

ISSUE 3 | 2024

# Choices

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ENGLEWOOD  
HEALTH

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Institute for Patient  
Blood Management and Bloodless  
Medicine and Surgery

## *Back in Action*

**AFTER BLOODLESS  
SPINE SURGERY**

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**BLOODLESS SURGERY  
IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE**  
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**TAKING CHARGE OF  
YOUR HEALTH CARE**  
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Josephine Perry is grateful for the bariatric surgery that put her on the path to a healthier future—and for the skilled surgeon who acted quickly to address an unexpected complication.

## *A Healthier Future*



James McGinty, MD

As 2023 progressed, Josephine Perry knew that she had to do something about her weight. The avid gardener, who loves growing vegetables and herbs, didn't want excess weight to continue to take a toll on her health.

"I had tried many different diets without long-term success," Josephine says. "I was 65 at the time. I needed to address my health issues."

Josephine researched bariatric surgery and scheduled an appointment with James McGinty, MD, Chief of Surgery and Surgical Services at Englewood Hospital. She knew that the medical team there would respect her requirement for a bloodless procedure.

"Often, when patients come to see me, they're struggling to lose weight through medical means," Dr. McGinty says. "Unfortunately, we don't really have effective therapies for severe obesity. Josephine had other medical conditions that would have likely led to future complications, all of which were attributable to excess weight. Bariatric surgery was the best option for her."

## Surgical Save

In December 2023, Dr. McGinty performed a procedure called gastric sleeve, wherein he removed part of Josephine's stomach and modified the rest into a banana-shaped tube. Removing a portion of the stomach reduces appetite and the amount of food that the stomach can hold, which aids in weight loss. During the surgery, Dr. McGinty also found and repaired a hiatal hernia—a condition that occurs when part of the stomach enters the abdomen through a weak area of muscle—which could have caused post-surgical complications.

"Everything looked great after surgery, but hours later, Josephine's heart rate became elevated and her blood count had dropped significantly," Dr. McGinty says. "We decided that we needed to return to the operating room right away."

When Dr. McGinty opened her stomach, he found that it was full of blood. The source of the blood wasn't clear, but Dr. McGinty suspects it leaked from the cut surfaces of the stomach and repaired hernia.

Dr. McGinty used a cell saver machine to collect the blood pooling in Josephine's stomach. The blood was cleansed, recycled, and returned to her body—all in a closed-loop system.

Josephine is grateful for Dr. McGinty's expertise throughout the bariatric surgery process, and she calls him a lifesaver for acting quickly once the team suspected internal bleeding.

## Overcoming Additional Challenges

Other than a brief return to Englewood Hospital soon after the surgery to receive treatment for blood clots, Josephine's recovery went smoothly for several months. In April 2024, however, an old problem resurfaced: another hernia. This hernia, located in the abdominal wall, became trapped in the nearby tissue and created a potentially dangerous situation.

Josephine and Dr. McGinty were aware of the abdominal wall hernia prior to the bariatric surgery. Dr. McGinty explained to Josephine that the defect would be easier to repair once Josephine lost weight. So, they decided to wait to treat it.

"We'd planned on performing the hernia repair robotically after Josephine had gone through six months of weight loss, but then the hernia became trapped," Dr. McGinty says. "Her bowels were blocked and the situation was urgent, so we performed an open hernia repair."

After the hernia surgery, Josephine's focus returned to making the lifestyle changes

## 4 BENEFITS OF BARIATRIC SURGERY

After having little success with dieting, Josephine Perry saw an improvement in her quality of life by means of bariatric surgery. Here are some of the key benefits of surgical weight loss:

- **Enhanced control of chronic health conditions.** Surgical weight loss may help you manage high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and sleep apnea, among other conditions. Bariatric surgery can significantly reduce your risk of death due to heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, according to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.
- **Fewer aches and pains.** Losing weight following surgery can relieve the burden on your knees, hips, and other joints.
- **Improved mobility.** As you shed excess pounds in the months after surgery, you may find it easier to walk and exercise.
- **Better self-image.** Bariatric surgery can give your self-esteem a boost and benefit your mental health.

necessary to support ongoing weight loss. Now 66, she's lost nearly 60 pounds and is working with other Englewood Health specialists to improve her overall wellness.

"My quality of life has improved," Josephine says, "and I am continuing to work on a healthier lifestyle."

*Curious about our approach to transfusion-free medicine and surgery? Visit [www.EHnoblood.org](http://www.EHnoblood.org) to watch patient blood management webinars, meet our team, and more.*

**"I HADN'T BEEN TO ENGLEWOOD HOSPITAL AT ALL BEFORE I HAD BARIATRIC SURGERY, BUT THE DOCTORS WORK SO WELL WITH BLOODLESS PATIENTS THAT I NOW GO THERE FOR EVERYTHING I NEED."**

*—Josephine Perry*



# KNITTING HER HEALTH

## *Back Together*

For avid knitter and sewer Iris Adorno-Williams, two spinal surgeries have helped life settle into a more comfortable pattern.

One day in early May 2023, Iris Adorno-Williams, a secretary from Queens, New York, developed frightening symptoms.

“She couldn’t move her legs or left arm,” says David Williams, Iris’ husband. “It was shocking. My son and I had to carry her out of the house to take her to the hospital.”



Frank Moore, MD

David suspected that Iris, who has rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, would need surgery. Aware of The Bloodless Institute at Englewood Health's reputation for high-quality care without the use of blood, he drove his wife there. The neurosurgeon on call, Frank Moore, MD, Past Chief of the Neurosurgery Department at Englewood Hospital, recognized the urgency of Iris' situation.

"Iris had cervical stenosis with cord compression," Dr. Moore says. "The canal through which the nerves in her neck travel had narrowed so much that the nerves were being squished, making her weaker and weaker."

By that point, Dr. Moore knew, physical therapy or steroid injections wouldn't help. Iris needed surgery to relieve the pressure on the nerve roots.

### Neck Relief

"My initial reaction to needing surgery was to feel scared," Iris says. "I'd never had a big operation. After talking it over with Dr. Moore, though, I realized the surgery had to be done, so I said, 'Let's proceed.'"

The day after meeting Iris, Dr. Moore performed a decompression and fusion procedure. Entering from the back of Iris' neck, Dr. Moore removed the bone pressing on her nerves and reinforced her neck with screws and rods. The procedure went as smoothly as Iris, David, and Dr. Moore had hoped.

"We weren't expecting significant blood loss because this type of procedure isn't very vascular, but we were ready for any scenario," Dr. Moore says. "Our typical approach involves using a meticulous technique to open the neck and cut through the muscles to minimize blood loss. We ensure each blood vessel is sealed off so it doesn't bleed throughout

the procedure. If we cut through the bone, we immediately put bone wax on it to stop the bleeding. We also have access to a cell saver machine to recycle the patient's blood, but we didn't need to use it for Iris."

Iris went home four days after the surgery and started outpatient physical therapy a few weeks later. She was able to move her neck and arm and walk again. The success of the procedure gave her confidence to address another problem: her painful lower back.

### Back to Better

The same sort of nerve compression that affected Iris' neck was also present in her lumbar spine (lower back) and threatened to worsen quickly.

"Now that Iris' neck was better and she was moving more, she started to experience more back pain and weakness," Dr. Moore says. "We needed to fix that, too, so she could benefit from a full neurological recovery."

"I trusted Dr. Moore since everything turned out well with my neck," Iris says. "I knew I could rely on him to operate on my back."

In April 2024, nearly a year after Iris' neck surgery, Dr. Moore performed the same sort of decompression and fusion procedure on her lower back, with similarly successful results.

Iris continued to build strength and mobility through the summer.

"Everything went well, and I'm able to move around and walk," Iris says. "I definitely have peace of mind that I got the back problem taken care of."

For both Iris and David, the kindness and attention to detail on display during Iris' time at Englewood Hospital stood out.

"Everyone made me feel comfortable. They took the time to introduce themselves and explain what was taking place and what to expect," Iris says. "I commend Englewood Health for that."

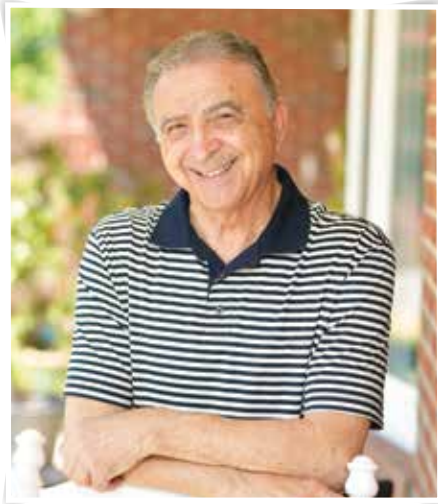
*Ready to see how bloodless medicine and surgery can help you reclaim your quality of life? Visit [www.EHnoblood.org](http://www.EHnoblood.org) to get started.*

## PROUD PIONEER

When Englewood Hospital began offering bloodless medicine and surgery in the U.S. in the 1990s, neurological surgeon Frank Moore, MD, Past Chief of the hospital's Neurosurgery Department, was one of the first physicians involved with the program. Over three decades, he's seen countless patients benefit from bloodless surgeries, and bloodless patients occupy a special place in his heart.

"Jehovah's Witnesses and other bloodless patients are some of my favorite people to care for because they're universally kind, generous, and pleasant," Dr. Moore says. "I like the challenge of performing bloodless surgeries on a regular basis."

Dr. Moore believes the meticulousness of bloodless surgeries has made him a better surgeon. It has benefited **all** his patients, regardless of whether or not they are enrolled in the bloodless program. He's excited about the future of The Bloodless Institute at Englewood Health, and states, "I'm proud to be a part of it."



# OPERATION *Ankle Renewal*

Rocco Funari couldn't get ankle replacement surgery unless the joint received better blood flow. Vascular surgery paved the way.



Thomas Bernik, MD

Retired teacher and basketball coach Rocco Funari, 76, loves sports, but his time as an athlete in high school and college took a toll on his right ankle.

"I walk with bone on bone," Rocco says. "I'm planning to have ankle replacement surgery when I heal from my vascular procedure."

Without that procedure, which took place at Englewood Hospital in May 2024, Rocco

might be facing a future with limited mobility and a lesser quality of life.

### Familiar Setting

Rocco had peripheral vascular disease (PVD), which narrowed the arteries carrying blood to his ankle. Replacing the joint without a healthy blood supply would have been risky. In early 2024, Rocco met with Thomas Bernik, MD, Chief of Vascular Surgery at Englewood Hospital. It was a familiar environment for Rocco.

"I had my first surgery at Englewood Hospital in 1999," Rocco says. "Surgeons replaced both of my hips there over

the years. I've always been pleased with the hospital because everyone respects my wishes for bloodless surgery."

Dr. Bernik concluded that Rocco would need vascular surgery to restore blood flow to his ankle and allow him to have joint replacement.

### Vascular Victory

Dr. Bernik performed a two-part surgery. During the first part, he made an incision in the lower abdomen and groin to access the femoral artery.

"We opened the artery and removed the plaque, essentially restoring the blood vessel to what it would have been 40 years earlier when Rocco didn't have PVD," Dr. Bernik says. "Then we patched the artery and sewed it together."

During the second, minimally invasive portion of the surgery, Dr. Bernik placed stents in the superficial femoral artery in Rocco's thigh to hold the vessel open. Now, months later, Rocco has healthy blood flow down his leg to the ankle.

"My leg used to hurt and get tired when I walked, but now, the pain is gone," Rocco says. "The next step will be to fix my ankle."

He plans to trust the experts at Englewood Health for that, too.

*Need a bloodless procedure to help you achieve your goals? Start your journey by visiting [www.EHnoblood.org](http://www.EHnoblood.org).*

**"NO MATTER THE EXTENT OR REASON FOR VASCULAR DISEASE, WE TREAT IT ALL. WE PLAN OUR SURGERIES CAREFULLY AND OPTIMIZE PATIENTS' HEALTH—INCLUDING THEIR BLOOD LEVELS—TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS BEFOREHAND. DURING SURGERY, WE CAN USE A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES TO HELP US SAFELY PERFORM SOME OF THE MOST CHALLENGING OPERATIONS—ALL WITHOUT BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS."**

*—Thomas Bernik, MD, Chief of Vascular Surgery at Englewood Hospital*



# Getting to Know

# DR. MICHAEL MARCO

A passion to improve people's lives carried Michael Marco, MD, from his native Egypt to the U.S.

Dr. Marco, a colon and rectal surgeon, grew up in Cairo, Egypt. His interests in science and medicine took shape early.

"I've been fascinated with understanding the human body and its complexities since I was a teenager," Dr. Marco says. "I'm intrigued by the disease process and how medical interventions can ease suffering and improve quality of life."

After receiving his medical degree from Cairo University, Dr. Marco moved to the U.S. to continue his training. He completed a general surgery residency at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and a fellowship in colorectal surgery at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He also completed a post-doctoral research fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

## Living His Dream

Gastrointestinal health helps pave the way for overall wellness, and the surgeries Dr. Marco performs can improve both. He enjoys being at the forefront of an evolving field and treating a wide range of conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease, functional bowel disorders, and cancers of the colon, rectum, and other parts of the gastrointestinal tract.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of colon and rectal surgery is the direct and significant impact it has on patients' lives,"

Dr. Marco says. "Whether performing a life-saving cancer surgery or improving quality of life through surgical management of conditions such as hemorrhoids, ulcerative colitis, or diverticulitis, my ability to improve patients' health is deeply fulfilling."

## Bound to Bloodless

Dr. Marco joined Englewood Health in 2022 in part because of its renowned reputation for bloodless medicine and surgery, a field to which he's deeply committed. He hones surgical techniques and uses the latest technologies to minimize blood loss and participates in continuing education to stay up to date on transfusion-free surgery.

"Because I collaborate closely with multidisciplinary teams at Englewood Health, I can offer comprehensive support to bloodless patients,"

Dr. Marco says. "As a result, all patients receive tailored treatment that respects their beliefs and preferences."

Outside of medicine, Dr. Marco devotes much of his time to his wife and three children. He enjoys sampling new cuisines, watching and playing soccer, and teaching Sunday school.

*Visit [www.EHnoblood.org](http://www.EHnoblood.org) to explore our approach to bloodless medicine and surgery. Need to speak to someone about a bloodless procedure? Call 888-766-2566.*

**"MY INTEREST IN BLOODLESS MEDICINE REFLECTS A BROADER COMMITMENT TO PATIENT ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT. BY PROVIDING BLOODLESS OPTIONS, I EMPOWER PATIENTS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THEIR HEALTH CARE DECISIONS, WHICH FOSTERS A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT."**

*—Michael Marco, MD,  
colon and rectal surgeon at  
Englewood Health*

# ENGLEWOOD HEALTH

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## Your Health Care— PUTTING YOURSELF IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



By Leilani Rangel, Senior Coordinator,  
Institute for Patient Blood Management and Bloodless Medicine and Surgery

You aren't feeling well, so you do the safest thing and go to the closest emergency room. Maybe you are actively bleeding or the doctors are discussing a procedure that has a risk of blood loss. If you do not accept blood transfusions, how can you ensure that your choices are respected and you still get good care?

The best outcomes happen when **you**, the patient, advocate for yourself. When you have open and honest communication with your providers, you help to build good relationships and gain access to the care that you need and deserve. Here's how to get started when you are admitted to a hospital:

**1. Gather information.** Keep track of your blood count, anemia treatment, frequency of lab tests, what is being done to stop any bleeding, and the estimated blood loss for any recommended procedures. Write down all of your questions and concerns so that you don't forget anything when the medical team visits.

**2. Speak up.** If you feel confused about anything regarding your care, ask for clarification. Make sure your team clearly

understands what you will and will not accept. Put your decisions in writing—fill out an advance directive that can speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

**3. Ask for help.** Feeling too unwell or overwhelmed? Enlist a family member or friend to help you keep track of everything and discuss your options with the medical team.

Regardless of where they work, medical professionals strive to do the right thing. They are more likely to cooperate with your wishes if you treat them with respect and gratitude. But what if the treatment plan still does not align with the bloodless care that you require? Then it may be time to request a consultation with one of our doctors or a possible transfer to The Bloodless Institute at Englewood Health.

The sooner we know about your situation, the better we can assist. So, if you think that there is even a possibility of needing a consultation or a transfer, why not contact us for guidance?

*To request a consultation or a transfer, call The Bloodless Institute at 888-766-2566.*