

# Otolaryngology Care

An Interview with Andrea Vambutas, MD, FACS,  
Senior Vice President and Executive Director for Otolaryngology Services, Northwell Health

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Dr. Andrea Vambutas oversees the quality and delivery of Head and Neck Services at Northwell Health. She also serves as chair of otolaryngology at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. Dr. Vambutas is a nationally recognized leader in immune mediated hearing loss. Previously, she was chair of otolaryngology at Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center and North Shore University Hospital and vice chair of otolaryngology at the Zucker School of Medicine, where she is also a professor of otolaryngology and molecular medicine. Dr. Vambutas joined LIJ in 1998 and helped maintain a rich tradition of research, receiving numerous awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for immunology research. She was also instrumental in developing the Apelian Cochlear Implant Center at LIJ, where she served as medical director for more than a decade before becoming department chair in 2015. In addition to her clinical and academic titles, Dr. Vambutas is an investigator in the Center for Autoimmune & Musculoskeletal Disorders at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research. She is a regular reviewer for the NIH and other grant agencies. She has been elected to a number of national positions, including the board of directors of the American Auditory Society, the Education Committee of the American Neurotology Society, the CORE Grant Committee of the American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), and the Research Advisory Board of the American Otological Society. Dr. Vambutas holds a medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and completed her residency at LIJ Medical Center, as well as a fellowship in neurotology at Minnesota Ear, Head and Neck Clinic.*



Dr. Andrea Vambutas

engaging in clinical and translational research that can change the outcomes of our patients.

**Will you highlight Head and Neck Services at Northwell Health?**

We provide care in all subspecialty areas of otolaryngology: head and neck oncology, endocrine surgery, robotic surgery, microvascular reconstructive procedures, cosmetic procedures, rhinology and skull base surgery, pediatric otolaryngology, neurotology, sleep medicine, and laryngology. Most of our faculty see patients at more

than one location, thereby allowing us to reach multiple communities. Additionally, we provide audiology and speech pathology services for the rehabilitation of hearing and speech disorders in both children and adults.

**What have been the keys to the strength and leadership of Northwell Health's otolaryngology specialty?**

The key strength is our tremendous faculty. They provide superior care by collaborating with their community partner physicians that refer patients as well as in multi-disciplinary teams within Northwell to render comprehensive care that addresses all aspects of the patients' needs for the best possible outcome.

**Will you discuss the advances taking place in otolaryngology and what excites you as you look to the future?**

We are in an age of precision medicine. It is clear that in many clinical conditions, various molecular signatures can be observed that may dictate tailoring clinical treatment based on these signatures. This approach is being

implemented in various areas, whether in the care of head and neck cancer, sinus disease or hearing loss. Understanding these molecular signatures and translating them to more precise care is the key to better patient outcomes. Additionally, otolaryngology care is becoming increasingly more ambulatory. Procedures that we used to perform in an inpatient setting now may be ambulatory or even performed in the office. For our patients, that means returning to their normal routines faster, with less pain and greater satisfaction.

**Will you discuss your role as an investigator in the Center for Autoimmune & Musculoskeletal Disorders at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research?**

My laboratory is focused on understanding the molecular mechanisms of immune mediated hearing loss. Although standard of care is through the timely use of corticosteroids to ameliorate their hearing loss, we know that many patients may not respond to corticosteroids. Unfortunately, there are no therapies that effectively address these corticosteroid-resistant patients. By studying the molecular mechanisms in these patients, we have identified a potential new treatment for these patients.

**Did you always know you were interested in a career in medicine and what has made the work so special for you?**

My mother was a biochemist and earned a PhD in an era where the numbers of women in basic science research were significantly less than today. She was an inspirational figure in my life who taught me the importance of understanding the basic science mechanisms in biological processes. ●

**Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?**

I am Senior Vice President and Executive Director of the Otolaryngology service line as well as Professor and Chair of Otolaryngology at the Zucker School of Medicine. My role is to drive the mission and vision of the department: to provide superior otolaryngologic care to patients of all ages through outstanding clinical care, monitoring quality and by actively

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