# Garnet Health. Exceptional Lives Here.

# The Recipe for Recognition

## Announcing our 2023 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR





### Are You a Patient of Any Garnet Health Service?

As ambassadors of our health system, we should share our Garnet Health experiences with the community. We have a lot to be proud of! If you are comfortable doing so, upon conclusion of your patient visit, please visit garnethealth.org/locations (or scan the QR code), select the location you visited and click on the "Review Us on Google" button.



#### **Quality Corner**

# Culture of Safety

What is a "Culture of Safety"? It is an environment in which:

- Risk is acknowledged.
- Reporting of issues is encouraged and the response to events or near misses is blame-free.
- Collaboration is promoted across disciplines and settings in order to find the best solutions.
- There is a commitment to provide the resources necessary to adequately address safety concerns.

Beginning April 15, we are asking all staff to complete the Patient Safety Culture Survey as part of our health system's efforts to improve patient safety. This anonymous survey measures your perception of patient safety at our facilities. Whether you provide direct patient care or not, you can impact patient safety, and your perspective and experiences are important. By completing this survey, you ensure that we get a complete picture of our safety culture.

For more information, please contact mcrittenden@garnethealth.org.

# Employees Dish Up Care and Compassion

Honoring Garnet Health 2023 Employees of the Year

Every day, Garnet Health employees go above and beyond. So choosing only two individuals to be our 2023 Employees of the Year isn't an easy task.

Chosen from among our 24 Employees of the Month (12 from each hospital), Food Service team members Aracelis "Sherry" Diaz and Tina Tyner are our 2023 honorees. Their winning recipe was equal parts caring, compassion and kindness.



#### **Aracelis "Sherry" Diaz** Nutrition & Food Service, Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills

A heartfelt nomination that relayed a truly touching display of kindness earned Sherry Diaz our Employee of the Month award in August: As an 87-year-old gentleman waited in the café for his wife's tests to be completed, his hands shook so badly that he struggled to fix himself breakfast. That's when Sherry came to his aid.

Sherry's nomination letter read, "It was wonderful and emotional to witness the care she provided." Sherry took it upon herself to help the gentleman "as if he were her own dad."

Sherry provides hospitality to everyone she helps in the café. Even her music selections are enjoyable. "I honestly enjoy my visits to the café," her nominator says.

Sherry, thank you for your kindness and compassion to everyone with whom you come in contact. Thank you for making Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills a better place.



#### **Tina Tyner** Nutrition & Food Service, Garnet Health Medical Center

Tina was selected as the December 2023 Employee of the Month because of her deep compassion for others and efforts to help those in need.

For example, while serving patients on the Mother Baby unit, Tina entered the room of a patient who had her toddler with her. The child was happy to tell Tina that, "Mommy just had a baby, but we don't have a crib for her when she comes home."

Tina took it upon herself to solve this problem for her patient. She made calls to her coworkers and friends. She searched Facebook Marketplace, where she discovered someone was giving away a bassinet—which garnered a lot of interest from other shoppers. So, Tina private-messaged

the owner of the bassinet to explain her patient's situation in hopes that it would give her an advantage. It paid off, and she was able to present her patient with a place for her new baby to sleep.

And this wasn't an isolated occurrence. When another patient in Mother Baby confided that she and her children were in desperate need of clothing and essentials, Tina rallied the troops. Soon, she had collected boxes and bags full of clothes and toiletries, which she personally delivered to the patient's home after discharge from the hospital.

Tina, your kindness and selflessness has made a difference with our patients, both during their stay and beyond. Thank you and congratulations on your well-deserved honor.

# "I knew where I needed to be."

# An EMT Experiences an Emergency of His own

Blaise Bojo is used to dealing with emergencies. As an EMT and fire chief in the community of Hancock in Delaware County, he has rushed stroke patients to the emergency department and entered burning buildings to save people's homes.

Toward the end of 2023, he experienced his own emergency. It was one that could have claimed his life if it weren't for the swift actions of the doctors and staff at the Stroke Center at Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills.

While making coffee, Blaise felt a sharp pain just above his left temple. "I didn't think anything of it at first," he says. "Then I turned around to talk to my family and they said, 'Your nose is bleeding!' About 15 minutes later, I started to develop right-side paralysis and aphasia. I just couldn't put words together. I recognized at that point I needed to get help."

Blaise's wife quickly called 9-1-1, but by the time the ambulance arrived, his condition had worsened.

"The last thing I said to the paramedic was, 'Take me to Garnet Health – Catskills!"" he recalls.

#### "I knew where I needed to be."

"When Blaise came into the ED, he was presenting with many classic stroke symptoms and was immediately sent for a CT Scan," says Nikki Maxwell, DO, associate medical director of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Garnet Heath Medical Center – Catskills. "It was decided that the best course of action would be to administer a fast-acting thrombolytic, also known as a 'clot buster,' to dissolve the clot that was causing his stroke." In less than one hour, Blaise's symptoms had started to improve.

It took only 21 minutes from the time Blaise entered the doors of the ER to the time he was administered medication, he says. "It was scary; I could have died. But as an EMT, I knew where I needed to be. If it weren't for Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills, I probably wouldn't be here to help other people in an emergency."

#### Garnet Health Celebrates January Employees of the Month

# BEEAWARDS



#### **Brianna Ognibene** Supervisor, Accounts Payable, Garnet Health Medical Center

Brianna was selected as the January Employee of the Month for being an "AP Superstar." Asked to team up with Nancy Teinken to drive a large project on a tight timeline, Brianna made herself readily available throughout the project—no matter the time of day, whether she was on PTO or in the office or even when she was leading or participating in other projects in the organization. She was incredibly communicative, always answering every email and returning every call before leaving for the day.

Her nomination read, "Brianna is smart, loyal, quick, customer-service oriented, results-driven and motivated. There are so many instances where she consistently goes above and beyond, exceeding expectations and paving the way for new processes and greater end-results." She not only answers the questions but also anticipates additional questions and provides more information. It was not unusual to receive an email from her at 8:00 p.m. Even when she was out sick, she was still in touch knowing that things had to keep moving. Brianna balanced all this while the Accounts Payable department was challenged with being short-staffed and fielding a large increase in invoices, vendor calls and emails. Yet, every interaction with Brianna is a positive one. She will never tell an internal or external customer she is too busy to help or answer questions.

Congratulations, Brianna! Thank you for your outstanding customer service, leadership and teamwork.



#### **Jamie Meyer, RN** Recovery Room, Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills

Jamie recently came across an older couple who got lost while trying to exit the building at the Harris Campus. But she did more than just escort them back to the area where they parked.

Since it had been snowing, Jamie told the couple to remain inside where it was warm while she ran out to the parking lot to clear the snow off their car. Then she drove it to the entrance, where she escorted them to their waiting car.

Jamie's nomination read, "I left work feeling proud of Jamie and to know I was working with such awesome people."

Jamie, we are impressed with the way you went above and beyond, and we are honored to call you a team member. Thank you for making a patient and their family member feel so special and for caring so much. They will never forget the kindness you showed them.

The Employee of the Month program is also known as the Being Exceptional Every day (BEE) Award—and Being Exceptional Every day takes dedication, loyalty and commitment. To nominate an employee, physician, volunteer or team/department, visit the intranet page, scroll down and click on the BEE Award icon.

# Garnet Health Foundation Announces Scholarship Opportunity

This year, The Matthew O'Brien Memorial Scholarship will award one \$1,000 scholarship to an individual pursuing a medical career. Applicants must complete a typed 500-word essay on one single-spaced page, addressing the following subject:

# Describe your passion for the medical profession and how that will shape you as a future medical professional.

To be eligible for the award, you must be pursuing a career in the medical profession and be:

- A Garnet Health High School volunteer; or
- A graduating senior of a Garnet Health employee; or
- A Port Jervis graduating senior.

Please submit your essay with your most recent transcript, as well as two letters of recommendation, by April 1, 2024, to:

Garnet Health Foundation 707 East Main Street Middletown, NY 10940

Attn: The Matthew O'Brien Memorial Scholarship

Or email them to foundation@garnethealth.org.

#### **Formal Presentation**

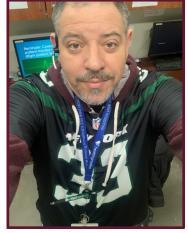
The award will be presented at Garnet Health Foundation's Annual Gratitude Donor Reception on April 11, 2024, at The Barn at Villa Venezia in Middletown. The scholarship award winner will be permitted two guests and will be presented the award during the evening's program.



# Super Bowl NFL Day

Employees sported their favorite jerseys on February 9, ahead of Super Bowl celebrations.





### Garnet Health Partners with Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York



Garnet Health staff receives its first delivery of 1,000 pounds of food from the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern of New York. From left: Nicole Sewell, Garnet Health Medical Center's Chief Nursing Officer and VP of Patient Care; Moira Mencher, Garnet Health's Director of Strategic Planning and Community Relations; John Politoski, Garnet Health Security (on the truck); Magalie Jean-Francois, Garnet Health Medical Center's Manager of the Hemodialysis Unit; and Maureen Roche, Garnet Health Medical Center's Manager of Volunteer Services

Garnet Health's successful Food Farmacy program has partnered with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York to meet the nutritional needs of even more patients, sending them home with the nourishment basics to help them heal.

Upon discharge from any of our three hospitals, qualifying patients receive three days' worth of food that is customized to their dietary needs. Patients receive appropriate canned and dry goods based on their medical condition, as well as personal hygiene items and educational and resource information.



About 9.8% of the population lives with food insecurity in Orange County. In Sullivan County, it's even higher—11.5%. Partnering with the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York means Garnet Health can reach even more patients.

Success for the Food Farmacy program so far has come from a collaboration within Garnet Health, including donations from Community Health, the Nursing Community Committee, Volunteer Services, Food Services, Patient Access and Garnet Health staff.

# CELEBRATING CERTIFIED NURSES DAY ON MARCH 19

March 19 is Certified Nurses Day, a day that celebrates the contribution of board-certified nurses to the advancement of nursing professionalism, higher standards and excellent patient outcomes. If you are a nurse interested in ANCC certification, reach out to your nurse leader. Garnet Health thanks all our certified nurses for their dedication and commitment to continued learning and exceptional patient care.



**Krystal Alexis** 



Shannon Carosella



Laura DelRegno



Melissa DiCostanzo



Sharon Geidel



Shanae Green



Jen Hadden



Rachel Hale



Joanne Moss



Maureen Neidnig



Leah O'Brien



Jessica Parzer



#### AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER





Glorianne Ellison



Peggy Ensslin



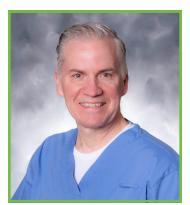
Allison Feimer



Yesenia Garcia



Joseph Klotz



Robert Lotz



Katherine Menges



Michelle Mootz



Kimlyn Patten



Tammy Shahzad



Yoriko Tange-Campbell



Stephanie Van Hope

Pictured are just a few of the **more than 400 certified nurses** who call Garnet Health home!

# A SPOTLIGHT ON CERTIFIED NURSES

Certified Nurses Day is recognized every year on March 19, the birthday of Dr. Margretta "Gretta" Madden Styles, RN, EdD, FAAN, one of the greatest leaders in the field of nursing certification. Garnet Health is shining a spotlight on a few outstanding certified nurses to bring awareness and recognition to nursing professionalism, excellence, service and better patient outcomes through national board certification in their specialty.



#### Emani Wilmore-DaCosta MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-S



"I have always been drawn to helping others and making a positive impact in their lives. Being a nurse allows me to blend my knowledge, skills and compassion to provide holistic care, advocate for patients' well-being and embrace the rewarding journey of lifelong learning."

—Emani Wilmore-DaCosta

Where she started: After receiving a BA in biology from SUNY New Paltz, Emani served as senior case manager for pregnant and parenting teens at Family Services of Poughkeepsie.

- **2011** Received BS in nursing from Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh.
- **2012** Began working as a float nurse in med-surg, critical care and pediatrics at Vassar Brothers Medical Center.
- **2015** Received MS in nursing from Mount Saint Mary College.
- **2016** Began working as a nurse practitioner with Advanced Kidney Care in Poughkeepsie.
- **2017** Started as a nurse practitioner hospitalist at Garnet Health Medical Center.
- **2021** Began the pursuit of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certification, currently in progress.

Where she's headed: Emani would like to continue to explore and embrace the blending of both Western and traditional medicine to best serve her patient populations.

#### Nicholas Acierno MSN, FNP



"Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, 'The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible.' I became a nurse practitioner so that I could always strive to conduct myself with high integrity while caring for patients. I also always saw myself as a leader of nurses."

—Nicholas Acierno

**Where he started:** In 2007, Nicholas started as an RN at Montefiore North in the Bronx.

- **2010** Transferred to ICU at Montefiore North.
- **2016** Earned his master's in the Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner program from the College of New Rochelle.
- **2017** Started per diem at NYU Urgent Care.
- **2018** Started at Garnet Health Urgent Care.

Where he's headed: Nicholas is looking forward to continuing his career as an FNP and working alongside his great work family.



#### Helen Burke BSN, RNC, MSN



"My passion has always been obstetrics. I was lucky to have been able to start my career in nursing directly on the OB unit, and obtaining my certi cation in inpatient obstetrics nursing has only enhanced my competency in providing the best care for my patients."

—Helen Burke

Where she started: In 1977, Helen earned her BSN from SUNY Albany and started at Community General Hospital of Sullivan County, now known as Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills.

- **1980** Earned MSN in Midwifery from Columbia University.
- **1982** Practiced as a CNM with Martin Cowan, MD.
- **2006** Joined the Women's Health Center in Monticello.
- **2008** Rejoined the OB department at Garnet Health Medical Center Catskills.

Where she's headed: Nearing retirement after 47 years of nursing, Helen encourages all nurses to further their knowledge by obtaining at least one certification in their field. She says, "There's always more to learn. Becoming certi ed demonstrates to patients and colleagues that you possess the knowledge and skills to provide competent and compassionate care to patients."

#### Michelle Alexis BSN, RN, CEN



"Having been a nurse for a little while, I have learned throughout the years to never underestimate the importance of good preceptors, nurturing colleagues and amazing educators. Everyone can learn; we just need to gure out the best way to reach each other."

-Michelle Alexis

Where she started: In 1993, after graduating from Long Island College Hospital School of Nursing, Michelle started work as an RNP at Long Island College Hospital in Brooklyn.

- **1997** Obtained board certification in med-surg nursing.
- **1998** Transferred to critical care. In 2002, she transferred to the emergency department.
- **2013** Started working as an emergency department RN at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn.
- **2016** Obtained board certification in emergency nursing. Started working at Garnet Health Medical Center.
- **2018** Graduated with BSN from Chamberlain University in Illinois.
- **2019** Obtained board certification in trauma nursing. Started working at Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills.

Where she's headed: Michelle hopes to finish her master's degree in education and/or become a nurse practitioner. She also hopes to obtain board certification in pediatric emergency nursing within the next five years.



#### Cynthia Brennan ADN, RN, CPN, MSRN



"In my career, I have been lucky to have many co-workers and nurse leaders who have supported and encouraged me. I have chosen nursing as my career path as a way to help others and, along the way, have been a orded the opportunity to provide new nurses with a solid foundation to begin their careers." —Cynthia Brennan

Where she started: In 1997, she obtained her nursing degree from SUNY Orange and started at Garnet Health Medical Center as a full-time RN for med-surg and pediatrics.

- **1998** Joined Garnet Health Medical Center's Shared Governance Nursing Congress.
- **2009** Earned her med-surg and pediatrics certifications.
- **1998** Joined Garnet Health Medical Center's Pediatric/ Maternal and Nursing Informatics Councils.
- 2019 Became Wound Champion on 5 West.
- **2022** Joined Garnet Health Medical Center's Nursing Professional Excellence Council.
- **2023** Joined Garnet Health Medical Center's Interdisciplinary Community and Patient Experience Committee on the Food Farmacy project.

Where she's headed: Cynthia will continue to work on 5 West and act as a preceptor and support person for new nurses, assisting in their transition into the field. She will also continue to educate her co-workers and patients regarding the importance of skin and wound care.

#### Shanita Reynolds DNP, RN, NE-BC, NPD-BC, CMSRN



"As a nurse leader, advocating for and participating in ongoing education and training will not only enhance your own skills and knowledge but will inspire others to prioritize their professional growth. By championing continuous learning, nurses can contribute to a culture of excellence and innovation within the nursing profession." —Shanita Reynolds

Where she started: In 2010, Shanita earned her BSN with honors from Lehman College in the Bronx. In 2011, she began as an RN at Vassar Brothers Medical Center in Poughkeepsie.

- **2015** Earned MSN from Sacred Heart University. She transitioned to leadership as nursing supervisor at Montefiore Mount Vernon.
- **2017** Joined Garnet Health Medical Center as director of 3 South Progressive Care Unit.
- **2018** Became a certified med-surg registered nurse.
- **2019** Transitioned to becoming the director of PACU.
- **2022** Obtained nurse executive board certification. Promoted to nursing administrator of professional practice.
- **2023** Obtained nursing professional development board certification. Earned doctor of nursing practice from Aspen University.

Where she's headed: Shanita will continue to be an advocate for continuous professional development, which she sees as vital to remain current in today's ever-evolving healthcare environment.

# Callicoon Campus Voted Best in Two Categories by *River Reporter* Readers

**River Reporter** Reader's Choice Awards

# Congratulations are in order!



Kim Wall, RN Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills, Callicoon Campus Best Nurse



Grover M. Hermann Hospital Emergency Department Best Emergency Department



# Discharge Lounge Opens at Garnet Health Medical Center

To improve patient throughput, increase bed capacity and ultimately decrease wait times in the ED at the Middletown campus, a patient discharge lounge has been opened.

The discharge lounge is located off the main lobby waiting area and offers a comfortable area that's appropriate for patients who are waiting for transportation. It includes:

- Charging stations
- Televisions
- Experienced staff who:
  - Transport qualified patients to the lounge
  - Oversee the area

The discharge lounge is available from 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays.

For more information about the discharge lounge, email kdale@garnethealth.org.







# Heart-A-Thon Raises More Than **\$80,000**

On February 16, the 46th Annual WSUL Heart-A-Thon raised more than \$80,000 for cardiac-related treatment, education and prevention. Each year, Garnet Health Medical Center – Catskills is proud to be one of the chosen beneficiaries, and this year, proceeds will go toward the purchase of state-of-the-art echocardiogram equipment.

Garnet Health was well represented at the event, which was held at Resorts World Catskills. Special thanks go to our Cardiothoracic Surgeons, Mariano Brizzio, MD, and Saqib Saeed, MD, as well as Ellen Oehrlein, BSN, RN-BC, Cardiothoracic Surgery Patient Care Coordination and Navigator Director. They were featured in an on-air discussion about the services our open-heart surgery program provides to the Sullivan and Orange County communities. The trio was joined by Jerry Dunlavey, Garnet Health – Catskills CEO; Suzanne Lange Ahmed, Garnet Health – Catskills CNO; Jodi Goodman, Garnet Health – Catskills Director of Patient Experience and Heart-A-Thon Liaison; and Anjana Poonthota, MD, Garnet Health Medical Director of Women and Children's Services.

We are still accepting donations. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jodi Goodman at **jgoodman@garnethealth.org**.



# GO RED Spirit

On Friday, February 2, several employees recognized Go Red for Women, the American Heart Association's national movement to end heart disease and strokes in women. It is celebrated on the first Friday of February each year.









# Wellness Word of the Month Self-reflect

the activity of thinking about your own feelings and behavior. It means to set aside time to think deeply and evaluate your thoughts, attitudes, motivations and desires.

"What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create." — Buddha

Self-reflection helps us understand ourselves by giving us time to consider what caused us to react or respond to situations or issues in a certain way. When you ask yourself questions, you can often gain a deeper understanding of your feelings. This can ultimately lead to self-development and growth. Further, self-reflection gives us great insight into ourselves and helps us understand the choices we make.

#### Here are some tips on how to self-reflect in everyday life:

- Take time from your busy routine every day.
- Find a place that is peaceful and quiet. This can be any place that has no distractions, such as a quiet room or a natural setting.
- Process any major incident that occurred by reflecting on your actions. Ask yourself: "If this happens again, how would I do things differently, or the same?"
- If you have multiple thoughts that cannot be processed during a stressful time, keep a journal and write them down. Once you have free time, you can read them and self-reflect.
- Meditation and deep breathing are great tools for self-reflection. Spend 10 to 15 minutes a day in meditation to allow your thoughts to be processed.
- Ask yourself simple questions after any stressful situation, such as "How did I feel?"; "What can I do better?" and "How can I improve my behavior?"

The practice of self-reflection helps you deal with difficult situations in an effective way. If you know yourself and understand how you react and respond, you are better able to manage stressful situations. Teach your children how to use self-reflection. This will enable them to develop good coping skills and allow them to help others cope with stress more effectively as well.

Positive affirmations and self-reflection work hand in hand. If you positively affirm with gratitude while understanding your behaviors, it's possible to heal from hardships in life. Understanding yourself will help you to be authentic and to grow and develop as you look to improve every day.

I encourage you to read the following article from *Harvard Business Review* about self-reflection: https://hbr.org/2022/03/dont-underestimate-the-power-of-self-reflection.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion March 2024 Recognition Days

Garnet Health is committed to being an inclusive organization that supports growth and innovation by providing an environment where employees, patients and visitors feel they belong. We also recognize that having more diverse backgrounds among our staff and providers contributes to better patient care. Please help share in acknowledging the following national and/or worldwide days of recognition.

#### MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In the United States, the origins of Women's History Month date back to the early 1900s, when suffragettes like **Susan B. Anthony** were working to secure greater equality and voting rights for women. The first National Women's Day was observed in New York City in 1908, and the first International Women's Day occurred in 1911. But it wasn't until 1978 that the National Women's History Alliance spearheaded the movement for a **National Women's History Week** to take place the week of March 8 (when International Women's Day is observed).

#### MARCH 8

International Women's Day, highlighting the political, social, cultural and economic achievements of women.

#### MARCH 17

St. Patrick's Day, a feast day of a Catholic saint who inspires cultural and religious celebrations around the world.

#### MARCH 25

Holi, the festival of colors. This Hindu holiday is celebrated every year on the full moon date of Falgun month.

#### MARCH 10 - APRIL 9

Ramadan, the start of Islam's sacred month. During this time, Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk.

#### MARCH 21

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

#### MARCH 31

Trans Day of Visibility, marking a time to celebrate trans and nonbinary people, as well as raise awareness of discrimination faced by the community worldwide.



#### **March Vendor Dates**

Want to do some shopping and some good at the same time? Throughout March, we're welcoming vendors to showcase their merchandise for sale. A percentage of vendor sales will support the Garnet Health Medical Center Auxiliary, a group of community volunteers dedicated to enhancing patient programs and services at the hospital. All vendors will be located in the lobby of the ground-floor level unless otherwise noted.

- 1 D&D Jewelry
- 5 Your Nutz
- 6 Save on Sweats
- 8 J's Divine Jewelzz
- **13** Arlene's Hair Accessories
- **15** Simple Treasures
- 18 Krafty Kandles

- **19** Mary Kay Cosmetics
- 20 Silver Dollar Boutique
- 21 Sew EZ Creations
- 26 Your Nutz
- 27 Teddie's Jewelry
- 28 John's Jewelry Box



### Spring Forward!

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 10, at 2:00 a.m.!

We may lose an hour of sleep, but we gain more daylight in the weeks to come!

#### National Doctors Day March 30, 2024

Take time out to recognize and to thank our physicians who have dedicated their profession to caring for those in need!

#### **Gems Newsletter**

Produced by Garnet Health Marketing & Corporate Communications. For more information, email mmanheim@garnethealth.org or call (845) 333-2391.

#### garnethealth.org