



Stony Brook University



Stony Brook Medicine

TO: University Senate
FROM: William Wertheim, MD, MBA
Executive Vice President for Stony Brook Medicine
DATE: November 3, 2025
SUBJECT: SBM EVP Report

ACADEMIC REPORT

Yusuf Hannun, MD, Awarded \$11 Million NIH Grant to Study Cancer Development

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently awarded Yusuf Hannun, MD, the Joel Strum Kenny Professor in Cancer Research in the Renaissance School of Medicine (RSOM), and his interdisciplinary team an \$11 million, five-year Program Project Grant (P01) to study how sphingolipids (SLs) influence cancer development, progression and treatment response. The P01, which will explore how targeting sphingolipids could enhance therapies for breast, lung and liver cancers, as well as leukemias, is the only NIH Program Project Grant awarded this year to a SUNY institution—a recognition that underscores Stony Brook’s national leadership in cancer research. The grant runs to the end of August 2030.

School of Social Welfare Launches New Research Seminar

The School of Social Welfare (SSW) has launched a new monthly Research Seminar Series, hosted by faculty members and open to the entire SSW community—including students, faculty, staff, and the SBU/SBM community. This initiative is designed to highlight the diverse and impactful research being conducted by our faculty, foster academic dialogue, and strengthen connections across the SSW community. Each session offers an opportunity to learn, engage, and explore current issues shaping the field of social work.

[Giselle Gerardi Wins NSHC Nurse of Excellence Award](#)

Giselle Gerardi, assistant professor in the School of Nursing (SON), was awarded the Nurse of Excellence Award by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council this past September. The award recognizes outstanding leadership and clinical practice among nurses at the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council’s member hospitals. A nurse at each member hospital is nominated annually for the honor. Dr. Gerardi becomes the third consecutive SON faculty member to win the award, following in the footsteps of Clinical Associate Professors Rewa Thompson and Maria Milazzo, who won in 2024 and 2023, respectively.

National Symposium Highlights Faculty Leadership on Disability Justice

On September 26, SSW Associate Professor Zach Morris convened a hybrid research symposium at New York Law School to highlight the additional costs of living with a disability, which his team refers to as the “disability squeeze.” Over 450 people registered for the symposium, including researchers, policymakers, advocates, and disabled people

from across the country. The event marked the launch of new national research revealing that, on average, people with disabilities must spend one dollar out of every five of their income on disability-related costs. Highlights included a keynote address by Mia Ives-Rublee, director of the Disability Justice Initiative at the Center for American Progress; panel discussions and policy spotlights with leading thinkers and advocates; and a collaborative session charting next steps for research and policy.

SBU-Led Study Reveals Link Between WTC Toxic Exposures and Lung Cancer ([SB News](#))

A Stony Brook-led study, funded in part by grants from the NIH and Centers for Disease Control, has identified a definitive link between toxic exposures from the 9/11 World Trade Center attack and an increased risk of lung cancer among responders. Published in *JAMA Network Open*, the study analyzed data from more than 12,000 responders enrolled in the Stony Brook WTC Health and Wellness Program. Researchers observed that responders with greater exposure to dust and toxic materials showed nearly a threefold increase in lung cancer incidence compared to those minimally exposed. The research was led by Sean Clouston, Professor in the RSOM's Department of Family, Population and Preventive Medicine and Director of Research for the Program in Public Health, and co-authored by Paolo Boffetta, Associate Director for Population Sciences in the Stony Brook Cancer Center and Professor in the Department of Family, Population and Preventive Medicine. The findings represent the first evidence linking specific types and severities of WTC exposures to lung cancer risk and emphasize the need for continued research, improved exposure assessment, and ongoing prevention and screening efforts for affected responders.

SBU Study Explores Link Between Chronic Depression and Dopamine ([SB News](#))

Researchers from the RSOM's Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health published a new brain imaging study in *JAMA Network* that shows how neuromelanin-sensitive MRI can shed light on the link between chronic depression and dopamine. Led by Greg Perlman, Assistant Professor, the team used this novel imaging technique to measure neuromelanin accumulation—a marker tied to lifetime dopamine production—in the midbrain of 105 women (mean age 21.6 years). In their findings, lower neuromelanin signals were associated with enduring, chronic depression and reduced extraversion compared with participants who had nonchronic or no depression history. Dr. Perlman believes that their findings may ultimately support earlier diagnosis and more effective treatments for different subtypes of depression.

SBU Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Features Rosalia Casanova and Gloria Viboud

As part of SBU's 36th Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, Drs. Rosalia Casanova and Gloria Viboud participated in the Inspiring the Future: Latinos in Health Care Faculty Panel and Meet & Greet. The event brought together Latino faculty from across the health sciences to share their personal journeys, professional insights, and advice for students aspiring to enter health care careers. Drs. Casanova and Viboud engaged in meaningful dialogue about representation, mentorship, and resilience in graduate education and clinical practice.

USWA Students Hold Food Drive for Local Families

Students from the Undergraduate Social Welfare Alliance (USWA) held their first food drive of the academic year at the East Setauket Stop & Shop. The students collected over 10 bags of non-perishable food, baby supplies, and hygiene products, all of which will support a community food distribution event planned for December. This initiative reflects the students' ongoing dedication to addressing food insecurity and supporting local families in need. The food and essentials drive will be held monthly in the same location.

[Kelly Ade Receives SUNY Healthcare Educator Scholarship](#)

School of Nursing student and Stony Brook University Hospital (SBUH) nurse Kelly Ade has been named one of 12 inaugural awardees of the SUNY Healthcare Educator Scholarship program. The pilot program is part of New York Governor Kathy Hochul's healthcare workforce initiative and aims to expand SUNY's capacity to educate nurses and support baccalaureate-prepared nurses seeking master's degrees. Each awardee receives up to \$20,000 annually for tuition and a \$5,000 stipend. Students, in return, must commit to a three-year faculty position at a SUNY associate-level nursing program.

Priscilla Knapp Teich Establishes New SBM Endowed Research Fund ([SB News](#))

Priscilla Knapp Teich, a longtime friend and benefactor of SBU and SBM, has established the SBM Endowed Research Fund to advance excellence within the Renaissance School of Medicine. This new fund will support high-impact research addressing local and global health challenges and will be amplified through both the NYS Endowment Match Program and the Simons Infinity Investment Match Challenge, potentially tripling its impact. As devoted supporters for more than 30 years, Knapp Teich and her family have contributed to numerous initiatives, including Stony Brook Children's Hospital and several endowed positions through the Knapp Swezey Foundation. Her latest gift reflects her deep admiration for Stony Brook's researchers and her commitment to accelerating discoveries that improve lives worldwide.

SOLAR Program Launches Second Cohort in Partnership with Samaritan Daytop Village

The second cohort of the Social Work Opportunities for Leadership in Addiction and Recovery (SOLAR) program was welcomed by Samaritan Daytop Village at a launch celebration in Manhattan on September 19. Clinical Associate Professor Melissa J. Earle—who oversees addiction education and online learning at the SSW—attended the event to support incoming students. Through the SOLAR program, participants will pursue their Master of Social Work degrees while receiving specialized training to become leaders in the addiction and recovery workforce. This innovative program strengthens the pipeline of skilled professionals in the field and expands access to evidence-based care for individuals and communities affected by substance use disorders.

Center for Healthy Aging and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Launch New Seminar

Over the fall, the Stony Brook Center for Healthy Aging and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)—a ~750-member volunteer-based organization focused on lifelong learning,

well-being and community in retirement—have collaborated on “The Science Behind Living Your Best Life,” a seminar workshop series that connects participants with Stony Brook experts to explore practical ways to support healthy aging. Through engaging discussions on topics such as fall prevention, brain and joint health, nutrition and mental well-being, the series translates the latest research into everyday strategies for living well. The final three sessions will be held on November 4, 11 and 18, from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in the Stony Brook Union Auditorium.

RSOM PACE Program Enrolls New Cohort

The Pre-medical Access to the Clinical Experience (PACE) Program has accepted 14 undergraduate and 1 graduate student for the 2025 cohort that began on October 3. They will collaborate with the PACE Empowerment and MAPS pre-medical student clubs on Anatomy and Suturing labs, as well as the Clinical Simulation Center, Kaplan MCAT Prep and clinical shadowing in the RSOM’s Department of Emergency Medicine.

CLINICAL REPORT

AWARDS, ACCOLADES & NEWS:

- SBUH has been named one of the Best Hospitals for Pediatric Care in 2025 by *Money*, earning the No. 1 spot in NYS and ranking No. 7 nationwide.

In the U.S., there are over 6,000 hospitals. To narrow this list down, *Money* first started with facilities that have received either a four- or five-star quality rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Next, they leveraged a novel way that Denniston Data, their data partner, measures quality care: by identifying high-performing doctors and other providers based on their level of experience with certain procedures. Unique to *Money*’s methodology as compared to other rankings, as healthcare costs are often such a large part of household budgets, they additionally incorporate overall costs into their models.

They then rewarded hospitals for their staff’s collective experience in the form of a Composite Ranking Score (CRS). To be measured by pediatric experience, and considered for this specialty list, facilities must have active pediatric specialists on staff.

The evaluation of SBUH includes data from Stony Brook Children's Hospital (SBCH), Suffolk County’s first and only children’s hospital. With more than 180 pediatric specialists in 30 specialties, SBCH is Suffolk County’s only Level 4 Regional Perinatal Center and Level 1 Regional Pediatric Trauma Center. It is home to the nation’s first Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis Center and also offers a Level 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Center, Celiac Disease and Gluten Sensitivity Center, Healthy Weight and Wellness Center, Cystic Fibrosis Center, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Program, Pediatric Cardiology Program, Pediatric HIV and AIDS Center.

- Suffolk County, launched its first-ever comprehensive drowning prevention action plan. Spearheaded by national water safety nonprofit The ZAC Foundation, Stony Brook Children's Hospital, and national water safety nonprofit Stop Drowning Now – with input from more than 30 local stakeholders – the Suffolk County Drowning Prevention Action Plan's goal is to reduce the rate of drownings countywide and enhance water safety for residents and visitors alike.
- Stony Brook Family, Population & Preventive Medicine's Lake Grove and Patchogue practices have once again earned Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) under the NYS PCMH Program, with renewal valid through August 2026. This recognition—the highest level awarded—reflects the locations' continued commitment to quality improvement and patient-centered care. To achieve this designation, practices must meet all core and state-specific criteria and demonstrate excellence across six key concepts of the NYS PCMH model, underscoring Stony Brook's dedication to delivering coordinated, accessible and high-quality care to the communities it serves.

PERSONNEL UPDATES:

- Ken Okorn is the new Director of Respiratory Care and Pulmonary Function Departments. Ken has a long history with Stony Brook, graduating from the University's Respiratory Therapy program with a bachelor's degree in 1997. He immediately joined the hospital's Respiratory Care Department as a staff therapist working with all patient populations and honing his skills. Throughout his 28-year career with Stony Brook he has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic, compassion, reliability and dedication to enhancing patient experience. During this time, he has assumed various roles within the department including transport therapist and, for the previous 10 years, Associate Director where Ken has shown his resourcefulness and leadership skills. Ken will use his wealth of experience and knowledge to continue leading this department in advanced respiratory care techniques, improving patient outcomes and experiences.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Emergency Medicine:

- SBUH Emergency Department has been awarded the ACEP PACED (Pain and Addiction Care in the Emergency Department) Gold level accreditation. This is the highest tier of recognition from the American College of Emergency Physicians and a significant achievement yet again for our team.

The Gold level accreditation signifies a strong commitment to excellence in pain and addiction care. It demonstrates SBUH's dedication to providing safe and effective pain

management, implementing best practices for substance use disorder, sustaining effective quality assurance and improvement initiatives, and ensuring a compassionate environment for patients with addiction. SBUH is the only Emergency Department in New York to receive this Gold level distinction.

Heart Institute:

- The Cardiac Catheterization team has increased the denominator for Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) and Bleeding Complications metrics. The team has made improvements to data reporting by implementing a new hydration protocol and drawing post procedure hemoglobin and Chemistry 8 panels.
- The Heart Institute held its 2nd annual Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) Support Group meeting held at the Advanced Specialty Center at Stony Brook. The session's topic was "Eating with a VAD: Ask Our Nutritionist", and we were pleased to welcome Anne Marie Berggren, our lead clinical nutritionist, as the guest speaker. The team provided tailored materials specifically for VAD patients and addressed numerous questions with helpful tips and recipes. The team also discussed and distributed handouts focused on low sodium, portion control, and the importance of being mindful of vitamin K intake.

Neurosciences:

- Patient data interface between Stony Brook and the American Spine Registry (ASR) occurred successfully for the first time in early September. The ASR data will be utilized to identify opportunities to improve clinical care, tighten processes, support patients and conduct research. Through our review of U.S. News and World Report rankings for spine, it is clear adjustments in our approach are needed to bring SBUH to a higher level. In addition, the data collection and benchmarking will form the basis for an expansion of research, enhancing both academic, clinical and funding prospects.
- The new CARE Initiative offered to school districts was officially launched the first week of September. The initiative is focused on improving access to various providers within Stony Brook Children's Hospital, with a strong, initial focus on mental health and wellness. Referrals to various Stony Brook providers have begun and are being triaged successfully. Parent and professional educational events have begun, as well as the children's hospital newsletter distribution. Remaining faculty recruiting is underway, as the program is not fully staffed yet, additional locations gearing up to open, and the website landing page content is being finalized. Minor challenges with processes are being discussed and overcome in real time. Much credit goes to the dedicated, interdisciplinary team handling the launch who demonstrated unprecedented cross-system collaboration.
- The newly licensed Office of Mental Health integrated outpatient clinic under Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital (SBELIH) officially opened the first week of September and is already receiving referrals for services. The demand for mental health services has been untenable across the United States, and a new mental health clinic within our health

system will help provide access to hundreds of new regional patients each year. The team faced various hurdles to the launch and navigated through new regulations, billing processes, and other challenges to open successfully.

Nursing:

- Vizient has accepted an abstract for presentation at the Nursing Programs Conference next March 2026 in Phoenix Arizona. The presentation is titled: *“Nurse Residency Unplugged: Technology-Based Approach for Marketing.”* The presentation details the strategies used by the Stony Brook Nurse Residency program to address the national nursing workforce shortage. It highlights how SBUH maintains a less than 5% vacancy rate by fostering a safe, empowering, and healthy work environment that supports nurses in practicing to the full extent of their license. The program was highlighted through collaboration with the Marketing Department in a podcast to disseminate information to a wide audience, thereby enhancing traditional recruitment efforts. The authors of the abstract are Katherine Lewin MS RN NPD-BC CCRN (Director of the Nurse Residency Program); Meghan Doelger RN DNP (Nurse Scientist); Carley Cori (Marketing and Communications); and Brenda Janotha EdD, DNP-DCC, ANP-BC, FNP-C, FAANP (Associate Dean Stony Brook School of Nursing). This will be shared as a SPARK podium presentation.
- Two additional posters were accepted for the Nursing Programs Conference including: (1) *Strengthening Academic-Practice Partnerships: Credit for Nurses*. Authors: Katherine Lewin, Meghan Doelger, Brenda Janotha, and Kristina Laurita, and (2) *Stick Smart: Protocol for Difficult IV Access* presented by Ruby Ghuman, RN Nurse Resident CTICU, LeeLee Tso, MS RN (Nurse Specialist 16N), Meghan Doelger DNP (Nurse Scientist) Denise Martorana RN (Quality Improvement), and Katherine Lewin RN (Director of Nurse Residency).

Women’s/Children’s Services:

- SBUH’s Lactation Support Program Coordinator, Kristin Thayer, and the Women’s Services Nurse Manager Sabine Sterlin, presented at the 2025 CHAMPS National Conference in September. Their presentation: *Donor Milk: Beyond the NICU*, highlighted the hospital’s success bringing human donor milk to the NICU population where now 85% of all babies receive some form of mother’s or human donor milk.

Kristin Thayer was also honored this year by being selected as CHAMPS (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) CHEER (Center for Health Equity, Education & Research) CHAMPion of the week. Each week a CHEER CHAMPion is selected to highlight, promote and protect breastfeeding and maternal-child health. Kristin’s profile was highlighted on the CHAMPS website and social media accounts, including her work growing our team, her commitment to evidence-based practices, development of our donor milk program, and inclusive care and educational programs.

- Stony Brook Children’s announced the accreditation of our new Pediatric Hospital Medicine Fellowship program. This is the second new fellowship program coming to Stony Brook

Children's this year, the other being in Pediatric Emergency Medicine. Dr. Maribeth Chitkara, our Pediatric Hospitalist Division Chief will serve as Program Director with Dr. Mariann Jacob as the Associate Program Director. This fellowship is a 2-year program, and the team will be recruiting 1 fellow each year. Although recruitment has already started, we will be entering the Match and hope to recruit a fellow for a 2026-2027 start date.

Support Services:

- On September 15th, Steve Weisman, AVP for Administration and Supply Chain Mgt, along with Dr. Peter Igarashi, Dean of the RSOM and Dr. Sritha Rajupet, Chair of the Family, Population, and Preventive Medicine Department, participated in an interview panel with surveyors from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) for accreditation for the new MS in Professional Nutrition Practice. Mr. Weisman spoke about the hands-on support and resources our hospital provides through learning opportunities in an inpatient setting including the Food Service department operations and daily inpatient registered dietitian activities.
- As a contractual agreement with Medtronic's Covidien division for Endomechanicals (trocars, staplers) and hernia supplies, SBUH received a rebate credit of \$133,558 based on reaching a high-volume level of purchases for August 2024 through July 2025.
- Work continues on the configuration and implementation of the WellSky Blood Centers software, which will replace the current HCLL Donor system for managing and processing blood donors. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is scheduled to take place within the next two weeks. Following UAT, the system will be locked for validation. The FastTrak module is currently pending completion of the purchasing process. FastTrak enables donors to complete their questionnaires, review educational materials, and view the medication list either prior to or upon arrival at the blood drive.
- The Clinical Flow Cytometry Laboratory has gone live with the new Beckman Coulter instrument, DX Flex, which includes assays such as Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria (PNH), Immune Recovery, Autoimmune Lymphoproliferative Syndrome (ALPS), and Rituximab. The DX Flex is Beckman Coulter's new line of cytometers featuring advanced detector technology, designed to replace outdated and unsupported models/platforms, such as Navios, previously used in Clinical Flow Cytometry.
- The histology laboratory is currently working to validate several new antibodies for Immunohistochemical staining, including Keratin-17 (K17), INSM1 and Claudin-4 antibodies. This will increase our capabilities within the Histology Laboratory, no longer needing to send samples to reference labs for these special stains.
- The new updated NATUS replacement equipment was received, while portable carts and two additional epilepsy monitoring fixed rooms were added to the SBUH EEG lab. The

department also replaced the intracranial quantum amplifier for intracranial surgeries. Technologists involved with the intracranial program were trained by Natus in July. Software version was updated for more efficient interpretation and recording of EEG recordings, as well as better cyber security.

- As a result of the continued efforts in adding efficiencies to invoice processing, the Pharmacy saved a total of \$7.03 million in turnaround time discounts from our primary pharmaceutical wholesaler, Cardinal, over the last fiscal year.
- Radiology has introduced a new Siemens fluoroscopy room, equipped with advanced digital technology that provides clearer imaging while reducing radiation exposure during fluoroscopy studies. Radiology has also installed a new digital diagnostic room. This state-of-the-art system offers faster image reconstruction and lower radiation doses for diagnostic imaging studies.

Facilities:

- *Advanced Specialty Care at Lake Grove:* Phase 3 is nearly complete. This phase includes our Gastroenterology, Neurosurgery, Urology, Surgery/ENT/Plastics (all practice relocations) and a new Procedure Suite that will open in early 2026. Phase 4 (the final phase) design has begun and the full building construction is planned to be completed in late 2026. The Phase 4 practices include Ophthalmology, Women's Pelvic Health program, Additional Medical Specialty space, Outpatient Laboratory and Clinical Trials.
- *Advanced Specialty Care at Commack :* A new, expanded Dermatology suite opened last month providing a significant increase in capacity for the practice. An expansion for Surgery/ENT is nearly complete, which will also include the addition of Pain Management services at this location. Imaging and Orthopedic expansions will begin in early 2026. Construction of the new Ambulatory Surgery Center will begin in October with occupancy planned for fall 2026. In addition, a new Clinical Trials suite is expected to open in October.
- A new Mobile Stroke Unit and Ambulance facility is planned to open in Riverhead in December. This facility will house the new mobile stroke unit and ambulances that serve the Riverhead area and the North and South forks.
- Renovations continue at the Advanced Specialty Care at Stony Brook building on East Campus. Construction of a new procedure suite has begun and a full cosmetic upgrade in the building will begin in October. New exterior building and wayfinding signage will be installed later this year.

Human Resources:

Employee and Physician Engagement Survey Planning

- The employee engagement survey will be distributed by our survey partner, Press Ganey, to approximately 14,000 SBM staff on September 15 and will remain open through October

6. Staff and clinical faculty across all SBM hospitals, the Renaissance School of Medicine, and the Clinical Practice Management Plans (CPMP) are invited to participate.

This year's survey will once again feature the themed message, "Share Your Voice – Shape Our Future." Survey results are expected in mid-October and will be cascaded to senior executives, department leaders, and then to staff and clinical faculty in that order during the last quarter of 2025. As with previous surveys, we will partner with department leaders to develop targeted action plans based on areas identified for improvement.

Recruiting and Retention

- Voluntary Turnover rates remain well below the industry average of 15%. Job vacancies remain below the industry average of 19%.

Patient Experience:

- The Department of Language Services, in collaboration with SBU, launched a 40-hour Medical Interpretation course. Students completing the training and exam are able to obtain work study eligible hours as a qualified medical interpreter in our Emergency Department.
- Aisha Arshad, Sophie McHeffey, Margaret Stern and Abigail Savage created and validated 164 patient experience data graphs for the final Magnet report submission.
- Lina Fonseca, Assistant Director of Language Services and Shana Kaplanov, Pediatric Chaplain presented case studies as part of a panel at the SBM Ethics Symposium.
- The Patient Experience Team facilitated Schwartz Rounds on August 5, 2025. Dean Michael Montelion served as a panelist for a session titled "Lessons Learned from our Patients".
- The Chaplaincy Team conducted Code Lavender training and education to expand the program to Stony Brook Eastern Long Island.
- The Emergency Department Physician Leadership and Patient Experience Team co-presented Compassionate Connected Care refresher training at Grand Rounds.
- The Patient Experience Division collaborated with Quality and Regulatory Affairs to launch the 2025-2026 SBM Project Charter for Health Equity. The project is to enhance equity in informed consent materials for Spanish-speaking patients. In addition to an education plan, the team will audit consent process compliance by language and the interpreter utilization rate.