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Close to Home

As a Philadelphia native, family medicine physician **Dr. Rita George** finds meaning and fulfillment in treating patients in the Community Health Center of **Lower Bucks Hospital**.



When family medicine physician Rita K. George, D.O., joined the staff of Lower Bucks Hospital in November 2021, it was a homecoming of sorts. Dr. George, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, considers it a special honor to be able to treat patients so close to her hometown.

“A lot of places around the country don’t have the community resources and outreach that we have here at Lower Bucks Hospital,” she says. “Another aspect of what we do is community involvement. I, and the other practitioners here, get to know our patients personally, and our entire organization is invested in the community, wanting it to grow and see the people who live here do better.”

Dr. George is based out of Lower Bucks Hospital’s Community Health Center, which opened in August 2019. She treats patients for emergent conditions, whether chronic or acute. The “receptive and welcoming” environment at Lower Bucks Hospital has made it easy for Dr. George to feel at home. She appreciates the opportunity to learn from, and collaborate with, fellow family medicine physicians such as Christopher Belletieri, M.D., and Jayantilal Patel, M.D.

“With family medicine, a huge part of what we do is education,” she adds. “It’s all about shared decision-making. We want to make sure the patient is involved and on board with the treatment plan. When patients understand what’s happening and why it’s happening, they end up having a better experience.”

Lower Bucks Hospital’s team of family medicine practitioners provides fast, convenient, and affordable care for non-life-threatening medical emergencies and routine health needs. Besides treating injuries, infections, and other illnesses, the Community Health Center offers ancillary services such as in-house lab tests, X-rays, and sports and school physicals.

Making an Impact

For Dr. George, a career in medicine seemed almost predestined. She grew up in Northeast Philadelphia, as the daughter of parents who both worked in health care. Listening to her parents’ stories about helping and healing others had a profound impact on her as she began to think about her own aspirations.

“I also took an anatomy and physiology class in college, and I really connected to the subject matter,” she says. “Before medical school, I thought I might go into emergency medicine. It



wasn’t until my third year of medical school, when I was doing my rotations, that family medicine clicked for me. I got to work with physicians whose patients really trusted them. I also enjoyed the slower pace, and how you really had time to connect with the people you were treating.”

After completing her undergraduate education at Villanova University, Dr. George spent several years away from the area building upon her education and experience. She earned her medical degree from Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harrogate, Tennessee. She then completed her family medicine residency at Lonesome Pine Hospital in Big Stone Gap, Virginia.

When asked what should patients look for in a family medicine physician, Dr. George has a few ideas.

“You want someone you can feel you have a good rapport with, someone you can ask questions to, and someone you feel comfortable with,” she says. “I like the opportunity to meet people of all personality types and help them with whatever issues have brought them to us. Solving problems is a big part of what we do, but family medicine goes beyond the medical aspects of treatment. I also get to know patients

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—Dr. Rita George,
Lower Bucks Hospital

personally and meet them where they are.”

Dr. George’s efforts to help others extends beyond her work at Lower Bucks Hospital. She previously volunteered her services at Abington Memorial Hospital, where she shadowed physicians and physician assistants in the emergency and surgical departments, and also volunteered in the Hospital Elder Life Program. She also participated in a Rostro De Cristo mission trip to Durán, Ecuador, where she led activities for afterschool programs and met with patients living in rehabilitation centers for Hansen’s disease, more commonly known as leprosy. She remains actively involved in her church and looks forward to supporting more local efforts designed to uplift community members in need.

Whether someone’s needs are chronic or acute, Dr. George reinforces the importance of seeking medical care when needed. Furthermore, she says the continued investments made by community-based health centers such as Lower Bucks Hospital have made high-quality, locally based medical care more accessible than ever before.

“The biggest thing we want to do is remind people that we’re here,” she adds. “People are busy, and they don’t always prioritize their health. We’re an outpatient facility based in the community, and we’re here to help people in any way we can. We’re also expanding how we can help. This hospital has ambitious plans to keep growing, including bringing in more specialists so patients can have access to more of their doctors in one central place.” ■

Lower Bucks Hospital

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