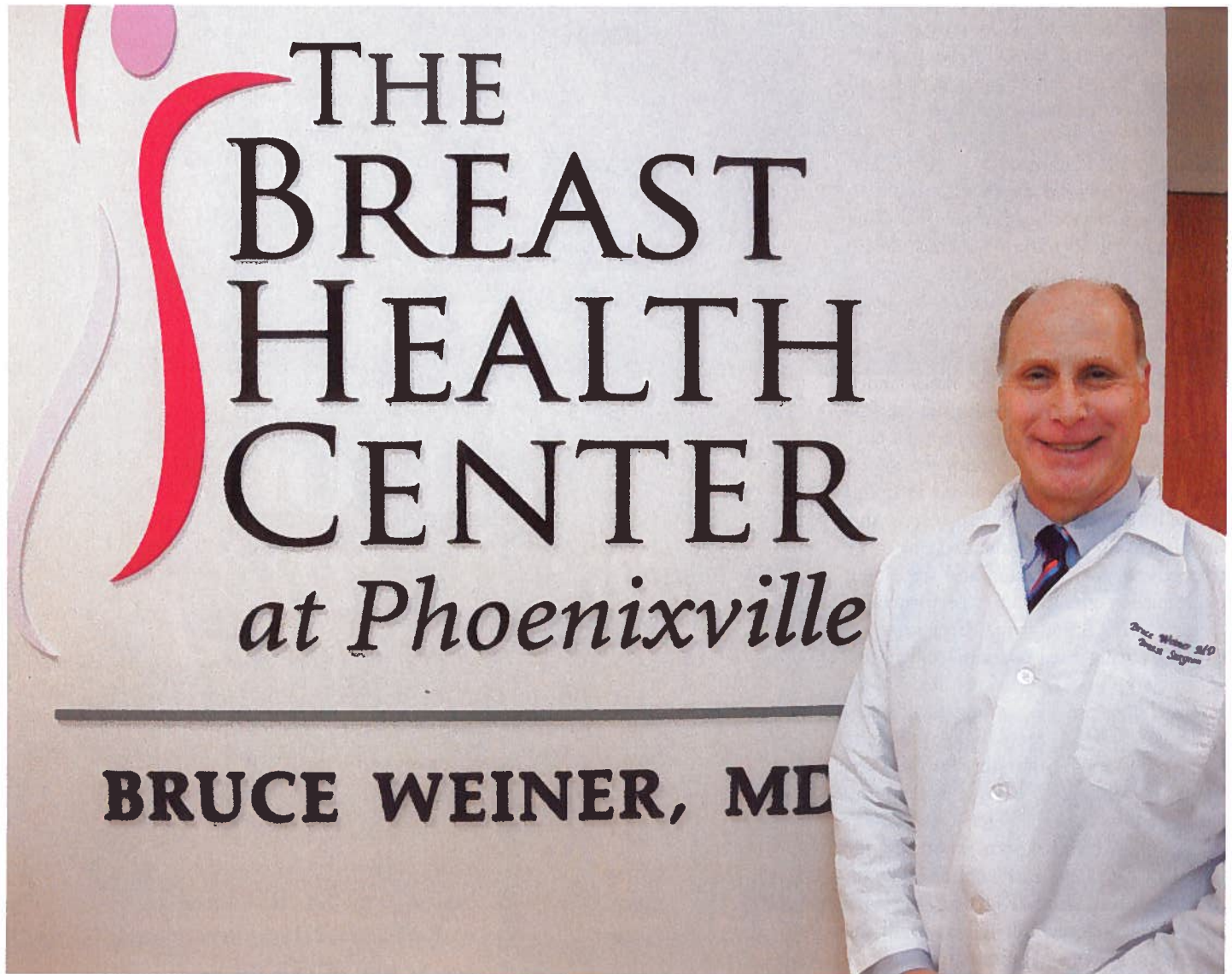


Phoenixville Hospital Empowers Women to Attain Healthy Lives

By Susan I. Shiber

Photography by Kelly O'Keefe



Bruce Weiner, MD, FACS, is the Medical Director of The Breast Health Center at Phoenixville. Dr. Weiner is a board-certified surgeon with advanced postgraduate training in the management of breast diseases.

There is always an air of excitement at Phoenixville Hospital. Something new. Something innovative. Something to provide better care. Better care is the hospital's primary goal, and seeking new and innovative programs to advance that mission is constant.



Urogynecologist Reneita Ross, MD, FACOG, has recently joined the medical staff of Phoenixville Hospital.

The hospital's state-of-the-art Women's Health Pavilion recently expanded services, giving the hospital an important dimension of care. The newest addition is Urogynecology, which is headed by Reneita Ross, MD, FACOG.

Dr. Ross is an obstetrician/gynecologist, who specializes in treatment of women with pelvic disorders, which may include incontinence, prolapse, emptying problems, overactive bladder, and pelvic or urethral pain. She decided on this specialty during her residency in Ob/Gyn. "We were doing a rotation in urogynecology, and a patient pulled me aside and in a very low voice said she had a leaking problem," recalls Dr. Ross. "She was so young, so embarrassed. I was just experiencing how common her condition is, and how it can impact women's lives. Executives, teachers, and others can't go to work or have social lives because of urinary incontinence. I decided almost immediately to change direction and apply for a fellowship in this field."

She completed the fellowship at Emory University School of Medicine and is a member of the Society of Pelvic Reconstructive Surgeons. "Dr. Ross is a respected urogynecologist, who treats difficult urinary tract problems including pelvic floor prolapse," says Alan Silverberg, MD, FACOG, Medical Director of Women's Health Pavilion. "Her specialty is vaginal surgery as opposed to abdominal surgery that leaves an abdominal scar, and she per-

forms procedures to correct severe pelvic and rectal prolapse. Her expertise is a big asset for the hospital."

For pelvic organ prolapse, Dr. Ross may complete pelvic floor rehabilitation, pessary placement, or recommend surgical management. Pelvic floor rehab and surgical management along with pharmacotherapy and sacral neuromodulation are among treatments for incontinence. "Sometimes after childbirth, support muscles in the vagina, bladder, and rectum are weakened, causing the problem. There are surgical and more conservative options, such as pelvic exercises, biofeedback, and behavioral or dietary modifications."

Dr. Ross also diagnoses and treats interstitial cystitis, hematuria (blood in the urine), urethral diverticulum, fecal incontinence, fistula repair, and vulvodynia (chronic pain around the vagina opening). "I have had people cry with happiness after successful treatment. Many didn't realize that medical solutions were available for some of these conditions. It's such a privilege to take care of women," she smiles.

Director of Phoenixville Hospital's Breast Health Center, Bruce Weiner, MD, FACS, agrees. "We provide 21st century, compassionate breast care in a warm and inviting environment. When I was in training, breast cancer treatment was coming of age. I was fascinated, and felt I could contribute. So much has happened since then and with the new center specializing in breast health. We offer a great service to the community."

"From our perspective, it's comforting to know that Women's Health Pavilion has a superbly trained breast surgeon and top-notch care available," says Dr. Silverberg. "The center really rounds out the department."



Breast Care Navigator Robin Heist RT (R)(M), provides compassionate support and guidance to breast cancer patients. Heist offers assistance with treatment clarification, referrals, resource information, insurance verification, and coordination of care.



Among the experienced staff of the newly renovated, all-private room Women's Health Pavilion are front row: Victoria DeCurtis, RN, and Jesse Haas, RN; back row: Beth Thompson, RN; Trish Giadonato, RN; and Lisa Atkins, RN.



Breast Care Liaison Georgia Kontra, Mammographers Linda Walley and Nanna Stankovics, and Mammography Supervisor Ann Millet, RT (R)(M), are shown here in the DEXA Scan room. This equipment measures bone density to check for osteoporosis.



Waleed Shalaby, MD, is a gynecologic oncologist with extensive experience treating gynecologic-related cancers. He performs advanced robotic surgery procedures at Phoenixville Hospital.

Dr. Weiner is a board-certified surgeon with advanced post-graduate training in the management of breast diseases. He was one of the first in the region to perform stereotactic breast biopsy, sentinel node axillary biopsy, and catheter placement for partial breast radiation. The Harvard University graduate earned his medical degree at Rutgers Medical School and performed his surgical training at The Mount Sinai Medical Center and post-graduate training in breast disease at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

The Breast Health Center provides comprehensive preventive, diagnostic, surgical, and follow-up care. It also offers ultrasound-guided biopsy, genetic testing, and counseling. Using a team approach, Dr. Weiner and his staff work closely with radiation and medical oncologists, radiologists, genetic counselors, and social workers. "We hold weekly multidisciplinary cancer conferences," reports Dr. Weiner. "By sharing ideas and suggestions, we maximize everyone's skills, and that benefits patients. The fact that we are affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center is another bonus."

Patients also benefit from minimally invasive procedures, such as lumpectomies instead of mastectomies. Sentinel node biopsies identify which lymph nodes have cancer and which do not, reducing removal of nodes. Diagnostic services include digital mammography, digital breast ultrasound, digital mammographic needle localizations, and breast MRI- and MR-guided biopsy. "The majority of women don't have cancer," says Dr. Weiner. "In fact, almost 75 percent of all biopsies in the United States reveal benign findings. Patients who have family members with breast cancer, however, should be cautious. We sug-

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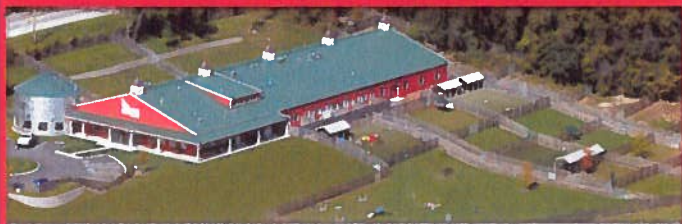
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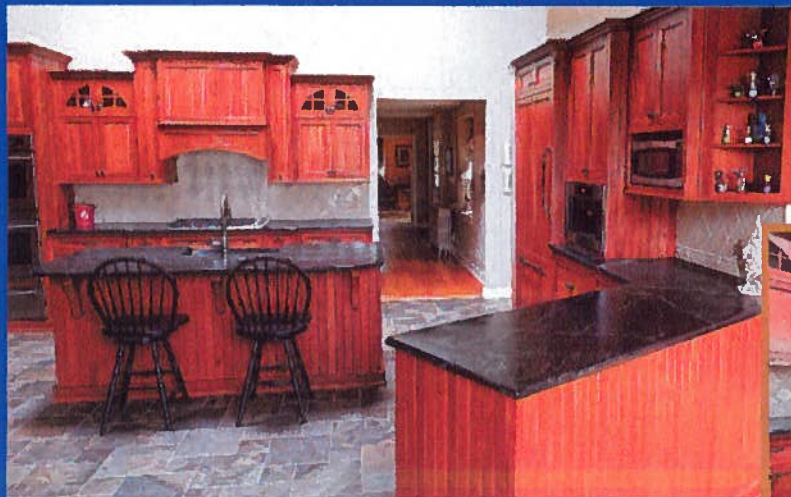
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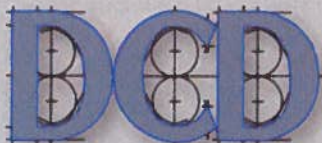
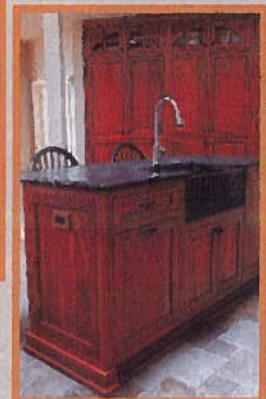
Taryn Felker and new baby Roman were well cared for by Christine Sigal, MD, FACOG, and Beth Thompson, RN.

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Phoenixville Hospital recently received two Kangaroo chairs from the March of Dimes to be used in the hospital's Level II CHOP NICU. Nurse Jesse Haas, RN, helped secure the chairs for the NICU. New mom Bridget Primavera uses the chair while holding twins Michael and Morgan.

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The robust Robotic Surgery Center at Phoenixville Hospital has also expanded in the treatment of gynecologic cancers. Fellowship-trained gynecologic oncologist Waleed Shalaby, MD, treats gynecologic-related cancers through advanced surgical techniques. "In most cases, robotic surgery is better for patients, particularly those with cancer. The procedures are often easier and recovery time is faster." Dr. Shalaby works closely with gynecologists and physicians in the hospital's Cancer Center to provide a comprehensive approach for treating gynecologic cancers.

The Women's Health Pavilion has made a big difference in Phoenixville Hospital and the community. Dr. Silverberg envisions even greater successes ahead. "We have expanded our services to Collegetown and offer women there what we have in Phoenixville, Limerick, and Exton. I believe that our women's programs will soon serve as a model for hospital care in the greater Philadelphia suburban area." CCL

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