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Physician Sees Puerto Rico Devastation Up Close

“It looked like a bomb went off.”

Such is the world that Patti Fisher, MD, found when she and a group of seven others disembarked from a boat that took them from Ft. Lauderdale to the island of Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. There to provide medical relief, they came to an island whose entire infrastructure had been decimated by the roaring winds and rising waters of the monster storm.

Across the island, power lines and telephone poles were down. Roads and bridges that hadn’t been washed out were spotted with cars, some moving, some completely stopped. Lines at gas stations snaked through what used to be neighborhoods, with drivers waiting up to 11 hours for a tank of gas. In a precarious new world where only cash was accepted, long lines formed at every functioning ATM.

The hospitals were all running on generators, lifesaving technology sustained by dwindling fuel. When Patti first arrived, five days after Maria struck, one of the hospitals had just six hours of diesel left.

Around the island, people sat in their battered homes, unsure of where to go or what to do.

The systems built to protect people were fractured or non-existent. There’s no 911 to call. FEMA and other organizations that were there to help were not communicating with each other.

The mood of the people varies. Initially, many were just happy to be alive. But as the weeks drag on without power and no end in sight, moods are fraying.

For those who came to help, the logistics of providing that help were equally frustrating. Patti and her team acted as a sort of mobile unit, travelling from village to village, to see where they could be the most useful. Without much support and with little communication, this meant a lot of driving, missed opportunities, and time lost.

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Patti spent most of her time helping people get their medications refilled. Without functioning pharmacies, it was difficult getting people their high blood pressure and diabetes medications at a cost they could afford. “One woman was charged $280 for medications that she could have gotten in generic form,” says Patti. “People became distraught and anxious. And these were not medications they could do without.”

It was these scenarios, played out time and again, that proved to be the biggest surprise for Patti and her team. “The logistics of everything were just so difficult. The medical needs in and of themselves were less obvious; but the health care infrastructure was broken, and the ripple effect was all-encompassing.”

Further, she says, it doesn’t appear that things will improve anytime soon. “Without power or water, I think things will get worse. There will be more problems with diarrhea, skin problems and other worrisome health issues. You have the makings of a public health crisis here.”

Against the backdrop of the confusion and uncertainty are the people themselves. “They are bewildered by what’s happened,” she says. “They are frustrated and upset that the systems aren’t working. Yet they are grateful for the help that comes their way. We felt like a lifeline.”

Patti Fisher, MD, travelled to Puerto Rico with a team sponsored by Heart to Heart, an international organization that is providing medical relief to some of the hardest-hit and remote areas of Puerto Rico. To learn more, visit Hearttoheart.org.

Get your free flu shot

Check out the employee flu shot clinic schedule.

Get your shot and earn $35 in a future paycheck: Simply register your vaccination as your 2017 $35 Preventive Health activity on the Employee Wellness website. Prefer to get your flu shot elsewhere? Bring documentation of your vaccination to Employee Health – you can still qualify for the $35 incentive! Contact Employee Wellness for additional information.
On September 29, 361 members of the UVM Medical Center community streamed into the 2nd annual Language Access and Communication Expo. Small bouquets of carnations sat on the registration table, color-coded to match flowers pinned to the lapels of different interpreters inside.

Inside, interpreters and more than 40 vendors mingled with physicians, nurses, students, volunteers, patients and community members. Some attendees tried on goggles to experience visual impairment. Others were guided behind curtains, and walked through a mock doctor’s appointment – where they were spoken to only in Spanish or American Sign Language regarding a complicated health issue.

Such appointments are one tool that the hospital’s Language Access Services team is using to “raise the bar” on improving care for patients and families, said Lynette Reep, CI and CT, ASL Interpreter/Interpreter Coordinator at the UVM Medical Center.

“This event is an opportunity for staff and providers to feel the patient’s perspective,” Reep said. “What is it like to try to explain my symptoms to a doctor who doesn’t speak my language?”

We began hosting this event in 2016 as part of our patient- and family-centered care effort. Many of our patients have limited English proficiency, and we want to provide them with the best possible care.

“I was struck by so much diversity and creativity in the room.”

EXPO ATTENDEE
Open Enrollment 2017: November 15 – December 4

Open Enrollment is just around the corner! We are pleased to announce a few benefit enhancements in the coming year. Some of the improvements to our benefits for 2018 include:

- Dependent Child Age Limit increase for dental and vision coverage.
- Additional life insurance offered for you and your spouse without medical underwriting.
- Short-term disability maximum length extended.
- Partnership with The Hartford for Family Medical Leave administration.
- Upgraded vision plan.
- Ability to save money when utilizing care at UVM Medical Center, Central Vermont Medical Center & Porter Hospital
- New Wellness Program Incentives.

FACES of The University of Vermont Medical Center

JENNA CARROLL
Patient Service Specialist, IV Medicine
“\textit{I believe every patient should be treated as if they were a member of your own family.}”

Get on Your Smoothie Bike!

Employee Health has moved and is now part of the wellbeing services offered by Employee Wellness and the Employee & Family Assistance Program. To celebrate this joining together of services, employees were invited to visit their new space at One South Prospect Street, Rehab 4. There were smoothies to sample (courtesy of the smoothie bike), prizes and more for the over 70 employees who stopped by.
Clinical Integration Summit draws 200 Network staff, providers, leaders

Nearly 200 people from around the University of Vermont Health Network gathered October 14-15 in Burlington for the first Clinical Integration Summit. Four national speakers contributed their experiences to a discussion of the benefits, challenges and opportunities of integrating clinicians around our network.

The weekend was sponsored by the UVM Health Network Medical Group. Highlights included:

• **Ken Kaufman**, chair of health care consultants Kaufman Hall, suggested putting aside the uncertainty in the federal government, but don’t ignore the changes being made by new competitors. “We will lose if we hold onto the status quo.”

• **Tal Ben-Shahar**, Harvard University professor, talked about how his field of study – positive psychology – supports better relationships, organizations and outcomes: by focusing on what works. “Don’t just fix what’s wrong. You have to also build on what’s right.”

• **Steven Johnson**, award-winning author, provided historical perspectives on how and where innovative thinking happens. The ideal “coffeehouse” (as in the coffeehouses of London where the Age of Enlightenment started in the 18th century) – is informal, diverse and comes together in a multidisciplinary space in support of an “open exploration of the world around you.”

• **Robert Nesse**, MD, former Mayo Clinic Health System CEO, said that to thrive, “think about your mission, values and purpose, and build your health care system around that.” Providers must come together to address this collectively, although they can’t do this by themselves.

Other insight was provided by three panels that included:

**The five hospital presidents:**
- Fred Kniffen, MD, Porter
- Eileen Whalen, MHA, RN, UVM Medical Center
- Stephens Mundy, CVPH and Alice Hyde
- Anna Noonan, RN, BSN, MS, CVMC
- John Remillard, Elizabethtown and InterLakes Health

**And five physician leaders:**
- Lewis First, MD, Vermont Children’s Hospital
- David Schneider, MD Cardiovascular Service Line
- Debra Leonard, MD, PhD Laboratory and Pathology Medicine
- Todd Whitman, MD, Hematology/Oncology, CVPH
- Claude Nichols, MD
EMT Reaches Beyond Job Description – Every Day

His ID badge says EMT, but that’s just one of Mike Romeo’s responsibilities in his self-described jack-of-all-trades job in the Emergency Department. Now you can add “Chief Cheapskate Officer” to his title, with an accomplishment that has resulted in improved patient care, enhanced efficiency and dollars saved for our organization.

In a busy Emergency Department that sees upwards of 180 patients per day, the nuts and bolts of turnover are always an issue. For those patients who end up waiting on stretchers to be admitted, the quality of our stretcher mattresses has always been important because the longer they have to lie on these mattresses, the more they are at risk for skin breakdown – a significant health issue with both human and fiscal costs.

Additionally, these mattresses needed to be cleaned with harsh chemicals after each patient for infection prevention purposes. This has shortened the shelf-life of the mattresses, costing us upwards of $9000 per year and filling our landfills prematurely.

Enter Mike. In talking to our Stryker representative, he learned about a new gel-foam stretcher mattress that had a number of features that made it safer, more efficient and more durable. Because it is easier to clean, it is better for our patients and it lasts longer.

From an infection prevention, cost and efficiency standpoint, it all made sense to Mike.

After some good old-fashioned bartering, he was able to negotiate a lower price for each mattress. Still, the total cost for the mattresses needed was nearly triple what the ED had in their small equipment budget for the year.

In the end, this was just a small bump in the road. Following discussions with Kristin Baker, ED nurse manager, and others, the decision was made to ask other departments if they would be willing to share their leftover small equipment budgets with the ED to help make the purchase – and they were. “From their perspective, it made total sense,” says Mike. “Some of these areas see these patients with skin breakdown, so they know firsthand the human costs of an inferior product.”

We were the first hospital in the country to order the gel foam stretcher mattresses.

Today, one year later, Mike is proud to show how wise a decision this has been – for our patients, our overall budget and our environment. The year-old mattresses look brand new. There have been fewer incidences of skin breakdown. There has been no need to even replace a single cover. We’ve spared our landfills old mattresses.

And the ED was able to donate some of the old stretcher mattresses that were still in good shape to other departments, saving them time and money.

“It was one of those things where, working together, we were able to focus on something that might seem like a little thing – but it makes a big difference in the lives of our patients.”

**Benefits of New Gel Foam Stretchers**

- Improved infection prevention because it’s easier to clean
- Gel surface lowers risk of skin breakdown
- Increased durability leads to cost savings and lower impact on our environment
- Lower cost overall
Electrical Lead Relishes Expecting the Unexpected

By Danielle Calaway

When asked to describe a day in the life of an Electrical Lead, Brian Reed laughs. “Most days I don’t know what to expect!”

From supporting facilities maintenance and retrofitting activities (like installing LED lights), to coordinating contractors and project communications, Brian enjoys a mix of hands-on and administrative work. “I’m never bored,” says Brian. “I’m always working on something different, with different people.” He credits “our awesome team” with making his work enjoyable.

Brian, who’s worked as an electrician for 16 years, joined the Main Campus Facilities Management team last January. After spending much of his career in commercial settings, he says he was eager “to be part of something bigger.” The sprawling medical center, with its variously aged buildings, keeps him on his toes: “It’s crazy, the things I’m still learning after nine months.”

In his free time, Brian enjoys local motorsports, camping, ice fishing, and going to concerts. He resides in Duxbury with his wife, Tara, and their two daughters, Brooke and Sydney.

Health Care is a Right for Every Human

These are uncertain and troubling times. Here at the University of Vermont Health Network, we have seen the resulting anxiety reflected in the faces and words of the people we encounter every day. While we can’t change the world, we can welcome everyone who comes through our doors with respect, curiosity and understanding. We are committed to making that kind of care available to everyone.

The UVM Health Network Medical Group, made up of hundreds of health care professionals throughout Vermont and Northern New York, embraces an uncompromising approach to health care based on quality, science and each person’s essential humanity.

We aim to provide the best care available – and to continue to step up as leaders in our communities – in a way that reflects our core values of compassion, collaboration, altruism, inquisitiveness, respect and diversity. We work hard to tailor that care to the individual needs of each patient.

Across our network, we believe that health care is a human right, and that healthy, diverse and robust communities are characterized by universal access to health care.

We are reminded daily – whether by the joy of a new life or the anguish of one extinguished – of just how intertwined we health care providers are in the lives of the people we care for. To continually improve the care we provide and make sure that we sustain that excellence, we need feedback. We welcome your input, engagement and partnership as we continue building strong, healthy communities.

Thomas Peterson, MD, a family physician, and Claude Deschamps, MD, a thoracic surgeon, are, respectively, chair of the Board and the president/CEO of The University of Vermont Health Network Medical Group.
CHT Nutrition Educator Advocates for Healthy Choices

For Emily Clairmont, an interest in complementary and alternative medicine led to her career as a Registered Dietitian on our Community Health Team.

Growing up in Shelburne, Emily was initially interested in art therapy. Later on, at Bastyr University in Seattle, she gravitated towards a degree in Nutrition because, she says, “I felt like helping people eat healthfully was a way to get to the source of good health.”

Ultimately, she earned a Master’s degree in Nutrition, after which she completed a dietetic internship at Cornell University before passing her national board certification. Vermont once again beckoned, and she started out volunteering with the Health Care Shares Program before taking a job as an inpatient clinical dietitian. “That was a great experience,” she says, “but I knew that ultimately I wanted to work with patients on an outpatient basis. I was really interested in helping them set goals and overcome challenges.”

She joined the Community Health Team in 2016. Patients are referred to her for a broad range of needs: she sees patients whose goals are managing weight as well as managing chronic disease, from diabetes to heart and auto-immune disease, to IBS and IBD. She aims to support and encourage patients to improve their health through nutrition education and counseling. “It’s a really nice blend of private practice and public health because I’m able to work with individual patients on their unique health concerns and the Community Health Team is a resource that is both accessible and available at no cost.”

Most of all she enjoys the patient interaction – coaching them through how to make the best choices for their health. “It’s very rewarding to hear how they’re applying what they’ve learned.”

And, in case you’re wondering, she is a proponent of the “80/20” rule: “You can’t eat perfectly healthfully all the time. For most of us, it’s okay to have that piece of cake every once in a while.”

The secret is balance – and she enjoys helping her patients find that balance.

“It’s a really nice blend of private practice and public health because I’m able to work with individual patients on their unique health concerns and the Community Health Team is a resource that is both accessible and available at no cost.”
LAUREN PEARSON, DO
Resident
“My priorities? Caring for my patients and building a work environment founded on positive energy, respect, and recognition of each other’s contributions to patient care. I believe this is the way to elevate each person to their personal best.”

Educational Program: A Father’s Perspective on Sepsis – November 1

On Wednesday, November 1, from 12-1 pm in Davis Auditorium, a father will speak about losing his 12-year-old son to sepsis – and what health care professionals need to know about the risks, signs and symptoms of this life-threatening condition.

Ciaran Staunton’s son Rory sustained a minor cut on a school basketball court. As his condition deteriorated, multiple health care professionals missed the signs of sepsis, until it was too late.

The CDC estimates that more than 1.5 million people get sepsis each year in the U.S. At UVM Medical Center in 2016 we cared for over 1200 patients with sepsis.

As health care professionals, it is essential that we detect the symptoms of this condition early.

We hope that you will take the time to attend this important event. For those of you who are off-site, we will be live-streaming the event so that you can access it from your UVM Medical Center computer:

1. In web browser, type: https://videostream.uvmmedcenter.org
2. Select live-stream. Then select the presentation at either available speed. Your video will appear in a pop-up window.

ServiceNow: New Way to Request IS Support Launches November 7

With the expansion of applications and information systems across the UVM Health Network, it is critical for staff at all of our partner hospitals to be able to engage the right IS resources.

Beginning November 7, ServiceNow will replace FrontRange as the primary way for staff to request help from Information Services.

The ServiceNow customer portal allows staff to submit requests, notify IS about problems, get self-help and track the status of their request.

The IS Service Center will continue providing telephone support for more urgent requests.

In 2018, ServiceNow will be in place at three UVM Health Network partner hospitals: CVMC, CVPH and Porter.

For more information, contact the IS Service Center, 847-1414.
Support Our 2017 United Way Campaign

OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 10

“The first time I heard English was when I came to Vermont from Rwanda. My ears didn’t hear the words. I only spoke French, Swahili and Kinyarwanda. When I started work, my supervisors used signs and gestures to explain my role at Rhino Foods. Through the English at Work program, I learned vocabulary specific to my work. Because I work with many new Americans, and many different languages are spoken, it’s very important that we can communicate in one language.

These classes helped me understand other people, speak clearly and be more confident. Now, I can talk with my children, who only want to speak English at home, and I don’t need an interpreter when I go to the hospital or to school to meet with a teacher.”

THEOGENE MAHORO, ENGLISH AT WORK PARTICIPANT, RHINO FOODS, INC.

BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT

The United Way funds and convenes Working Bridges, an employer initiative which develops innovative strategies using the workplace to deliver human resources for the benefit of both employee and business. English at Work, a pilot program developed by United Way, Vermont Adult Learning, and Community College of Vermont, delivers English language classes at local manufacturing worksites.

Note: This video is designed for use in Internet Explorer.
Celebrating Our Infection Prevention Advocates

On Friday, October 20, we held our 9th Annual Infection Prevention Advocate celebration in the Davis Concourse. Twenty-one posters highlighting the work of some of our Infection Prevention Advocates were showcased at the event, allowing staff who stopped by to see firsthand the excellent work that our infection prevention advocates do each year.

This year, 64 of your colleagues chose to be infection prevention advocates.

Projects highlighted at this year’s event included hand hygiene, *C. diff* knowledge, cleaning practices of patient care equipment, workstations on wheels and safe injection practices. The poster event was followed by a discussion of tickborne diseases, led by Jean Dejace, MD, in Davis Auditorium.

blog

Passwords: What You Need to Know

Information Security Analyst Brendan Chamberlain discusses the role of passwords in cyber security.
Nutrition Services Staff Lend a Hand for Donor Thank-You Event

It was a team effort from Nutrition Services for a recent event thanking our donors. Pictured here are Kayla Murray, Adam Pheiffer, Richard Jarmusz, Katie Mcgann, Lacy Lewis, Kyle Woodley, Tanya McDonald, Jeremy Hill, Justin Gilbeau, Jordan Cortell, Ismar Biberovic, Brenda Narucki, Debbie Dubie, Mary Glass, Gayle Quimby, Jon Beach, Andy Davidson and Kelly Allen. Thanks to all!

JessieMae Belcher Receives DAISY Award

Congratulations to JessieMae Belcher, RN, who has received the most recent DAISY Award. Here's a letter from a patient describing the care she received:

“What’s it like when someone listens to you – really listens? There it was, the middle of the night, and I developed shivers, sweats and short, choppy breaths. The hospital room was dark and quiet. I was having a panic attack each time I closed my eyes to try to sleep – sure that they would never open again. The night nurse on the cardiac floor responded to my red “please help me!” button. JessieMae stood by the hospital bed. She listened. She asked questions to get more details and to construct her understanding of the terror I was experiencing. . . she consulted with another nurse to verify my blood pressure. She called the doctor and shared observations. She took action and gave me recommendations. She listened. Thank you, Jessie Mae!”

Eileen Whalen Receives Nursing Alumni Leadership Award

Eileen Whalen, MHA, RN, President and COO, UVM Medical Center, recently received a Nursing Alumni Council Leadership Award from her alma mater, Niagara University, in recognition of her many years of leadership in health care and her longstanding spirit of community service. A member of the Class of 1977, Whalen began her career as a trauma nurse, building an exemplary career over the years through such roles as executive Vice President at the University of Arizona Medical Center in Tucson and, more recently, as Chief Executive at Harborview Medical Center in the state of Washington. She has also served her communities in a variety of roles, including as a board member of the American Trauma Society and the Trauma Center Association of America. “I’m honored to have been recognized by my alma mater,” said Eileen. “At every stage of my career, I’ve felt that it is a privilege to serve our patients and their families. The educational foundation I received at Niagara University has been the bedrock of my leadership career in health care.”
Working Together, We Improve People’s Lives

“Dr. Weinberger took remarkable care of my 82-year-old Mom when she was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma on the top of her scalp. Mom has cognitive impairment and Parkinson’s disease, which complicates all experiences. Dr. Weinberger naturally relieved all Mom’s anxiety to the extent that she actually slept through most of the procedure that was done under a local. Even though Mom’s cancer was remarkably large (I was sure there would be notable hair loss) Dr. Weinberger was able to stitch her back up like new with NO hair loss! Skill - 5 stars Knowledge - 5 stars Bedside manner - 5 stars I highly recommend Dr. Weinberger and her team!”

Dawn Lancaster

CULINARY MEDICINE – RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Mediterranean Barley Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup barley, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup pitted olives, chopped (Kalamata or other)
- 1/4 cup chopped tomatoes (sun-dried, Rona, or other)
- 1/2 cup cucumber, diced (English or other)
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled

Dressing

- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Bring water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add barley, oil and salt. Bring back to a boil, adjust heat to maintain gentle simmer, cover and cook until tender, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand, covered for 10 minutes or more. Drain excess liquid, if needed, and cool.

2. In a large serving bowl, whisk the lemon juice, honey, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in the oil in a steady stream to make a smooth dressing. Add cooled barley and the remaining salad ingredients. Toss, season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

Make 4 servings

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Scholarship Awardees Honored

UVM Medical Center is committed to supporting continued learning and leadership development. As part of that commitment, we offer three different scholarships to our employees. Recently, scholarship awardees were celebrated at a luncheon in the Mary Fletcher Room.

Barbara Newell and Elizabeth Madigan received The Long Tenure Leader Education Scholarship for UVM Medical Center leaders who are currently enrolled or have been accepted into a graduate degree program.

Allied Health Scholarships are offered to employees that are pursuing advanced degrees. Each of these participants received a scholarship:

Suzanne Lawrence, Physical Therapy
Lisa Goodwin, Physical Therapy
Kevin Cummings, Physical Therapy
Jeffrey Gaudreau, Dental Hygiene
Nell Marner, Respiratory Therapy

Leadership Champlain is a program offered by the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce that encourages participants to build their leadership skills through service for the long-term benefit of the community. This year’s recipients are Charlotte Gowen and Hannah Burnett.