South Nassau Unveils Novalis Tx™ Stereotactic Body Radiosurgery

What does South Nassau Hospital have in common with some of the leading academic medical institutions like Brigham and Women’s Hospital/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Henry Ford Health System and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation? The Novalis Tx stereotactic body radiosurgery device, a new system designed to bring the latest in stereotactic technology to the range of options available to patients faced with combating several types of cancers.

The state-of-the-art image-guided radiosurgery tool at South Nassau uses precisely focused high-energy radiation to treat tumors and other conditions anywhere in the body, including the brain, spine, lung and liver. The technology delivers a powerful beam of radiation that is conformed to the contours of the tumor and is able to penetrate cancerous tissue more efficiently. Because the radiation is channeled to only the tumor, it spares the healthy tissue.
Quality Supersedes All Else

In the hyperbolic world of advertising and marketing, we are inundated with messages that center on being “first.” While there is certainly a measure of prestige in being ahead of the curve in adopting innovation, in reality, health care is not the same as a horse race. Coming in first, second or third is not a true measure of quality or efficacy, which are the only metrics that really matter.

Here at South Nassau, we have our priorities straight. Our focus on quality supersedes all other objectives. At times, our pursuit of excellence has resulted in our hospital being among the first to introduce new technological breakthroughs to Long Island. Our commitment to excellence helps us maintain our position at the leading edge of care.

In this issue of Physicians’ Forum, you will read about some of the areas in which innovation and quality converge at South Nassau. Our cover story focuses on the Novalis Tx™ system, which provides our communities with the latest generation radiosurgery treatment tools for fighting cancer. You will also read about the continued success of our Bariatric Surgery Program, which has an effective surgical solution to help morbidly obese patients improve their health by achieving permanent weight loss.

Successful implementation of these programs requires the support and commitment of a skilled and dedicated medical staff. Our extraordinary staff includes Dr. Nauheim, who was recognized by the Greater New York Hospital Association and recently returned from a humanitarian mission to Haiti; Drs. Thall and Smith, who were recently honored by the UJA Federation; Dr. Shore, who was saluted by community leaders; and Dr. Efferen, cited as one of the top 50 businesswomen on Long Island by Long Island Business News.

Most physicians would agree that their primary mission, shared with the hospital, is to heal the sick. While diagnosis and treatment of illness comprise a majority of our overall efforts, we serve many other functions as well. In our pursuit of excellence, we are dedicated to the education of future generations of health care professionals through our Family Medicine Residency Program, which was recently re-accredited by the American Osteopathic Association for five years. And perhaps most importantly, we are concerned with meeting our patients’ multiple needs, not only medical, but supportive as well. Our newly launched Palliative Care Program will likely serve as a valuable resource for you in assessing and advising patients and family members when a cure is no longer an achievable treatment goal.

Although there will undoubtedly be challenges ahead, this is an incredibly exciting time to be in medicine. Guided by our focus on quality and innovation, there is no question that we will continue our success as we face the challenges together.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Quagliata, M.D.
President and CEO

Quality Supersedes All Else

Physicians’ Forum is published three times a year by the External Affairs Department for the medical communities of South Nassau Hospital.

Physicians’ Forum is online! Log onto www.southnassau.org and click on Healthful News and Resources

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Study Shows Gastric Sleeve Helps Obese Lose Significant Weight

A study in the February issue of The Bariatric Times on the outcomes of 292 patients who underwent single-stage, laparoscopic gastric sleeve weight-loss surgery showed that the procedure is safe and effective and results in significant weight loss.

“Initial Outcomes Following Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy in 292 Patients as a Single-Stage Procedure for Morbid Obesity” studied 245 women and 47 men who underwent surgery between October 2006 and December 2009. Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 66; the average age was 42. Their average weight prior to surgery was 301 pounds and ranged from 198 pounds to 595 pounds. The average percentage of excess weight loss after surgery was 24 percent after one month; 36 percent after 3 months; 50 percent after 6 months; 57 percent after 9 months; and 60 percent after 12 months.

When it was first developed a decade ago, gastric sleeve surgery was only used to initiate weight loss in patients who were not eligible for weight loss surgery. The study’s authors concluded that gastric sleeve can be performed as a single-stage operation for those patients as well as patients who are eligible for lap-band or gastric bypass surgery.

Led by Rajeev Vohra, M.D., director of minimally invasive and bariatric surgery, South Nassau Hospital’s Center for Weight and Life Management offers the gastric sleeve as a single-stage procedure. The short- and long-term weight-loss and health benefits achieved by patients have prompted some health insurers to cover the procedure.

“As the owner of a catering business that specializes in Caribbean and soul food, the Amityville resident was accustomed to tasting every dish she prepared. “I cook heavy, starchy food loaded with oil and coconut milk,” said the 58-year-old mother. “I would start eating at 3 p.m. and pick on leftovers all night and then go to bed.”

Unlike the lap-band, the gastric sleeve does not require the implantation of an artificial device inside the patient’s abdomen that is periodically adjusted as the patient loses weight, he added.

Since 2001, South Nassau has successfully performed more than 2,500 weight loss surgeries, including gastric sleeve, gastric bypass, Lap-Band® and revisional surgeries like the StomaphyX®. Almost all of the surgeries have been performed laparoscopically.

South Nassau Hospital is designated a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. South Nassau is also an authorized provider of weight-loss surgery for Medicaid- and Medicare-eligible patients.

For more information about weight-loss surgery, call 516-374-8631.

Amityville Woman Finds Gastric Sleeve Weight Loss Surgery a Good Fit

As an adolescent, Joycelyn Howell’s nickname was “toothpick.” But as an adult, she began to pack on the pounds. By age 45 she weighed 260 pounds at 5 feet, 7 inches.

“As an adolescent, Joycelyn Howell’s nickname was “toothpick.” But as an adult, she began to pack on the pounds. By age 45 she weighed 260 pounds at 5 feet, 7 inches. She is now 58 years old and weighs 160 pounds. She is feeling better and her blood pressure is under control.

Joycelyn Howell has lost nearly 60 pounds since gastric-sleeve weight loss surgery nine months ago. As she continues to drop dress sizes, she says, she still eats whatever she wants but “much, much less.”

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“This system is the most up-to-date technology that is precise and clinically accurate, targeting tissue less than one millimeter in size.” – Edward Mullen, M.D.

Unlike other radiosurgery systems, Novalis Tx delivers an accelerated dose of radiation, reducing the treatment time.

“Speed is very important when treating tumors that move,” said Dr. Mullen. “The system is so sophisticated that it can even adjust for the movement that may occur with normal breathing.”

Keeping the targeted tissue within the treatment range is easily managed by the Novalis Tx. The system delivers treatment beams from virtually any angle “with a set of image guidance and motion management tools that guide the positioning of the patient and monitor motion during treatment,” said Leester Wu, M.D., radiation oncologist.

“The imager actually lets clinicians see the precise location and shape of the tumor, so we can fine-tune the patient’s position to make sure that it hasn’t changed prior to treatment,” Dr. Mullen said.

The treatment, which is typically delivered in 1 to 5 sessions lasting no longer than 20 minutes each, requires no hospitalization. Following the procedure, patients are able to resume their daily activities.

Novalis Tx body radiosurgery can also treat recurrent tumors and tumors that were previously treated with radiation.

Treatment is delivered by a team of compassionate and skillful physicians, nurses, technicians, therapists, physicists and medical dosimetrists (who develop radiation dose calculations in collaboration with the medical physicist and radiation oncologist) with experience in treating benign and malignant tumors.

South Nassau Unveils Novalis Tx™ continued from page 1

Developed by Varian Medical Systems and BrainLAB, the technology combines the benefits of surgery and radiation to noninvasively treat tumors that are otherwise inaccessible or too close to vital structures in the brain or spinal cord to safely perform invasive or open surgery.
South Nassau’s team of experts guides patients through the surgical process every step of the way, explaining how to prepare for the procedure, what to expect and when to follow up with physicians.

Nurses also provide telephone-based support and education for patients, contacting them prior to and following the procedure to answer questions or clarify instructions.

“The beauty of this very focused and precise image-guided radiosurgery system is that it can safely and very accurately treat patients without a single incision,” Dr. Wu said.

For more information, call (516) 632-3360.

The Novalis Tx™ offers a high dose rate of 1,000 monitor units per minute.

Surgery without an Incision to Correct Chronic Acid Reflux Disease

Laparoscopic and bariatric surgeon Gregory Nishimura, M.D., didn’t need to make a single incision to relieve Vernon Barber of chronic acid reflux disease. That’s because South Nassau’s Dr. Nishimura specializes in using a minimally invasive surgical device called the EsophyX® to perform transoral incisionless fundoplication, which corrects the cause of gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD.

“The fire has gone out and what is left is an occasional smoking ember,” said Mr. Barber. “The results of the surgery, I have to say, appear at this point in time to be a success.” Clinical studies show that 80 percent of patients who had the procedure reported a reduction or elimination of GERD symptoms. And nearly 80 percent of patients reported that two years after surgery they were still off daily medications, such as H₂ blockers and proton pump inhibitors.

“It has been five months since I had the procedure,” said Mr. Barber. “I am now able to eat and drink just about anything without significant ill effects, and I am off of all medications that I needed to manage the reflux.”

GERD occurs when stomach acid or bile flows back into the esophagus due to the weakening of the lower esophageal sphincter. The weakening prevents the sphincter from closing up completely after food empties into the stomach, allowing acid from the stomach to back up into the esophagus.

The signs and symptoms of GERD include heartburn, chest pain, dry cough and dysphagia; sour taste in the mouth; hoarseness or sore throat; regurgitation of food or sour liquid; and sensation of a lump in the throat.

Inserted through the patient’s mouth and under visual guidance of an endoscope, the EsophyX reinforces the sphincter by folding the upper portion of the stomach around the gastroesophageal junction and securing it with special fasteners.

Compared to traditional laparoscopy or invasive open surgery, EsophyX means a shorter hospital stay, less pain and no scarring. “In fact, most patients are discharged from the hospital the next day and are able to perform daily activities within a week,” said Rajeev Vohra, M.D., chief of minimally invasive surgery and bariatric surgery at South Nassau.

To reach Dr. Vohra, call (516) 374-8631.

Source: www.curegerd.com

The weakening of the lower esophageal sphincter prevents it from closing up completely after food empties into the stomach, allowing acid from the stomach to back up into the esophagus.
Palliative Care vs. Hospice Care

Is palliative care the same as hospice care? Not exactly. “Palliative care is a medical specialty focused on the relief of suffering and treatment of patients whose disease may not be responsive to curative treatment. Palliative care is an umbrella term and hospice care falls under that umbrella,” explained Laura Hummel, R.N., administrator of palliative care and geriatric services at South Nassau.

Hospice care provides palliative care to patients who are terminally ill and have fewer than six months to live, while palliative care is geared to those with life-threatening or chronic illness who are receiving treatment.

The goal of palliative care is to improve the quality of life in patients suffering from life-threatening and chronic diseases, such as cancer, dementia and lung disease. The quality of life is improved by preventing or treating the symptoms of a disease, side effects caused by the treatment and addressing psychological, social and spiritual concerns.

“We focus on matching the goals of the patient with the goals of treatment while managing symptoms that cause pain, suffering and discomfort,” Ms. Hummel said. “We collaborate with the attending physician and hospital staff to achieve the best possible quality of life for patients and their families.”

For more information on South Nassau’s Palliative Care Program or to speak with Ms. Hummel, call (516) 632-4219.
Like millions of people around the world, Richard Nauheim, M.D., director of ophthalmology, had watched the devastation of the earthquake-ravaged Port-au-Prince on television news channels. But the destruction he and a team of medical relief workers observed the moment they stepped off a plane in Haiti’s capital paled in comparison to any televised images of the Jan. 12 disaster.

“We had to be escorted through waves of people at the airport and tent cities. It was unreal,” recalled Dr. Nauheim who volunteered with the relief organization New Reality International. “There is such extreme poverty there and then to suffer the devastating earthquake…”

Armed with suitcases filled with surgical supplies, eye glasses, medications and instruments donated by pharmaceutical companies, community groups, South Nassau and other local hospitals, he and the team boarded a broken-down bus in Port-au-Prince on Feb. 27 for the 50-minute drive to the relief organization’s compound.

Each day from dawn to dusk during Dr. Nauheim’s five-day medical mission, he and two ophthalmologic residents diagnosed and treated more than 200 patients suffering from corneal ulcers, cataracts and glaucoma.

“There weren’t many traumatic eye injuries, because we were there about five weeks after the earthquake [hit],” he said. “For some patients, their eyes were so scarred and damaged from cataracts there wasn’t much we could do for them, because we didn’t have any of our [cataract removal] equipment. They really didn’t have any eye care that I was aware of.”

Despite the plight of the earthquake victims, Dr. Nauheim said he was struck by “how noble their spirit was.”

“Considering all the suffering they were exposed to, they were relatively happy,” he said. “They were a kind and noble group of people. The deference they treated physicians with was amazing.”

The team, composed of physicians, nurses, physician assistants and nurse anesthetists from throughout the country, worked and slept in sweltering 100-degree heat.

“We slept on the floor under a malaria net on the house’s open porch,” recalled Dr. Nauheim, who said he kept his passport tucked into his shirt pocket (to guard against thieves) while he slept. “Bathrooms were shared by about 30 people, running water was sporadic and hot water was nonexistent.”

As the medical mission was winding down, Dr. Nauheim said he and his colleagues felt “a sadness that stayed with us for weeks.”

“I was sad because of all the suffering and poverty I saw. Haiti is probably the poorest country in the hemisphere, which was exposed to one of the greatest disasters of our time,” he said. “This was a major historic event, and I was there and able to help them.”
Since the 1960s, minimally invasive arthroscopy has routinely been used on elbows, shoulders, ankles, knees and wrists to repair damaged tissue and cartilage. Increasingly, doctors are performing the technology on the hip joint.

Patients who have undergone arthroscopy rather than traditional open surgery have reduced pain, minimal scarring, a lower risk of infection and quicker return to daily activities. What’s more, they typically go home the same day following the outpatient procedure.

“It’s an extremely valuable tool and generally easier on the patient than the more invasive open surgery,” said James Germano, M.D., chief of South Nassau’s hip service, one of few surgeons on Long Island performing hip arthroscopy. “In fact, with open surgery, we have a more limited view of the anatomy than with arthroscopy. You definitely get a better view of the surgical field.”

“In many cases,” continued Dr. Germano, “hip replacement can be delayed or avoided altogether.”

If you would like to consult with Dr. Germano about your patient, he can be reached at (516) 536-2800.

Repairing Damaged Hip Joints, But Not the Traditional Way

Do you have patients under 50 who are active and have persistent hip pain for at least three months despite physical therapy? Are they avoiding hip replacement surgery because of their age? Maybe they should consider hip arthroscopy.

South Nassau Appoints Jonathan E. Singer, M.D., Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology

A graduate of George Washington University School of Medicine, Dr. Singer completed post-doctoral training in anesthesia at Massachusetts General Hospital, including a year as chief resident and critical care fellowship training. Dr. Singer was previously managing partner of North American Partners in Anesthesia and has provided services to North Shore University-Long Island Jewish Healthcare System since 1985. He has assumed leadership positions in hospital performance improvement initiatives and on various clinical committees. He is a member of numerous national, international, state and local professional societies.

South Nassau Names Director of Motility Studies

South Nassau Hospital has appointed Meyer Blumstein, M.D., director of gastrointestinal motility testing. Dr. Blumstein is board certified in both internal medicine and gastroenterology.

Dr. Blumstein has nearly 25 years experience in internal medicine and gastroenterology and is a specialist in endoscopy, gastroesophageal reflux disease and inflammatory bowel disease.

He has been listed in the acclaimed guide Top Doctors: New York Metro Area published by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., which spotlights the top 10 percent of primary specialty care physicians in the tri-state New York area.

An assistant professor of medicine at Albert Einstein College School of Medicine, Dr. Blumstein earned a medical degree from SUNY Downstate Medical Center in 1986 and completed fellowship training in gastroenterology in 1991 at Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

The Motility Center at South Nassau uses a range of motility tests to diagnose and evaluate esophageal motility disorders. This includes a state-of-the-art manometry machine, esophageal pH monitoring and ultrasound imaging.
South Nassau Physician Receives Professional of the Year Award

Internist Gary Shore, M.D. was honored by the Merrick Chamber of Commerce and Merrick Life as Merrick Professional of the Year. The award ceremony, which recognizes and honors Merrick residents in the categories of Professional of the Year and Merchant of Year, was held on May 17 at the Rattlesnake Jones Restaurant in Merrick. Dr. Shore earned a medical degree from SUNY Stony Brook and has been affiliated with South Nassau Hospital since 1995. According to long-time patients Hal and Karen Horowitz, who nominated him, Dr. Shore “epitomizes quality health care.”

South Nassau’s Chief Medical Officer Named One of Long Island’s Top 50 Most Influential Women in Business

Linda Efferen, M.D., senior vice president and chief medical officer, was honored as one of Long Island’s Top 50 Businesswomen by Long Island Business News at an awards dinner at the Crest Hollow Country Club on May 20. The award recognizes the significant contributions of women professionals throughout Long Island. Awardees are selected by a panel of business and community leaders based on the nominee’s professional accomplishments, impact on the local community and leadership in the business world.

Richard Nauheim, M.D., Recognized by Greater New York Hospital Association

Richard Nauheim, M.D., director of ophthalmology, was nominated by the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System for recognition by the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA) for his relief efforts in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake. The GNYHA honored relief workers on May 27 at a special ceremony in New York City.

South Nassau Physicians Honored by UJA Federation of New York

Urologist Eric Thall, M.D., and family practice physician Neil Smith, M.D., were honored by the United Jewish Federation of New York in a ceremony on April 29 at Temple Hillel in North Woodmere. The physicians were recognized for their contributions to medicine and for their work with the organization.

Family Medicine Residency Receives Five-Year Osteopathic Accreditation

On April 16, South Nassau’s Family Medicine Residency Program was re-accredited for five years by the American Osteopathic Association. “We are so proud of our accreditation status,” said Thomas Zimmerman, D.O., program director of osteopathic medical education and program director of the osteopathic family medicine residency. “Typically, the accreditation term is three years, but the AOA was so impressed with our program, that they accredited it for five years.”
Juan C. Goez, D.P.M., recently lectured at the first international symposium of foot surgery at the University of Galicia in Ferrol, Spain, on May 12. Dr. Goez, who was the featured speaker at the symposium, presented several lectures, including “The First Metatarsal Phalangeal Joint Replacements Over a 15-year Period.”

Muataz Jaber, M.D., was elected president of the Long Island Allergy and Asthma Society, a non-profit organization formed by a group of allergy/immunology specialists to help educate practicing allergists on Long Island. Dr. Jaber, who has been practicing since 1983, will serve a two-year term.

Thomas G. Zimmerman, D.O., director of osteopathic medical education and program director of the osteopathic family medicine residency, was recently designated a Fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians during its 47th Annual Conclave of Fellows Award Ceremony on March 20 in Las Vegas, Nev. Dr. Zimmerman was one of only 14 recipients this year.

Dr. Zimmerman was also awarded the Outstanding Paper Crest Award in recognition of a scientific paper titled “The Case for Electronic Medical Records – the Time to Act is Now,” in the peer-reviewed journal Osteopathic Family Physician.

South Nassau In the News

South Nassau health care professionals are frequently called on to serve as expert sources for articles in trade journals, newspapers, popular magazines, radio and television. Here is a listing of when and where the hospital’s physicians were in the news.

Kenneth Becker, M.D., past president of the medical staff, served as an interview source for an article about federal health care reform legislation, which was published in the April 16 edition of The Village Herald.

Ann Buhl, M.D., director of gynecologic oncology, served as an expert interview source for an article about ovarian cancer myths to be published on www.lifescript.com.

Rajiv Datta, M.D., medical director of the cancer program and chair of the department of surgery, served as an interview source for an article about the benefits of the recent advancements in cancer treatment, which will be published in an upcoming edition of HealthLeaders magazine.

Gary Greenwald, M.D., associate director of emergency services, served as an expert interview source for a Newsday article about recent episodes of people ingesting Benadryl lotion.

Edward E. Mullen, M.D., director of radiation oncology and co-medical director of Long Island Gamma Knife®, served as the expert source for an article about prostate cancer, the PSA test and its effectiveness, and advancements in radiation therapy to treat prostate cancer, which was published in The Hospital Newspaper. He also discussed diagnosing and treating prostate cancer during a guest interview on Healthradio Talk Show on April 7.

Vincent Reid, M.D., surgical oncologist, served as a guest interview on “Your Family’s Health” radio talk show, which aired March 17 and again on March 21 on WHPC 90.3 FM.

news notes

physicians’ event calendar

2010 Quarterly Staff Meetings
- October 5: 6:00 p.m.
  Albert Conference Room
- December 14: 5:30 p.m.
  Albert Conference Room

Flanking Dr. Zimmerman, center, is Lewis Bass, D.O., Fellow sponsor, left, and Max Helman, D.O., chair of the awards committee.
Out in the Community

South Nassau sends its doctors and allied health care professionals into the community to educate and promote health and well-being.

South Nassau Physician Speaks at Sandel Senior Center

On March 2, podiatrist Jay Kerner, D.P.M., presented “Your Fabulous Feet” to members of the Sandel Senior Center in Rockville Centre.

South Nassau President Addresses Atlantic Beach Town Meeting

Joseph A. Quagliata, president and CEO of South Nassau, along with Cheryl Rosner, R.N., nurse practitioner from South Nassau’s Center for Cardiovascular Health, spoke at the Atlantic Beach Town Meeting on May 10. Mr. Quagliata highlighted South Nassau’s newly acquired technology, and Ms. Rosner provided an overview of the hospital’s cardiovascular services.

New Medical Staff

Keith Burger, P.A., Neurosurgery
Patricia Buro, P.A., Neurosurgery
Jeffrey R. Cantele, M.D., Anesthesiology
Douglas Carras, M.D., Anesthesiology
Kelli A. Chambers, P.A., Orthopedics
Irum A. Chaudhry, M.D., Hematology/Oncology
Joseph Cilento, P.A., Orthopedics
Ricardo Cruz, M.D., Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Gina Day, M.D., Cardiology
Fredric Fabiano, M.D., Anesthesiology
Geralyn Groh-Szuba, M.D., Pediatrics
Todd A. Halper, M.D., Family Practice
Jingxuan Liu, M.D., Pathology
Vidhata P. Malhotra, M.D., Anesthesiology
Daniel Mazzuchin, M.D., Neurosurgery
Joseph J. Moreira, M.D., Neurophysiology
Dominic Nardi, M.D., Anesthesiology
Matthew J. Nester, D.P.M., Orthopedics
Gregory Palleschi, M.D., Anesthesiology
Jennifer M. Rath, P.A., Neurosurgery
Dana R. Rausch, M.D., Radiology
Rosetta Richards, N.P., Anesthesiology
Krista M. Rohde, P.A., Orthopedics
Edward Sceppa, M.D., Anesthesiology
Jonathan E. Singer, M.D., Anesthesiology
Jihong Tang, M.D., Pathology
Yelena Trakhtenberg, M.D., Obstetrics/Gynecology
James Walsh, M.D., Anesthesiology
Alan Weisman, D.P.M., Podiatry
Large Turnout for Head and Neck Cancer Screening

South Nassau Hospital recently conducted a free head and neck cancer screening for employees and members of the community.

Several South Nassau physicians, including Rajiv Datta, M.D., chair of the department of surgery; Vincent Reid, M.D., surgical oncologist, Comprehensive Cancer Center; Louis Rosner, M.D., ear, nose and throat specialist; and Robert Licul, D.D.S., director, division of oral and maxillofacial surgery, performed more than 70 screenings on April 16 for members of the community and staff. Nine required a follow-up visit.

South Nassau plans to hold the event semi-annually, with the next head and neck screening slated for the fall.

Every two seconds someone needs blood. And one out of three people will need a life-saving transfusion in his or her lifetime. To meet local requirements, the New York Blood Center needs nearly 2,000 people a day to donate blood and platelets. Please roll up your sleeves and plan on donating!

**South Nassau’s final 2010 blood drive will be held on Thursday, October 21**

from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Albert Conference Room.

For more information or to register, call the Department of Human Resources at (516) 632-4080.