Have you ever wondered where Overlook physicians turn when *they* need medical care? James N. Gardner, MD, FACS, a longtime member of our medical staff and Chief of Plastic Surgery, has turned to Overlook *three times*.

I’d like to tell you more about Dr. Gardner as I ask for your support of Overlook Foundation’s Year End Appeal. During this season of giving, there is still time to touch lives...change lives...and save lives.

Your gifts help to implement and sustain world-class health care in our community... care that is delivered by people with top-notch credentials and top-shelf compassion... people like Jim Gardner.

Dr. Gardner has been an active member of the Overlook community since joining the medical staff in 1994. To his patients, he’s a talented and compassionate plastic surgeon, specializing in reconstructive breast surgery for women recovering from breast cancer. To his peers, he’s a past president of Overlook’s Medical Staff, a trusted friend, an experienced colleague, and inspiring mentor. To those of us at the Overlook Foundation, he’s a valued member of our board of trustees and an avid proponent of our mission to elevate the level of health care in our community.

*Dr. Gardner prepares for another surgery at Overlook Medical Center.*
“In 1997, I hurt my back and went to see Jack Knightly, a neurosurgeon who attended medical school with me,” recalls Dr. Gardner, a New Jersey native, who graduated from Rutgers University and Rutgers - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, prior to earning his board certification in plastic surgery. “An MRI showed I had a ruptured disc, so Jack operated on me the next day. I was back to work, operating on my own patients, the following week.”

“In 2002, I was on a plane, returning home from a trip to Arizona, when I felt some lumps in the back of my neck,” says Dr. Gardner, who has earned “Top Doc” recognition several times by New Jersey Monthly. “Paul Starker, an Overlook colleague and surgeon, performed a biopsy and I was diagnosed with Stage 3 non-Hodgkins lymphoma. For six months, I walked over to the Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Overlook, just steps from my office, for chemotherapy treatments while continuing to treat my own patients at Overlook. As a result of that experience, I can completely relate to chemotherapy patients who lose their hair and eyebrows, feel nauseous and lethargic, and lose their appetite. I was treated with the same drug that most breast cancer patients receive, and I had the same side effects.”

This year, Dr. Gardner returned to Overlook for another major medical issue. High school gymnastics, college rugby, and years of competitive dancing had taken a toll on his knees. In August, he had a total knee replacement, performed by orthopedic surgeon Jeffrey Leary, MD.
“Two-and-a-half weeks following surgery, I was standing in the operating room again,” Dr. Gardner reports. “My outcome was terrific and I’m continuing to improve my strength and range of motion with physical therapy.”

“There is no reason to look beyond Overlook for my own healthcare,” observes Dr. Gardner. “The talent, technology and facilities rival those at larger academic centers; and here they’re offered in a friendly, personal atmosphere, conveniently close to home…and in my case, work.”

It’s sometimes said that doctors don’t make the best patients. But, physicians like Dr. Gardner admit that being a patient can help make better doctors.

“I have a unique understanding of the total patient experience now that I’ve been a patient myself,” says Dr. Gardner. “I can identify with both the positive results of medical care and the frustrations and setbacks that sometimes occur during recovery.”

Dr. Gardner is not alone. Many Overlook healthcare providers have chosen to be patients at the hospital they call home…and it shows.
Where you go for health care matters. For the ninth year in a row, Overlook has been recognized as a Best Regional Hospital by *U.S. News & World Report*. It is ranked in the top two percent of U.S. hospitals for patient safety and quality by Healthgrades®, which has recognized it 18 times for care across seven specialties, including the Top 100 in the nation for stroke care, gastrointestinal care, general surgery and critical care. Overlook was recently ranked No. 1 in New Jersey for Neurosurgery by Carechex and was named a Top 100 Hospital in the United States by *Newsweek* in its ranking of the world’s 1,000 best hospitals.

Your generous gifts have brought world-class care conveniently close to home. Your ongoing support will ensure that Overlook continues to lead, innovate and elevate health care for everyone in our community. Please join me in supporting the Overlook Foundation’s Year End Appeal.

With sincere appreciation for your generosity,

Clelia Biamonti, Ph.D.
Executive Director

P.S. This holiday season, help ensure that state-of-the-art and state-of-the-heart care is always available for your family, friends, and neighbors. To support our Year End Appeal, please visit our secure website at [www.overlookfoundation.org](http://www.overlookfoundation.org). If you or your spouse has a matching gift program at work, your gift will have even greater impact.

And if you are 70½ or older, take advantage of your IRA to make a qualified charitable distribution. If sent directly from the IRA administrator, it counts toward your required annual minimum distribution but does not trigger income or income tax.

Thank you!