The “Vaxmobile”

Mount Sinai South Nassau and Town of Hempstead Launch the Region’s First COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination Unit

Mount Sinai South Nassau and the Town of Hempstead have launched the “Vaxmobile,” the region’s first mobile vaccination unit, which has administered more than 1,000 vaccinations to hard-hit communities with large senior populations and those with mobility or transportation challenges.

One of the Vaxmobile’s first stops on March 31 was the Uniondale-Hempstead Senior Center, where hospital staff vaccinated 100 residents.

Town officials approved a grant that allowed the hospital to purchase the mobile command

“I want the vaccine so I can regain a sense of community and reunite with family and friends.”

— Patient Kyra Lewis

Minimally Invasive Procedure Controls Chronic Acid Reflux

Six times a day, before and after meals and before bedtime, Allison Ifertle, 71, would pop a pill or swallow a chalky liquid to relieve her frequent bouts of chronic acid reflux. While the medication cleared up her symptoms, it also interfered with her desire for a carefree lifestyle.

“If we took a day trip, I would have to carry the liquid medicine in a jar, because you have to take it an hour before meals...who wants to live like that?” said the North Babylon grandmother of three, one of 60 million Americans who suffers from acid reflux, according to the American College of Gastroenterology. “I said I’m not going to do this for the rest of my life.”

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Rising to the Challenge

Our hospital has a well-documented history of anticipating and responding to emerging health needs as part of our commitment to keeping our community safe and healthy in an ever-changing world. Yet no previous period can compare to the tremendous demands and subsequent shifts that we have had to make over the past year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. From canceling elective procedures to converting parts of our hospital to COVID-19 units capable of rendering care to the most critically ill patients, to ramping up our testing capabilities, to this latest phase of helping to distribute the vaccines that offer real promise in helping us reach the end of this scourge, Mount Sinai South Nassau has risen to the unimaginable challenges we have faced. In this issue of Healthy Outlook, you will read about our newest initiative, bringing COVID-19 vaccinations to communities via the “Vaxmobile,” our mobile outreach unit.

For some families, the pandemic serves as a backdrop to dramatic medical issues that are unrelated to COVID-19. That is the case for Baby Alice’s parents, profiled on page 8. Thanks to Mount Sinai South Nassau’s advanced prenatal imaging capabilities, they learned even before their daughter was born that she has a rare condition that causes noncancerous tumors to grow within her heart. Our maternal-fetal medicine specialists monitored her before birth, and she is now being followed by pediatric cardiologists to ensure that she continues to grow and develop.

Even those whose medical conditions are considered to be routine can expect to find the latest diagnostic and treatment options, as well as the most highly skilled medical care team, here at Mount Sinai South Nassau. On our cover, you can read about the expert physicians who care for patients with common digestive disorders, ranging from irritable bowel disease and chronic acid reflux to more complex disorders of the liver, gall bladder, biliary tree, and pancreas. Our patients do not have to travel out of the area to find cutting-edge approaches to diagnosing and treating these conditions.

I hope that this publication fills you with hope and confidence for the future, knowing as I do, that our community has the benefit of the very best health care providers and facilities available. This knowledge provides a measure of peace of mind as we continue to navigate these challenging times. I wish you and your loved ones the best of health.
Partnering with Nassau County to Vaccinate Teachers

In an effort to help schools reopen, Mount Sinai South Nassau and Nassau County have launched a pilot program to vaccinate area teachers and school staff members from the Island Park, Long Beach, Oceanside, and Rockville Centre school districts.

The Teacher’s Vaccination Pilot Program, a joint initiative of Mount Sinai South Nassau and the Nassau County Department of Health, vaccinated more than 600 teachers over several days.

“We have used every tool available and have taken every action necessary to prevent community spread of the virus and protect the residents of the communities we serve,” said Adhi Sharma, MD, Executive Vice President of Clinical and Professional Affairs and Chief Medical Officer at Mount Sinai South Nassau. “We know that getting students and teachers back to full, in-person school instruction is paramount and this pilot program was essential to help normalize our schools.”

“I have been an advocate of in-person learning, and I commend our school districts for all the work they have done this year to make that safely happen. Getting teachers and school faculty protected from this virus is key to keeping our kids in school. The Department of Health has already vaccinated thousands of our teachers, but we won’t stop until every Nassau educator who wants a shot gets one,” said Nassau County Executive Laura Curran. “Nassau County is proud to partner with Mount Sinai South Nassau to get another teacher vaccination effort rolling.”

Teachers and staff from several Nassau County school districts received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at Mount Sinai South Nassau’s COVID-19 Vaccination Center at 519 Merrick Road in Rockville Centre. They were invited by their administrations to schedule appointments at the time that was convenient for them. Scheduling, processing, and administration of the vaccinations were handled by members of Mount Sinai South Nassau’s nursing and allied health staff. The vaccines were provided by the Nassau County Department of Health.

The pilot program launched after school superintendents from a number of districts reached out to the hospital’s administration for help to get teachers vaccinated.

“We have used every tool available and have taken every action necessary to prevent community spread of the virus and protect the residents of the communities we serve.”

—Adhi Sharma, MD
Mount Sinai South Nassau Launches Comprehensive Digestive Health Program

From common digestive health conditions like acid reflux to complex diseases, such as liver disorders and pancreatic cancer, Mount Sinai South Nassau’s board certified specialists use leading-edge diagnostic tools and therapies to provide expert, personalized care.

The multidisciplinary team comprises gastroenterologists; hepatologists, physicians who specialize in the liver, gall bladder, biliary tree, and pancreas; surgeons; certified nurses; nutritionists; and other health care professionals who provide comprehensive outpatient and inpatient services in general gastroenterology and manage digestive and liver diseases that include:

- Gastroesophageal reflux disease
- Peptic ulcer disease
- Celiac disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Irritable bowel disease
- Diarrhea
- Malabsorptive syndromes
- Constipation
- Hepatitis B and hepatitis C
- Alcoholic and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease
- Hepatic cirrhosis

The center’s physicians perform a range of diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic procedures in a modern endoscopy suite located on the Mount Sinai South Nassau campus. Routinely performed procedures include:

- Esophagastroduodenoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- Esophageal manometry
- Endoscopic ultrasound
- Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography
- Luminal dilation and stent placement
- Peroral endoscopic myotomy, an endoscopic procedure used to treat swallowing disorders
- Video capsule endoscopy

The outpatient center is located at 2209 Merrick Road, in Merrick. FOR AN APPOINTMENT, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).

Meet the Digestive Health Team

Frank Gress, MD, is Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology and Chief of Interventional Endoscopy at Mount Sinai South Nassau. Board certified in gastroenterology, he earned a medical degree from Mount Sinai School of Medicine and completed a residency in internal medicine at Montefiore Medical Center and fellowships in gastroenterology and hepatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center/The Brooklyn Hospital Center. He was also fellowship trained in advanced therapeutic endoscopy at Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis.

Iman Andalib, MD, Director of Surgical Endoscopy and Assistant Director of Endoscopy at Mount Sinai South Nassau, is board certified in gastroenterology and specializes in diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy. He earned a medical degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica, West Indies, and completed residency training in internal medicine at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington. A frequent lecturer at national and international conferences, Dr. Andalib is fellowship trained in gastroenterology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, and advanced endoscopy at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Firas Al-Ani, MD, is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine and specializes in gastroenterology and hepatology. He earned a medical degree from UMF Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Romania, and completed an internal medicine residency and a gastroenterology and hepatology fellowship at the State University of New York in Brooklyn.
Help for Chronic Acid Reflux
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Soon she learned of a minimally invasive procedure, Transoral Incisionless Fundoplication (TIF), performed by Iman Andalib, MD, Director of Surgical Endoscopy and Assistant Director of Endoscopy at Mount Sinai South Nassau, that would alleviate her symptoms of reflux. TIF uses a high-definition endoscope, a flexible, tube-like imaging instrument, to repair, without incisions or metal implants, the faulty valve that allows stomach acid back into the esophagus.

“TIF is an effective, long-lasting treatment for patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), particularly in those with persistent reflux who experience moderate to severe symptoms, even while on daily medications,” said Dr. Andalib. “This incisionless procedure is very safe, and most patients can return home the same day and resume ordinary activities within a few days.”

Ever since Ms. Ifferte underwent the TIF procedure last August, she has been symptom-free, takes no acid reflux medications, and does not have to fear indulging in dark chocolate, pizza, and topping a sandwich with onions—her favorite foods that used to trigger her reflux symptoms.

“To think, before the procedure, all I was doing was taking medications six times a day,” she said. “I wish I could put out a neon sign of thanks for Dr. Andalib.”

FOR AN APPOINTMENT with Dr. Andalib, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).

Juan M. Baez, MD, PhD, is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine. He earned dual doctorate degrees in medicine and biochemistry, studying hepatology lipid transport, from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, where he also completed an internal medicine internship and residency at Jacobi Medical Center and Montefiore Medical Center, respectively. He was subspecialty trained in gastroenterology at New York Presbyterian-Columbia University Medical Center in Manhattan.

Ayanna Lewis, MD, is board certified in internal medicine and specializes in gastroenterology. She earned a medical degree from The Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine in Hanover, New Hampshire. She completed an internal medicine residency and a fellowship in gastroenterology at Stony Brook University Hospital and a visiting fellowship in gastroenterology at Weill Cornell Medical Center. Following a clinical research fellowship at Saint Antoine Hospital in Paris, she completed an advanced inflammatory bowel disease fellowship at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Frank Palumbo, MD, is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine. He earned a medical degree from St. George’s University School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies, and completed an internal medicine residency and a gastroenterology fellowship at New York Presbyterian Queens.
Relief for Hard-to-Heal Wounds

Daniel DeLaRosa, 54, of Rockville Centre, was clearing out his garage last November when a 2 x 4 piece of lumber tipped over and hit his left leg. “The calf was black-and-blue with a little gash,” recalled the property manager. “I didn’t think much of it.” Over the next two weeks, the father of two treated the wound himself with antiseptic and antibiotic cream. But when the area became red and swollen, he turned to Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Wound Care staff, who had treated his nonhealing wound years earlier following a motorcycle accident.

Surgeon Steven I. Friedman, MD, of Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Wound Care Center, examined Mr. DeLaRosa and diagnosed a traumatic wound on his left leg. “This wound had the potential, if not properly treated, to enlarge and be a source of disability to the patient,” said Dr. Friedman. “The Wound Center’s philosophy is to use surgical or chemical debridement (removal of dead skin and tissue) as often as necessary to stimulate the wounds to heal by converting a chronic wound into an acute wound, thereby fooling Mother Nature into thinking that the wound is fresh and new,” added Dr. Friedman. “That stimulates the patient’s own immune system to mobilize healing factors from the bloodstream to congregate in the wound and promote healing.”

Mr. DeLaRosa’s underlying medical conditions delayed wound healing and necessitated multiple wound debridements to remove dead skin and tissue and the application of an advanced wound care product that “removes substances in the wound that impede healing. It also stimulates formation of granulation tissue, which is the backbone of human wound healing,” Dr. Friedman explained. “Patients with comorbidities require more specialized care from the onset in order to circumvent complications.”

Thanks to Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Wound Care Center, Mr. DeLaRosa’s wound is now healed and is free to resume his daily activities. He’s hoping he won’t need the center’s care again, but if he suffers another nonhealing wound, he knows where he will turn for care.

“The minute you walk in the door, from the receptionist to the nurses, doctors, and assistants, it’s a pleasant experience,” said Mr. DeLaRosa. “They are very professional, attentive, and caring and they answered all of my questions.”

The Wound Care Center’s team, under the direction of Charles Sticco, DO, far left, foreground, comprises vascular and general surgeons, podiatrists, physician assistants, certified wound care nurses, nutritionists, diabetes educators, physical therapists, and pharmacists.
Mount Sinai South Nassau Wound Care Center’s primary goals are healing difficult wounds faster, preventing wounds from getting worse or infected, and preserving limbs.

Chronic wounds, or wounds that are slow to heal, affect 6.5 million Americans, according to the National Institutes of Health and account for 200,000 hospital admissions. Left untreated, chronic wounds can result in life-threatening infections and limb loss.

The mission of the center is to provide high quality wound care in a professional and nurturing environment. The center treats an array of hard-to-heal wounds due to a number of conditions, including diabetes, poor circulation, trauma, surgery, and pressure ulcers on any body part, including the legs, ankles, and feet, abdomen, and sacral area, explained vascular surgeon Charles Sticco, DO, Medical Director of the Wound Care Center.

A multidisciplinary team of experienced vascular surgeons, general surgeons, podiatrists, specially trained and certified wound care registered nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, nutritionists, diabetes educators, and pharmacists apply proven wound care practices and advanced clinical approaches customized to achieve excellent healing rates and fast healing times. The center currently boasts a success rate of 94 percent, which is above the national average, and treatment is typically completed within 45 days.

Wound treatment services include:
- Active topical wound care
- Wound debridement
- Biological and biosynthetic dressings
- Local and systemic antimicrobial therapy
- Compression therapy
- Offloading
- Bio-engineered skin substitutes
- Contact casting

FOR AN APPOINTMENT with the center’s wound care specialist, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).

Mobile Vaccination

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center, known as the “Vaxmobile.” The vehicle and staff were funded with $695,042 from the federal CARES Act legislation. The primary mission of the mobile vaccination unit is to reduce transportation, language, and technology barriers to vaccination and bring vaccines directly to residents.

“Supervisor Donald Clavin Jr. and the town Board recognized last year the importance of having a mobile unit. They had the vision to approve the purchase of this vehicle back when vaccines were still in very short supply,” said Richard J. Murphy, President and CEO of Mount Sinai South Nassau. “As a result of their foresight and action, we are now in a strong position to help the community. The town has been a solid partner in our fight to stop the spread of the virus. We appreciate its leadership and willingness to fund and join us in this important public health effort.”

The town previously approved funding to provide drive-through COVID-19 rapid testing at the hospital’s Oceanside campus. The 50-foot unit, a 2013 International Durastar 4400, was previously used as a mobile command center and was purchased by Mount Sinai South Nassau from Mission Mobile Medical, a North Carolina-based mobile medical company.

The Vaxmobile staff had been administering the one-dose Johnson &Johnson vaccine but paused using it on April 13, following guidance from the CDC, FDA, and New York State Department of Health officials over reports of a rare blood clotting disorder in six women (out of more than 7 million vaccines administered.) The Vaxmobile was back on the road a day later using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which requires two doses.

At the Vaxmobile at the Freeport Recreation Center, Kyra Lewis, 29, of Freeport, said she was looking forward to getting immunized against the virus so she can “regain a sense of community and reunite with family and friends,” whom she has not seen in months.

All vaccines administered at the Vaxmobile are by appointment only and residents must meet the eligibility requirements as determined by the New York State Department of Health.
Helping an Infant With a Rare Genetic Disorder Reach Milestones

Alisom Espinoza, of Freeport, had just completed her first trimester of pregnancy when doctors at Mount Sinai South Nassau discovered that her unborn daughter, Baby Alice, was suffering from tuberous sclerosis, a rare genetic disorder that causes noncancerous tumors to grow in the brain and other vital organs. In Baby Alice’s case, five tumors had developed inside her heart.

“I didn’t have any problems with the pregnancy and was very excited because this was my first,” recalled Ms. Espinoza, whose husband carries the genetic mutation. “But when I found out she had this disorder, I was very depressed.”

With each passing day, she worried about other health problems that medical tests might reveal about her daughter’s condition. There were multiple echocardiograms and an MRI of the heart and brain to check for tumors. And after her birth on January 16, Baby Alice underwent an additional battery of tests, including more echocardiograms and MRIs of the brain and kidney. As doctors suspected, the echocardiogram of the heart confirmed numerous tumors inside the heart. But the tests on the brain and kidney returned normal. Ms. Espinoza felt relieved that her daughter’s condition was not as dire as she had feared.

“Clinically, Alice is doing very well and has not demonstrated any concerning cardiac or neurological signs or symptoms at this time,” said pediatric cardiologist Farrah Munir, DO. “She is a thriving, beautiful baby.”

About the Doctor

Farrah Munir, DO, is a pediatric cardiologist and has special interests in transesophageal echocardiography, transthoracic echocardiography, and fetal echocardiography. She earned a medical degree from the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, Virginia, and completed a residency in pediatrics. She was fellowship trained in pediatric cardiology at Penn State Children’s Hospital in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

The Mount Sinai South Nassau pediatric cardiology team, from left, Farrah Munir, DO; Carlos Montoya-Iraheta, MD, Chief, Pediatric Cardiology; and Megan Bartlett, pediatric echocardiographer.
2D, 3D, 4D, and now 5D Prenatal Ultrasound

Mount Sinai South Nassau Acquires the Latest in Fetal Imagery

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Maternal Fetal Medicine Department has acquired an ultrasound with 5D technology. The device uses sound waves to produce realistic, lifelike images of the fetus and detailed views of the amniotic sac, placenta, and ovaries. In addition, anatomical abnormalities or birth defects and blood flow problems may also be visible.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT with any of the physicians in Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Maternal Fetal Medicine Division, call 516-632-4636. Appointments are available throughout Nassau and Suffolk.

Nevertheless, every few months, Baby Alice will have to undergo close monitoring of the tumors and her heart rhythm at Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Pediatric Cardiology Division and continue to follow up with specialists throughout her lifetime. “Based on what we know right now, Alice has a very good prognosis,” said Dr. Munir.

Ms. Espinoza is not only grateful that her daughter is healthy, but also for the care they have received at Mount Sinai South Nassau. “The hospital has been so supportive. They have been monitoring me and the baby since Day One and they have welcomed us like family,” she said. “Dr. Munir has always been there for both of us. I have the best doctor that I could ever ask for.”

The new fetal high-definition ultrasound, used by Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Maternal Fetal Medicine Department, shows enhanced facial features, skin tone, and depth perception.

Pediatric cardiologist Farrah Munir, DO, left, with Baby Alice Espinoza-Aplicano, who suffers from a rare genetic disorder, discusses next steps with the infant’s mother Alisom Espinoza.

Mount Sinai South Nassau Earns Pediatric and Fetal Echocardiography Accreditation by IAC

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s pediatric and fetal echocardiography service has been awarded accreditation by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission. The accreditation is the organization’s seal of approval, demonstrating the hospital’s commitment to quality patient care in echocardiography.

Echocardiography is an ultrasound test that uses sound waves to evaluate a baby’s heart structure, position, size, function, and rhythm or heartbeat. A detailed echocardiographic evaluation before birth can diagnose congenital heart disease and provide the baby faster access to medical intervention after birth.
Precisely Focused Radiation Treatment for Benign and Cancerous Conditions

Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Department of Radiation Oncology has a reputation for providing the most advanced treatment options for patients. It boasts Long Island’s longest running and most experienced program for Gamma Knife™ radiosurgery. And it was first on Long Island to offer the Novalis Tx™ radiosurgery platform with SmartArc™ technology.

These noninvasive surgical procedures treat a wide range of cancers and functional abnormalities of the brain and body with precisely focused high-energy X-rays rather than a blade. The result: the tumor or disorder receives the prescribed dose of radiation while preserving surrounding healthy tissue.

The Department’s multidisciplinary team of board certified radiation oncologists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, medical physicists, nurses certified in radiation oncology, and radiation therapists are committed to excellence and work together to provide each patient with a custom-tailored care plan.

At every phase of the planning process, patients can be assured that the treatment, which uses sophisticated computer guidance, is targeted and spot-on, precisely focusing radiation beams to destroy a tumor or lesion.

**FOR A CONSULTATION** with Leester Wu, MD, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).

**About the Doctor**

Leester Wu, MD, Director of Radiation Oncology, is board certified in radiation oncology and has nearly 20 years of experience in external beam radiation therapy and Gamma Knife® stereotactic radiosurgery. He brings a diverse background in community practice, research, and academic training to Mount Sinai South Nassau’s Radiation Oncology Department. He was the recipient of numerous honors throughout his undergraduate work at Harvard University and while he was in medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. He completed a residency at Columbia University Medical Center.
Healthy Recipe

Superfood Curry Protein Bowl

This flavorful curry protein bowl, layered with healthy kale, carrots, and superfoods, makes it easy to eat your veggies. Dig in and enjoy!

Ingredients:
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 14-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon curry
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut
- ½ cup sliced red onions
- 2 teaspoons garlic pepper
- ½ bunch of kale
- ½ bunch of baby spinach
- ½ cup carrots, julienned
- ½ cup chopped red cabbage
- 1 large avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced
- 2 cups quinoa, cooked
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, for garnish
- ½ cup hummus
- ¼ cup Greek plain yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:
- In a skillet, add oil and chickpeas. Sauté and add curry. Stir until well combined. Set aside.
- Set oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Drizzle oil over sweet potatoes and sprinkle garlic pepper on the baking sheet. Mix until well combined. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes, or until potatoes are soft. Set aside.
- Put the hummus, yogurt, and a couple of pinches of salt and pepper into a bowl. Stir the mixture until thoroughly blended. In a large bowl, add kale, curry chickpeas, roasted sweet potatoes, carrots, red onions, cabbage, avocado, and quinoa. Drizzle hummus dressing over the salad. Garnish with sesame seeds.

Servings: 4
About Visitation at Mount Sinai South Nassau

Mount Sinai South Nassau has increased its visitation hours as the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients continues to subside.

| Visiting is restricted to one healthy visitor each day per patient for medically qualified patients in unrestricted units | 1 – 7 pm for a maximum of 4 hours |
| Visitors to the Behavioral Health Unit (D4) should stop at the Information Desk to arrange for visitation rather than using the registration kiosks | Monday to Friday, from 1 – 2 pm and 7 – 8 pm; Saturday and Sunday, from 1 – 3 pm, 7 – 8 pm |
| Transitional Care Unit visitation | By appointment only |

Visitor exceptions are made to allow one healthy support person for pediatric and birthing patients; patients with developmental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, where it is medically necessary; and for end-of-life care.

Visitors must be 18 years of age, unless an authorized exception made, and enter through the Main Lobby for screening and registration. A hospital-grade surgical face mask is required to be worn at all times, including while in the patient’s room.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, go to southnassau.org/sn/visitor-information.

To find a doctor, visit mountsinai.org/southnassau.

The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Except where noted, models are used in photos and their appearance here is not reflective of a specific disease profile. Some photos were taken prior to the COVID pandemic. Our practitioners and patients are required to wear appropriate PPE at all times.

Read Healthy Outlook online at mountsinai.org/southnassau.