Celebrating the Miller Building

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Strong Leadership Shapes Miller’s Success

No one was less surprised, or more gratified, by the success of the Miller building’s construction and opening than the project’s three principal leaders — Dawn LeBaron, Peg Gagne and Dave Keelty. The building was completed ahead of schedule and below budget, and officially opened June 1 without incident.

From the beginning, their focus in leading this effort was on empowering stakeholders as decision-makers — from patient and family advisors who were involved in the early design phase to nurses who took on the role of transition leaders for the move to Miller. Collaboration and communication defined every stage of the process, and the six years of planning paid off in a big way.

“One of the keys to why we could do what we did with such success on Saturday is about relationships. And genuine ones. I honestly believed that this is exactly the way it would play out.”

DAWN LEBARON, VICE PRESIDENT OF HOSPITAL SERVICES

“What I most appreciate is that the building came back exactly — I mean exactly — as we intended. The project is getting a lot of good vibes and has been received extremely well as a LEED-certified building that is projected to consume half the energy of a typical new-construction hospital.”

DAVE KEELTY, DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

“Walking through the halls after we moved in and seeing into the rooms, it was awesome to see physicians sitting at the bedside, patients and families sitting in the sun and being able to enjoy the space, nurses at those micro stations using the computers. It’s so gratifying to see that it’s working the way it was planned.”

PEG GAGNE, RN, DIRECTOR OF MEDICINE, PSYCHOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

CINDY CASWELL
Unit Secretary/Endoscopy Assistant, Endoscopy

“I come to work every day doing the job I love. As Unit Secretary, I meet and greet people with a smile. My motto has been, and always will be, to treat people the way I would like to be treated, with respect.”
On the morning of June 1, Baird 3 officially became a medicine unit, focused exclusively on the complex needs of a diverse range of patients. The efforts to build this team, led by Nurse Manager Jenna Page, say a lot about the resilience and dedication of our people.

As the Miller Building officially opened, the Baird 3 staff, comprised of new graduate nurses and experienced nurses, quite literally hit the ground running. Not only had they never worked in the Baird 3 space before, but most of them had been with the organization less than six months — and they had never worked together. “Even today, a few weeks in,” says Charge Nurse Heather Tetrault, “we’re still trying to remember each other’s names!”

And yet the team spirit, built from a clean slate, is strong. Says Page, “Usually when you start a job there’s an existing culture that you try to fit into — we’re starting from ground zero, building the kind of culture and team we want.”

Building the framework for this success has included the logistical, from where supplies will be stored, to how nurses will report to each other to the aesthetics of the new space. When the ortho patients who had been on the former Baird 3 unit moved to Miller, this created significantly more single patient rooms. The space is also getting some sprucing up — “our HGTV makeover,” as Page calls it.

To prepare staff for their debut June 1, Page organized trainings, a tour of the unit, social events outside work and a week of lunches. “Our goal was to help the team feel as prepared as they possibly could, both in terms of the work itself and having relationships with their colleagues. They’ve embraced it.”

Charge Nurse Heather Tetrault was drawn to the team because of the focus on medicine patients. “I love the mix of patients — from 18 to 100 years old — and the diversity of their conditions. I was also interested in being part of a brand-new unit.”

Strong leadership has been key to the effort. For Page, it’s the big and small things — reaching out to staff constantly, ensuring they have what they need to care for our patients, and, well...chocolate. A giant plate of candy sits on her file cabinet — yesterday it was lifesavers and gummy candy, but when Jenna heard about a desire for chocolate, she made it happen. “When my nurses tell me they need chocolate, I’m there!”

But beyond the little things, there are the nuances of what it takes to build a team. LNA Jamie Theriault did her training on the unit with what was then the ortho patient population. Since June 1, she’s been impressed with the

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Hearing from Our Physicians

“The transition to the new Miller space was seamless for our patients, my resident and myself on call, made possible through the calm, focused and talented team effort provided by the entire staff. Importantly, the new space will allow for University of Vermont Medical Center to better accommodate the greater numbers of patients, with more complex medical problems, in its role in support of the University of Vermont Health Network.”

MARK PLANTE, MD

“I would like to say that I was material in the transfer of the patients from McClure 5 to Miller 4 on June 1st but truly this was a day for the nurses and other support personnel. The community spirit and pride was a keen reminder of the commitment and dedication of UVM Medical Center employees to provide the best care possible to their patients and our community. I continue to hear nothing but positive remarks from patients and staff since the building has opened.”

PETER VAN BUREN, MD

“The new Miller space gives our patients access to private spaces where they can interact with their care teams. The care teams continue to provide 21st century care, but patient’s are now experiencing it in a 21st century space. The space also provides for enhanced family support while preserving the privacy all deserve.”

BRIAN IRWIN, MD

(Continued from page 3)

unit leadership. “Bringing this team together has really been remarkable. When we all started, we had no idea how we were going to work together. But it’s already feeling like a family, and I give all the credit to Jenna. She asks our input, she genuinely cares about us. You walk down the hall and people are laughing, always ready to help — it’s contagious.”

Glenn Grushko, RN, recently completed the accelerated bachelor’s degree program in nursing at UMass Amherst and interviewed around the country to find a team that felt like the right fit. She says she’s found it here: “I think everyone was recruited to be positive and a team player and it really shows.”

And Grushko is not the only staff person who has come from out of state. “It’s really exciting to see the diversity in our new hires,” says Page. “Some of our staff have uprooted their families to be here, and they’re bringing with them a really interesting mix of experience and perspectives.”

In the days and weeks ahead, the Baird 3 team will continue to grow together as the unit takes shape. In the meantime, they are enjoying getting to know one another as they serve our patients. “I’m incredibly proud of our team,” says Assistant Nurse Manager Nicole Dragoon, RN. “They have really stepped up in an extraordinary situation.”
On June 1 and in the days after, our patients and our people shared their thoughts about what Miller means to them.

"I used to have a little slice of sky, but now I have this view. Wow. This is amazing...incredible."
Peter Gold, patient

"I have worked here for over 35 years, but was a cardiology patient at a very young age. Being a part of the Miller Building Go Live gave me a sense of pride for working here at UVM Medical Center. The more I give, the happier I feel!! It was good for my SOUL!"
Denise Cross, Monitoring Services Coordinator, Volunteer Greeter and Guide on Move Day

"I do all the financial reporting for the Miller project, so being part of this day is just amazing! Doing things like this makes me feel even more that I'm a part of something important."
Laura Sleeper, Senior Financial Analyst, Volunteer Greeter on Move Day

"This project was a great opportunity to work with leadership across the organization. Our meetings were professional but also relaxed and informal which allowed us to share our personal ideas, ask questions and have a nice dialogue."
Michael Connolly, RN, transition team leader

"I was so impressed by the size of the room and especially the bathroom. It was so spacious and beautiful and I could get my power wheelchair around with no problem."
Katie Randall, patient and family advisor

"This organization helped save my son’s life and I am deeply inspired by the amount of care that is put into caring for our community at every single step."
Charlotte Safran, employee volunteer, patient- and family-centered care coordinator
“Working on the Miller project got me involved in other areas across the hospital that I wasn’t previously involved in. When we can cross-pollinate, we all work better and build mutual respect.”

Leslie Twitchell, RN, transition team leader

“It’s like going from black and white to color.”

Stephanie Rettew, RN

Moving patients on Miller Move Day was even easier because it was all planned out. All we had to do was go pick up the patient and they’re already packaged for transport. It was an easier day for us thanks to all the advance planning.”

David Ely, orderly II

“When I’m 100 years old and a patient in the Miller building I can say I pushed the first patient in. This was a really important day. It’s a moment that will stick with me.”

Jamie Pecor, orderly II

“I was a hospital chaplain in the past. One thing I noticed was that the quality of the conversations I had with patients in single rooms was very different. People are much more willing to be open about their fears and their concerns when they have a sense of real privacy.”

Margie Emery-Ginn, gift/donor

“It was ironic that I was with my father as he became the 20th patient to move to Miller. I thought, ‘Wow,’ this has gone full circle. My dad’s transition from McClure 5 to Miller 6 was so well-rehearsed...the atmosphere was calm and joyful.”

AnneMarie DeFreest, patient and family advisor

“This is where the future of medicine is.”

Joseph Wells, RN
An Unexpected Test Run

Lauren Curry already felt personally and professionally connected to the Miller building. As a patient and family advisor for the cardiovascular service line, she volunteered early on for the room design team. And as executive director of the Tarrant Foundation, she oversaw the $1 million grant the nonprofit made to support the project.

But she got closer than anticipated to opening weekend when she wound up there late Saturday night with her husband, who was admitted after running an 88K race earlier in the day.

“The ironic thing is that I’m the one in my family who is always consuming health care,” says Curry, who had open-heart surgery in 2010. Her stays in cramped and noisy double rooms convinced her that new facilities were needed and could benefit everyone in the community. And she was thrilled with her first-hand experience.

“Right away, I noticed that when you close the door of the room, it’s quiet in a way that the old rooms couldn’t achieve. I can’t get over the fact that Dave actually slept,” she says. “In the morning, he was able to get up and sit in a chair by the window. It couldn’t have been more beautiful with the sun coming up, looking out over Lake Champlain.”

When the care team came in, Curry and her husband talked with them in the seating area. “Instead of looking down on a patient in a bed, you can sit in a circle. It changes the dynamic and is an incredibly powerful signal that you are in this together,” she says.

For his part, Curry’s husband is just fine and is eager to have it be known he placed second in the ultramarathon. Curry came away from the overnight ultra-impressed with the outcome of the project she has been involved with from the beginning.

“It was quiet, it was team-oriented, it was respectful, it was beautiful — all of those things you imagine it could be.”

LAUREN CURRY

“**It was quiet, it was team-oriented, it was respectful, it was beautiful — all of those things you imagine it could be.**”

ELEANORE SINCLAIR
Lab Reimbursement Specialist, Lab Outreach

“My greatest satisfaction is providing necessary support and help to patients, clients, and co-workers. As a lab employee I work closely with other departments and have a good relationship with them.”
Bringing the Best of the Old to the New

Before leaving their old unit for good, the close-knit team of oncology nurses on Shepardson 4 gathered to bid the place that held so much history a proper goodbye. Tamara Dennis, RN, and her colleagues shared stories about their time on the floor caring for patients and families that left them with lasting memories — memories they wanted to be sure to bring along.

“We’ve gotten attached to so many of our patients and their families because many oncology patients can stay for a month or longer while getting their chemotherapy,” says Dennis, who will celebrate 22 years here as an oncology nurse in October. “Our Shep 4 unit is really tight. We’ve thrown birthday parties for patients on our unit, we’ve married people on our unit, and we’ve said goodbye to people on our unit.”

Of course, there’s much to love about the new unit on Miller 5, with its wide hallways, ample natural light, new technology and spacious rooms. It’s obvious that nurses played a key role in the design of the rooms because they are so much easier to navigate.

“The computers are placed at the head of the beds now so we don’t have to turn our backs to our patients when we’re charting,” says Kelly Cueman Sargent, RN. “I can’t tell you how much time used to be spent moving things around to get patients to the bathroom. Now it’s no problem and walkers actually fit through the door.”

Still, the new-ness of it all takes some getting used to. On Shep 4, the nurses were always in close proximity. The Miller 5 hallways are wider and longer, there are three medication rooms instead of just one, and only one nurse assigned to each private room. The larger unit with more beds means a bigger team of nurses.

“One of the concerns that came up was that we might lose that family bond in the transition to such a big unit,” Dennis says. “We’ve had conversations about how we’re intentionally going to make sure we stay close and about how we’ll welcome new members of our staff to become part of this family.”

On one of her first days on the new unit, Cueman Sargent says she was feeling a little overwhelmed and disconnected. Then she saw that some of her teammates had put up decorations and signs to welcome one of their longtime patients “home” for treatment.

“When I went and saw the room I was amazed and it made me realize that though we are bigger and more spread out, we are still the same,” she says. “That was an example of who are as a team and how we care for patients, despite how the logistics have changed.”

“Our Shep 4 unit is really tight. We’ve thrown birthday parties for patients on our unit, we’ve married people on our unit, and we’ve said goodbye to people on our unit.”

TAMARA DENNIS, RN
Miller Made Possible Through Philanthropy

Contributions at every level helped the Miller Building become a reality. Without the community’s remarkable philanthropic investment of over $30 million, the Miller Building would not be the leading-edge health asset it is.

“Support for the Miller Building reflects the very best in our community,” says Kevin McAteer, Chief Development Officer, UVM Medical Center Foundation. “It shows that people recognize the value of our academic medical center and the importance of ensuring the quality of our facilities matches the outstanding quality of our skilled, compassionate, and committed teams of nurses, physicians, and staff.”

The groundwork for reaching the Miller Building’s $30 million fundraising goal began with Bob and Holly Miller’s donation of Holly Court in May of 2013. Since then, more than 1,000 households have made charitable gifts. Of these:

- Over 500 came from our employees — including residents, fellows and UVM Health Network leadership
- Over 60 gifts were made by former employees
- Over 80 gifts were made in honor of a caregiver
- Over 200 gifts were made in memory of a loved one

Each gift is an investment in our work and in the people we serve. Together, these gifts will have lasting impact on patients, families, caregivers and learners—for generations to come.

Frank Ivelleman, MD, at the Miller donor recognition wall

See many names of donors (some of whom you’ll know) on the Miller donor recognition wall outside the Level 3 Surgery Waiting Area.

FACES
of The University of Vermont Medical Center

CURTIS TUBBS
Payroll Application Analyst, Payroll

“It motivates me when my work enhances our systems and processes, allowing our leaders and employees to spend more of their time focused on caring for our patients.”
Sweet Surprise

Lily Sickles was comfortably settled into her room on Miller 5, but told her nurse, Milton Rosa-Ortiz, that she was especially sad to be in the hospital during lilac season. “This is my favorite week of the year, because you walk around town and everything smells so sweet. It’s magical. And now I wasn’t going to get to experience it.”

The next morning, Rosa-Ortiz left his Burlington home early for his bike ride to work carrying a pair of clippers with him. He stopped at a few overgrown white and purple lilac bushes along his route and snipped just enough to fill a spare vase the nurses keep on the floor. “When I came in this morning I put them on Lily’s tray,” he said. “She was still sleeping.”

Sickles awoke to the fragrant aroma and lovely sight of the blossoms. “Milton is super kind,” she said. “He’s been great from the beginning. He’s taken special care of me.”

Do you know someone at the UVM Medical Center who goes above and beyond for our patients?
Please send to: Eleanor.Osborne@uvmhealth.org and we will share in an upcoming issue of ONE!

MIKE JOHNSTON
Security Officer Lead, Security

“I’m inspired everyday by the patients and employees that I work with. I find it especially rewarding to de-escalate a situation using my interpersonal skills that I have developed with these interactions. I feel all of these experiences have made me a better person.

COMPLIANCE & PRIVACY DEPARTMENT INFORMATION
The UVM Medical Center has established a confidential disclosure mechanism through its Compliance and Privacy 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, or via email at ComplianceOfficer@uvmhealth.org.
MILLER OPENING DAY (Continued)

Visit our gallery of Miller Move Day photos.