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Dear Colleagues:

As clinical department chairs at the UVM Larner College of Medicine, we have responsibility for fulfilling the education, research and patient care missions of the College and of our partner, The University of Vermont Medical Center. As physicians, each of us has taken an oath to serve our patients and our community, and we take that promise very seriously. We believe it is an honor and a privilege to care for people when they need us the most, armed not only with the tools of modern medicine but also with open hearts and listening minds. While the events over the last weeks involving the nursing union and strike have been difficult, we want to assure you that we, along with our health care teams across the institution, are fully committed to ensuring that our patients and their families continue to receive safe, effective, high quality, collaborative, compassionate care – no matter what. Our tenets that follow remain strong and reflect why each of us takes great pride in being able to work and live here.

We are a team. At the core of our clinical and academic mission is the care of our patients and their families, and this is a team effort. We support and appreciate every member of the patient care team, including not only the faculty physicians, nurses, social workers and technicians you may interact with, but also the pharmacists, schedulers, laboratory scientists, culinary workers, office managers, and hundreds of others who dedicate their workday to ensuring that our patients receive the care they need, when they need it.

We are teachers and scientists. Our medical center is a vibrant classroom for medical students, nursing students, pharmacy students, laboratory science students, residents, advanced practice nurses, fellows and more. Biomedical research is also thriving here, with many breakthrough discoveries and treatments that are making a difference in the lives of people we care for locally and in turn can then be shared around the world. Studies show patients benefit when receiving care at an academic medical center teaching hospital, from the strength of the health care team to having access to the latest treatments and clinical trials. We are your neighbors, colleagues, and friends. This is one of the nation’s best places to live, by many measures, and we share your commitment to living and raising our families here. As members of this community, each of us has a responsibility to serve it in the best way we can. For all of us involved in the health care mission, it is a privilege to care for you and your family as compassionately and effectively as we care for our own.

We will be here when you need us most. We are proud of the professionalism and commitment of our teams who care for our patients and their families. Every hour of every day, in every department throughout the hospital, and in every clinic across our community, we will continue to focus on caring for you and the members of our community who need us most. This is at the heart of our mission as an institution and in the heart of every person who has chosen this career.

“Every hour of every day, in every department throughout the hospital, and in every clinic across our community, we will continue to focus on caring for you and the members of our community who need us most.”

Again, we are fully committed to ensuring that our patients and their families continue to receive safe, effective, high quality, collaborative compassionate care - no matter what. We promise to be vigilant in our efforts to support, encourage, and inspire our teams to keep patients at the center of all we do, as we honor and celebrate the commitment to service and the deeply personal connections that are the hallmark of our profession.
Hitting the Road – For Miles and Miles

Ultra-Marathoner Enjoys Testing her Limits

For most of us, a 100-mile journey involves filling the tank in our cars. Not Kristin Lundy. Since trying a leg of the Vermont City Marathon in 2001, Kristin has been running ultra marathons, 50 miles and up.

That first relay leg seemed relatively easy, so Kristin started with a full marathon, then five a year, then started looking at something longer. She trained with others who had done ultra marathons and did her first 50-miler in Massachusetts. “I felt great,” she says today. “I took a bunch of walking breaks and was able to make it all the way.”

The next year, she signed up for the Vermont 100 (yep, 100 miles).

Apparently the key to running these long distances, which most of us can’t fathom, is to walk up the hills and inclines and run the downhills and flats, stopping along the way for food and drink. Kristin has used this approach for the many 100-plus mile races she’s done over the past several years, including a 125-miler in the Italian Alps.

She does take some down time after completing a major race – time to “lie in bed and eat sugary cereals.” But within a few days she is usually back at her training regimen.

Kristin loves running in other countries, alongside people who speak different languages and reflect different cultures. “We became friends during the race.”

“It’s just so rewarding,” she says, “to be competing in a race and feeling your body is strong and well-trained… then when you finish, it’s always an amazing sense of accomplishment.”

Kristin is not the only ultra-marathoner among us. Stay tuned for upcoming profiles in ONE of others who tackle 100 miles and more on foot, just for the fun of it.
It’s the Little Things by Gillian English

Taylor Room and Volunteer Services Address Nuances of Care

One day, Amy Cohen, director of Patient and Family Experience, was visiting the Taylor Hospitality room - a place where families of patients can go to take a shower, get a snack, or just relax and take a break. While she was there, a woman was getting out of the shower and realized that one of the volunteers had left a bag with hair ties and a hair brush. “She started crying,” Amy recalls. “She said she felt so much better being able to put up her hair. It was such a nice moment.”

The Taylor Room was founded after the Taylor family of Greenwich, Connecticut received care for a family member in the ICU. Throughout the long recovery, there were many visiting relatives and caregivers, but the family quickly recognized that they had nowhere to go within the hospital for privacy, to “get away from it all”, or just have a quick meal and a shower. That’s why the family made a generous donation to create a space for family members visiting a loved one in any unit throughout the hospital.

In addition to The Taylor Room, Volunteer Services does so much more to address the small things that can make a big difference for patients and families. If there’s something a patient needs, whether it’s a coloring book, snack or simply some deodorant, the FAVORS program, started in 2001, is here to provide it. To make a request, you can simply dial 1-2-3 anywhere on the Medical Center Campus.

“We really want staff to know that there’s a lot of resources available to support patients and families,” Amy says. “Our goal is to make a hospital day a little easier.” She wants patients and families to know that they can call and ask for anything that will make them more comfortable. She encourages employees to share information about The Taylor Room with patients and their families.

Amy really values being able to make these small impacts and working with such dedicated volunteers to do so. “I love being a part of that commitment to service and thinking creatively about how little things make a huge difference to someone who is going through an emotionally complex time. It’s very rewarding.”

“I love being a part of that commitment to service and thinking creatively about how little things make a huge difference to someone who is going through an emotionally complex time. It’s very rewarding.”

AMY COHEN
DIRECTOR OF PATIENT AND FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Facts about the Keto Diet on our Blog
The Keto diet is one of many diets that claim to produce rapid weight loss safely. Is this truth or fiction? Learn more.
Pilot Nursing Mentorship Program Welcomes New Nurses

By Jean Graham, RN

If you’re an experienced nurse, you may remember what it was like when you took your first steps as a new graduate nurse working on a unit or in an outpatient setting: that mix of excitement and nervousness as you found yourself faced with challenges, both expected and unexpected. As a new graduate nurse, your nursing education program sought to prepare you for those challenges. But what you’ve studied as theory doesn’t always prepare you fully for the reality of everything you may face as you become a full-fledged working member of the health care team.

The nursing profession has earned a proud reputation for being the most trusted profession in annual Gallup Polls for the last 16 years. But there is another reputation that the nursing profession has battled with for even longer: nursing eats its young. Here at UVM Medical Center, we want to change that with a new Pilot Nursing Mentorship Program developed by the Mentorship Task Force (part of the Nursing Professional Governance structure).

Through the Nursing Mentorship Program, new graduate nurses hired here will be offered the opportunity to be paired with an experienced Nurse Mentor for a period of one year starting at the end of their unit-based orientation. The opportunity for a new nurse mentee and an experienced nurse mentor to develop a trusting and meaningful relationship has benefits for both participants. Nurse mentee has the benefit of a mentor’s experience and support to help guide them through the challenges ahead. Nurse mentors practice and remember what drew you to the profession in the first place.

If a new graduate nurse already has someone in mind, they are welcome to ask that person to mentor them. Training for Nurse Mentors will be provided starting in August of 2018, and mentees who haven’t already selected someone will be matched with mentors as part of our Nurse Residency program in the fall.

If you are a new graduate nurse and want to learn more about this exciting program, contact Human Resources or e-mail RNMentoring@uvmhealth.org. If you are an experienced UVM Medical Center nurse interested in becoming a nurse mentor, visit the Nursing Mentorship page on our SharePoint hub.

“A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself. A mentor is someone who allows you to know that no matter how dark the night, in the morning joy will come. A mentor is someone who allows you to see the higher part of yourself when sometimes it becomes hidden to your own view.”

Oprah Winfrey
Lauren Rolandini trades her khakis for gym shorts, throws her hair up in a ponytail, and plays in the dirt. Literally. Lauren has two energetic sons and you can always find her outside hiking, snowshoeing, or just digging holes in the yard after a long day at the office. “Whatever it is, we’re always outside,” she says with a laugh.

Lauren grew up in the small town of Sutton, Massachusetts, which has a population of just under 1,000 people. After graduating from Elms College, Lauren spent a year volunteering in Honduras. There, she worked in the clinics, ran a support group for domestic abuse, coached a baseball team, and took on many projects—all in Spanish. “I don’t ever think I’ve ever been so tired,” she says. “By the end of the day every day I was out cold at 8 pm.” Despite the amount of work—and the number of large insects she encountered—Lauren still says the experience was fun and rewarding.

In addition to all of this, Lauren also led a Bed Meeting Redesign task force which focuses on patient flow, how to make the most of the plan for the day and how to accommodate every patient.

When Lauren speaks about her work, it’s clear that she has a passion for it and cares about the well-being of each individual patient. But her favorite part of working here is the people. “For all of us, it’s always about stepping up to the plate to do the right thing for the patient. That’s what I will always love about this organization.”
In January of 2017, Anya Koutras packed her bags and traveled to Ddegaya, Uganda for the first time. In Ddegaya, Anya volunteers at Engeye, a non-profit health clinic that aims to provide healthcare for rural and needy communities in Uganda.

On Anya’s first morning in Ddegaya, she stepped out of her bunkhouse to brush her teeth and stared in awe. Over 100 patients were lined up outside the clinic next door.

Year-round, the clinic has health officers with general knowledge, and visiting doctor teams come two or three times a year. During those times of the year, it’s jam-packed because there is no other way for the citizens of Ddegaya to see a doctor. Anya has spent the past two Januaries volunteering with one of those visiting doctor teams at Engeye. Engeye was founded by an alumna from Anya’s medical college, Stephanie Van Dyke, and a Ugandan, John Kalule. Anya has plans to return to Engeye again in 2019.

“This year, Anya co-led ALSO (Advance Life Saving in Obstetrics) classes for 35 midwives from all over Uganda. It was the first ALSO course ever taught in Uganda. Anya also brought along her 18-year-old daughter, who started the Moon Catcher’s Project, which helps young teenage girls sew reusable sanitary pads so they can stay in school.

The thing that keeps Anya coming back to Uganda is the people that she’s met there and the friends she has made. “I call it the Uganda grace,” she says, “They’re faced with more challenging situations than we have here, and they do it with such poise and calmness. That’s really impacted me.”

As a busy Family Medicine physician, Anya was always interested in global health but found herself too busy to become involved. Over the years, she kept in touch with a friend from medical school who invited her to go to Uganda five years ago. Anya wasn’t ready for it then, but two years later she had a personal life crisis that changed her mind. “It got me thinking, why wait? I’m going to do this, I’m going to go help.”

“The clinic is very self-sustaining and the patients pay what they can,” Anya says, “even if it’s just five cents.”
Food Waste Comes Full Circle by Gillian English

Even if we can’t finish our lunch, we want to be sure that it’s not going to waste. That’s why here at UVM Medical Center, we’ve been composting since 1993.

In May, the nonprofit Practice Greenhealth named the UVM Medical Center’s main campus a top 10 hospital in the nation for waste management with its Circle of Excellence Award. Our composting program played a huge part in this.

“Managing our food waste is just the right thing to do,” says Daria Holcomb, Manager of Dining Services & Nutrition.

In 2017, the UVM Medical Center, Fanny Allen and 1 South Prospect campuses composted a combined 467.76-plus tons of waste. The media total food waste composted that year by other organizations that applied for the Practice Greenhealth Awards was 21.4 tons.

When they buy food and supplies, Holcomb and her colleagues do consider practicality along with environmental impact. Not every meal will be eaten on-site, and not everyone will have access to a compost bin when they finish their food at home or on the run. “A lot of products leave the cafes, so sometimes it’s better to choose recyclable containers than compostable,” says Holcomb.

When that food waste is composted, employees in our kitchen and café areas sort compostable materials into compostable liner bags. The hospital’s waste team then collects and delivers to Green Mountain Compost.

The entire composting process takes about nine to 12 months. Once this process is complete, the compost is turned into rich gardening material that is ready for sale. Then it all comes full circle: We purchase it and use it in our rooftop and Learning Gardens to continue the cycle of growing healthy food on-site.
Wellness Program Inspires Employees to Get Outside
by Gillian English

It’s easy to get stuck in the same routine and forget to step outside and experience the outdoors with family and friends. That’s why Employee Wellness launched the Move into Summer campaign at the start of June. They held workshops, events, and provided people with free two-week memberships at fitness centers in the area.

Barbara Morales signed up for two free weeks at the EDGE and began swimming again. “I was a huge swimmer when I was a kid and I missed it so much,” she said, “I am in a much better mood and I have more energy.” On Morales’ days off, she began hiking mountains with her husband and her dog, trekking up Mount Philo and Mount Spruce. “My dog has been having a blast and it is the perfect exercise to reconnect with my husband after our stretch of work week.”

Barbara is also planning future hiking trips. “My husband and I have signed up for the EDGE and we are going to continue to hike,” Barbara says. “Sometimes it feels like I am a vampire and don’t come out when it is sunny out, so it is great to have these free events to go to the gym and so forth.”

If you have questions or want more information, please contact Employee Wellness at wellness@uvmhealth.org.

MOVE INTO SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS
• Approximately 1,000 different employees participated
• We partnered with 20 different community organizations and businesses
• Over 20 different prizes were provided by Employee Wellness and their partners

ROBIN GARNER
Environmental Services Worker II
Environmental Services
“I take great pride in my work and how it affects the health of The University of Vermont Medical Center community. It’s more than just cleaning – it’s caring.”

FACES of The University of Vermont Medical Center
Employees Who Bike to Work by Gillian English

There are many benefits to taking alternate forms of transportation to work, but employees are even getting paid to do so! The Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association (CATMA) has a Bike-Walk Reward program that is free to the UVM Medical Center. You can log the hours that you walk or bike to work online to earn gift cards to City Market, Merill’s Roxy Cinema or Skirack. These employees are taking advantage of this program and biking to work.

Food Service worker Bill Douglas only puts 2 or 3 tanks of gas in his car year-round. After all, it takes him less time to bike to work than it does to drive his car. He’s been making the two-mile commute for almost seven years. Bill loves breathing in the fresh air in the morning and hearing the birds. “Riding home is how I unwind from the day,” he says. “I’m saving money and helping the environment. I think everybody should try to bike or take some form of alternate transportation.”

Ginny Horne, MD, finds that riding her bike to work is the easiest way to wake her up for the day. She lives only three miles away from the hospital, and it takes her about the same time to bike the path to work that it takes her to drive. It’s hard to balance residency with time to exercise during the workday, but bicycling to work is the most efficient way for Ginny to make time for her workout.

CATMA’s program rewards Ginny and Bill for doing something they already love doing, while they save money on gas and positively impact the environment. For people who don’t own a bike, CATMA offers the Greenride Bikeshare program. Bikes are located in hubs around Chittenden County for easy point-to-point trips. Employees are eligible for the Campus Plan, a 50% off discounted annual membership. If you’re interested in getting involved in the rewards program, bikeshare, or want to learn more, visit the CATMA website.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Professional Billing Department Receives National Recognition

The Professional Billing Department (PRD) finished in the top 10 of the Vizient/AAMC Faculty Practice Survey of academic billing offices. The survey uses multiple metrics to measure the timeliness and accuracy of our professional billing. PRD staff are proud to be recognized for their work and would like to share their appreciation for the work that registration, clinics, coding, self-pay follow and others do to help make them successful. Even though PRD has placed in the top 10 for more than 10 years running, staff continue to embrace the need to get better and look forward to working with everyone to make the billing process a better experience for our patients.

MICU Receives 2018 Center for Donation and Transplant Donate Life Champion Award

Congratulations to our Medical Intensive Care Unit, which has received the Center for Donation and Transplant Donate Life Champion Award for 2018. MICU staff were specifically highlighted for their support of donor families.
Working Together, We Improve People’s Lives

Hearing from our Patients

“I was rushed from a very rural hospital in NY to the emergency room at UVM Medical Center in Burlington, VT. Thanks to Dr. Tranmer and his team I survived a large brain aneurysm rupture... I not only survived but I had no physical disability. I advise any one who might experience any similar health crisis this is the team for you... also a ‘big’ thank you to Dr. Johnson for successfully stopping my brain bleed by placing a ‘platinum coil’ in my brain ... THANK you for my second chance at life...”

—Jolee Ashe

Patient Shares Experience to Benefit Others

In late December of 2017, Larry Michaels—realtor, outdoors adventurer, husband and friend—was diagnosed with a neuroendocrine gastrinoma pancreatic tumor. It was a rare diagnosis, surprising for a man who was so healthy and active. By the time his illness was discovered, the tumor had metastasized to his liver.

Larry’s treatment has been managed collaboratively by Marc Greenblatt, MD, here at the UVM Medical Center, and by Diane Reidy, MD, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. By any definition, that treatment has been a grueling battle. Chemotherapy, hormone treatment and embolization have been the foot soldiers. Screens, scans and exams have been the messengers.

Through it all, Larry has played an active role in the collaboration between UVM Medical Center and Sloan Kettering. Drs. Greenblatt and Reidy have successfully managed Larry’s treatment, making it easier when possible for procedures to be done here in Vermont. Larry has experienced the care of our many health care professionals here at the UVM Medical Center. He’s worked with all of them with courage, dignity and grace.

And he has used his experiences to help us improve the way we provide care. Working with our patient advisory team, Larry has shared his thoughts on how we can better treat the whole person by listening and embedding compassion in every aspect of the care experience. He has provided specific examples that speak volumes: the physician who responded too bluntly when Larry asked about his prognosis; the nurses and technicians who sent him a note after one of his interventional radiology procedures; the staff who scheduled a CT scan the same day, when tensions were high.

Today, he continues to be optimistic about his future, knowing that he is his own best advocate.

“I’m as lucky as you can be with this unlucky diagnosis,” he says, “and I’m grateful for the people caring for me. They listen to me when I share my perspective on what they can do better. They make every effort to show how much they care in everything they do. They are engaged with me as partners in this difficult journey.”

Larry with his embolization team

COMPLIANCE & PRIVACY

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION
The UVM Medical Center has established a confidential disclosure mechanism through its Integrity and Compliance Hot Line, a toll-free telephone line, to enable employees, residents, staff and patients to report instances of noncompliance and/or make inquiries on compliance issues. The Compliance Hot Line can be reached at: (800) 466-7131 or (802) 847-9430.