cardiology, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital - New Brunswick. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, focused on the improvement and expansion of the Hospital Cardiovascular Service Line, he serves as co-director of the Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Hospital Sports Cardiology Program and is a cardiology consultant to Princeton and Rutgers University athletic programs. Dr. Altobelli also sits on the Medical Executive Committee of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital.

A non-invasive cardiologist and cardiac imager by training, Dr. Altobelli is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, Rutgers – Robert Wood Johnson Medical School where he participates in the education and training of medical students and physicians-in-training. He remains clinically active, treating patients with all types of cardiovascular conditions at his practice in East Brunswick - Cardiology Associates of New Brunswick. Dr. Altobelli, in partnership with his patients, formulates care plans grounded in state-of-the art therapies and procedures. Patients and their families can expect that their questions will be answered and that they will have a clear understanding of their health issues and goals of care that together with Dr. Altobelli they are striving to achieve. During the nursing strike in 2023, Dr. Altobelli led the efforts on behalf of the Heart and Vascular Service Line at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital to ensure that patients would continue to receive the highest quality of care without interruption.

Humanitarian with Heart Award

Awarded to an outstanding person who is a dedicated volunteer and/or philanthropist promoting our mission of building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke and/or making exceptional contributions to community health.

Greg Lewis

Calcium+Co.

Greg grew up with five siblings and both parents in healthcare. His father was a cardiovascular surgeon and his mother was an operating room nurse. Although none of his siblings went into healthcare, Greg was determined to make a difference in the world by making the leap into healthcare advertising and marketing. His motto is "make everyday count" and he certainly lives by it every day. Greg encourages employees to take care of their wellbeing and provides the employee resources and tools to do so like summer Fridays, quarterly wellness stipends for things like new sneakers or a workout class, and a comprehensive healthcare benefits package. Greg starts each morning with an Orange Theory class to get his blood pumping and body ready for the day. Greg not only lives a healthy life but influences the people around him to, too. Greg has been on the Heart Ball board of the AHA NJ chapter for more than 6 years. The company he leads, Calcium+Company, is proud to be a corporate supporter of the Heart Ball and AHA NJ chapter this year.

Researcher of The Year Award

Awarded to a researcher who is performing cutting edge research in the field of cardiovascular health and science, impacting heart disease and/or stroke.

Marc Klapholz, MD, MBA, FACC, FAHA

Chair, Department of Medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Cardiology research for over 20 years, with 100+ articles/publications specializing in Congestive Heart Failure. \$60 million dollars in grants presently with Department of Medicine. Marc Klapholz, MD, FACC, FSCAI is Professor and Chair of the Department of Medicine and director of the Heart Failure Prevention and Treatment Program. Dr. Klapholz has been a principal investigator on over 100 clinical trials in heart failure and other cardiovascular diseases. He has served on AHA Grant Review Committees, the Heart Failure Society of America Guidelines Committee and on the Editorial Board of several journals. He has chaired and continues to chair numerous Steering, Endpoint and Data Safety Monitoring Board Committees for national and international trials in heart failure. Dr. Klapholz is a Fellow of the American Heart Association (FAHA).

Practice of the Year

Awarded to a cardiovascular or neurology medical practice that epitomizes outstanding patient-centered care, evidence-based medicine, continuity of care and quality improvement.

Mahesh Bikina, MD, MPH, FACC, FSVM, FSCAI

Founder and President

HVA Medical Group

With more than 25 offices throughout Northern New Jersey, HVA Medical Group is a very large, multi-specialty medical practice group serving Northern New Jersey for over 25 years. With emphasis on general, electrophysiology and interventional cardiology as well as vascular services, HVA Medical Group provides patients with a comprehensive, compassionate and individualized experience resulting in a seamless continuum of care. HVA Medical Group is a dedicated team comprised of outstanding physicians in a wide range of medical specialties, primary care, and key ancillary services located throughout Northern New Jersey, in Bergen, Passaic, and Morris counties.

Mahesh Bikina, MD, is a board certified interventional cardiologist who is the Founder and President of HVA Medical Group. Dr. Bikina received his medical degree from Guntur Medical College in Guntur, India and completed an internship and an internal medicine residency at Michigan State University. He completed fellowships in cardiology and interventional cardiology at the University of South Alabama and an additional cardiology fellowship at Boston University. He is also the co-chief of cardiology at St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, NJ.

Early Investigator-Clinician Impact Award (special)

Awarded to a physician, surgeon, clinician, researcher or health educator in the early stages of their career yet making significant impact in their work or field. ("finalizing award title")

Molly Schultheis, MD

Englewood Health

Molly Schultheis, MD, has the distinction of being the only female cardiothoracic surgeon practicing in Bergen County. She is among just 125 female cardiothoracic surgeons nationwide. In a specialty largely dominated by men, Dr. Schultheis leverages her unique perspective and lived experiences to fight heart disease and propel the field of cardiothoracic surgery into the future. At Englewood Health, she is a leader both in and out of the operating room. Her compassionate approach to patient care sets her apart as a truly exceptional physician. She embodies a deeply personal and empathetic ethos that resonates with her patients and colleagues alike. "Dr. Schultheis stayed with me before, during, and after my surgery and recovery. She treated me like I was her own mother, and I would not be here today without her," says Frances Olenik, a patient of Dr. Schultheis' who underwent triple bypass surgery this year. In addition to her commitment to her patients, Dr. Schultheis is passionate about advancing research on heart disease in women. To that end, she currently serves as a principal investigator for ROMA: Women, an international study on coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery in women. This groundbreaking research seeks to address the disparities and gaps in understanding women's heart disease, an area that has historically been overlooked in medical research. "This is an international study of vast importance," reports Adam

Arnofsky, MD, chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Englewood Health. "Dr. Schultheis' contributions to the data in this first-of-its-kind clinical trial to determine the best surgical approach for women with coronary artery disease is significant."

Through her leadership, Englewood Health and Dr. Schultheis have achieved remarkable milestones within the study, enrolling the highest number of trial participants among all health systems in New Jersey. Dr. Schultheis completed a general surgery residency and a cardiothoracic surgery fellowship at RWJBarnabas Health, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. She is board certified in both general and cardiothoracic surgery, and holds memberships in esteemed medical societies, including the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and Women in Thoracic Surgery. Dr. Schultheis' dedication to advancing medical knowledge is evident through her contributions to medical journals, including the Journal of Clinical & Experimental Cardiology and the Journal of the Society of Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeons.

Additionally, she has shared her insights and expertise through oral presentations at prominent annual meetings, including those of the Eastern Cardiothoracic Surgical Society and The International Society of Heart and Lung Transplant. Dr. Schultheis' compassionate approach to care extends beyond the confines of the operating room, as she views her patients as an extension of her own family. This deeply personal connection underscores her commitment to individualized care and sets her apart as a uniquely empathetic surgeon. Her impact reverberates throughout the medical community, leaving an indelible mark on the field of medicine and positively touching the lives of countless individuals.

Lifetime Educator Award (special)

Awarded to a healthcare professional working in the cardiovascular or neurology – neurosciences field that demonstrates or epitomizes a career passionate about and dedicated to education, training and learning. This is an individual that has committed their work and life to preparing future generations of exceptional physicians, surgeons, researchers or healthcare professionals.

Fayez Shamoan, MD, FACC, FACP, FSCA Medical Director of Cardiovascular Services

A passionate and dedicated lifetime educator and teacher for more than 30 years, Dr. Fayez Shamoan is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Clara Maass Medical Center, Saint Michael's Medical Center, Trinitas Regional Medical Center, Hackensack Meridian Health Hackensack University Medical Center, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, Saint Barnabas Medical Center, and St. Joseph's University Medical Center. He received his medical degree from University of Jordan Faculty of Medicine and has been in practice 36 years. Dr. Shamoan specializes in adult congenital heart disease, cardiac electrophysiology, and interventional cardiology and is experienced in electrocardiography, cardiac catheterization, coronary angiography, cardiac critical care, and stent placement. Dr. Shamoan has served as the administrator or program director of Interventional Cardiology Fellowship programs. These intensive multi-year accredited cardiovascular disease fellowships, provide rigorous clinical and academic training. Robust didactic lectures enhance the training of fellows and provide a platform for ample research opportunities, with the program, faculty and Dr. Shamoan imparting their own passion and commitment to the principles of professionalism, integrity, compassion, and dedication to the patients they serve.

ADP Community Impact Award

Awarded to an outstanding corporation, company or organization which is dedicated to our mission of building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke. They may encourage employees to live the mission with heart-healthy initiatives such as promoting and learning Hands-Only CPR, National Move More Day, the National Eat Smart observance, or by being a Well-being Works Better program participant. The nominee should demonstrate outstanding community support and involvement impacting the health and wellbeing of the community and its residents.

Cardiac and Neurosciences Service Lines, RWJBarnabas Health

James Andrews, MHL, Senior Vice President

- Delivered charity care to over 5,000 patients each year assuming the cost of an average of \$10M of services for our communities.
- Collaborate with The Institute for Prevention and Recovery to focus on the significance of not smoking as a way to reduce the incidence and risk of stroke.
- Focused on getting smoking cessation programs into the community: Partner with people's trusted services and community leaders to provide smoking and lung cancer screenings and help increase access points of care via connection to RWJBH Primary Care Physicians (schools, employers, faith-based organizations, sororities, beauty salons).
- Partner with Marketing and Communications to educate internal and external communities on the identification of stroke symptoms and risk factors.
- Rolling out a "We don't judge, we care" campaign to encourage health care adverse individuals to receive annual exams.
- Increased access to our providers by expanding our community based provider base by 15% in the last year while ensuring all patients/payors are seen.
- Expanded our community efforts to ensure cardiology is available across NJ FQHCs. Assess the disparity gaps and educated our employees, residents and contracted physicians on best practices to address CV health disparities.
- Collaborate with Marketing & Communications to the importance of home blood pressure monitoring Increase collaboration with external stakeholders to increase community knowledge surrounding the criticality of CV health, home monitoring, and self-advocacy.
- Focused on increasing the percentage of managed RWJBH patients with longitudinally controlled hypertension, particularly those from marginalized communities.

Victor Parsonnet, M.D. Visionary Award

Awarded only three times in the history of the New Jersey Heart Ball, this award is named in honor of Victor Parsonnet, M.D., of Newark Beth Israel hospital. Dr. Parsonnet is credited with implanting the first permanent pacemakers in New Jersey and the first permanent transvenous pacemakers worldwide. This award is given to fellow visionaries, whose ideas and discoveries have truly changed the way medicine is practiced.

John M. Brown, III, MD

Mid-Atlantic Surgical Associates

Chief Section of Cardiothoracic Surgery

In addition to his role as Chief Section of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Mid-Atlantic Surgical Associates, Dr. Brown serves as Chief of Cardiac Surgery, Morristown Medical Center, Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute. Dr. Brown's professional expertise includes all aspects of adult cardiac surgery.

Pioneers in cardiac surgery, under Dr. Brown's leadership, Mid-Atlantic Surgical Associates is the premier cardiovascular surgery group in the New Jersey-New York metropolitan area, #1 in volume for open heart surgery and TAVR in the tristate area and performs three times the national average of cases in all areas of cardiac surgery.

Dr. Brown has been active in the development of minimally invasive surgical techniques as they apply to adult heart surgery at Morristown Medical Center. He has a special interest in minimally invasive valvular heart techniques and the MIDCAB procedure.

He helped to found and develop the Cardiac Classroom at the Liberty Science Center some 20 years ago. Now called Live From Surgery at the Liberty Science Center, this is an ongoing interactive experience for students to gain insight into health science careers and bring attention to cardiac risk factors in their formative years. Dr. Brown has been actively involved in a number of clinical research projects. He has been the Principal Investigator in the pivotal CoreValve Trial as well as the Magna Ease Trial. He is a sub-investigator in the Everest II Trial. His extensive professional associations include membership in the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, American College of Surgery, American College of Chest Physicians, American College of Cardiology and both the New Jersey and New York Societies of Thoracic Surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery as well as the American Board of Surgery.