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VNA of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties is Now The University of Vermont Health Network Home Health & Hospice

The Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties has changed its name to The University of Vermont Health Network Home Health & Hospice.

The new name and brand identity signify a formal affiliation with The University of Vermont Health Network, which began on January 1, 2018. The UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice is the first affiliate of The UVM Health Network to provide post-acute, community-based care.

The UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice, Vermont’s oldest and largest non-profit home health agency, is on the forefront of delivering increasingly complex care to people at home. Joining the Network makes it possible to build on its longstanding partnership with The University of Vermont Medical Center, as well as primary care and specialty physician practices across the Network to deliver an enhanced care experience for the patients we jointly serve.

“This new name reflects our partnership with The UVM Health Network’s member hospitals and physician organization and our shared commitment to providing seamless, patient-centered care across all providers. High-quality home health and hospice services are integral to a fully integrated, regional health care system. Our new name and brand identity align with our role in the Network.”

JUDY PETERSON
PRESIDENT AND CEO
UVM HEALTH NETWORK HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE
Peer Recovery Coaches Play Key Role in ED

The corrosive effects of substance use disorder are evident throughout our community. Today, a joint program in place in the ED employs peer recovery coaches who know firsthand what it is like to struggle with addiction.

The program connects a trained coach who has been in recovery for at least three years with a patient suffering from substance use disorder. There are currently four coaches working in our ED. Cam Lauf of the Turning Point Center of Chittenden County, who supervises them, emphasizes how their past experience can make a difference in getting someone to recovery. “Once we come in and say, ‘I’ve been in this position before, where you are now, and can help you navigate through it, that really resonates with people.’”

Says Medical Group Director Maureen Vinci, “Peer recovery coaches can help with deciding to go into treatment, can help identify next steps to get help and can advise the individual in navigating all of the things they need to do to make that first step into recovery programs.”

The coaches also can act as an important bridge to ongoing treatment and support after the patient leaves the ED. “We tell them we’re here to help them with their sobriety,” says Cam. “It’s a close-knit, warm hand-off to the Turning Point Center.” Coaches also will accompany a patient to a sobriety meeting if needed.

Says Peer Recovery Coach Michael Couture, “Having been a recovery coach for 8 years, I saw the opportunity to work in the ED as an important milestone in substance use disorder treatment. This is when a coach can best listen and then provide help in identifying needed community resources so when these individuals leave the ED they have some tools they’ll need, along with continuing long-term coaching contact, if they want it, to move toward a life free of substances.”

“It’s all about empowering the client,” says Cam, “and helping them feel that they are connected to something.”

Since the program launched this summer, 10 of 103 identified patients regularly access the Turning Point Center for Recovery Support.

The program is currently in place at UVM Medical Center, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center and Central Vermont Medical Center. Plans are in the works to possibly expand it further.

Peer Recovery Coaches Cam Lauf, supervisor; Tara Campbell; Stephanie Torres and Michael Couture.

Margaret Estes
Scheduling Specialist II, Radiology Communication

“One of my favorite things is when a patient I’ve met returns to say ‘hi’ and check in. It makes my day that they look back on their experience with me in a positive way.”

Faces of the University of Vermont Medical Center
Working with Our Neighbors to Address Noise Issues

Over the past year, we have been working closely with our neighbors on East Avenue and Case Parkway in Burlington’s Ward I to identify and find solutions to noise emanating from the central plant and main loading dock area of our Medical Center Campus. “Our focus throughout this work has been to be a good neighbor,” says Maria McClellan, senior community relations strategist. “We have been working hard to be responsive to the concerns of residents in our neighborhood.”

After conducting a series of acoustical tests, we learned that a major contributor to the noise affecting our neighbors was coming from one of the boiler stacks in the central plant area, as well as from trucks and GMT buses near our main loading dock and on Mary Fletcher Drive.

We then looked closely at different noise mitigation techniques. To mitigate the noise from the boiler stack, we inserted a “silencer” or large muffler into the stack in September, and are now in the process of conducting additional acoustical tests to determine its effectiveness.

To mitigate the noise from trucks and buses, we determined that a 600-foot long, 12-foot high absorptive wall placed at the top of the East Avenue embankment would make a big difference for our neighbors. The wall, which will be made of a wood/concrete composite that forms the outer layer, will absorb, on average, 25–35% of the noise. Said Dave Keelty, director, Facilities Planning and Development, “We have been gathering input from our neighbors regarding the noise barrier wall, and we will continue to do so in finalizing a design.”

We are currently in the planning phases for permitting and structural and financial feasibility for this project.

FACES

of The University of Vermont Medical Center

NANCY BISTER
Patient Access Coordinator, Regional Financial Clearance Center

“My job allows me to do what I am passionate about—whether it be helping patients and their families or co-workers. I feel in helping others we help ourselves.”

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.
Deskside Support Tech Enjoys On-the-Job Challenges

Eric Weiss, a Deskside Support Technician at 1 South Prospect Street, acts as kind of a teacher/tinkerer/technology expert. Always on his feet, he roams from office to office, and clinic to clinic, providing expertise as needed in the unpredictable world of technology.

His career represents somewhat of a leap from his early life growing up near Portsmouth, NH, the son of a nurse and an engineer. Initially unsure of what he wanted to do, he followed the advice of his brother and a close friend, took a chance, quit his office job, and moved to Taiwan to teach English. He enjoyed working with the students, making class fun, and found Taiwan a fascinating place to live for four and a half years.

While living in Taiwan he met his girlfriend Kaitlin, who grew up in Burlington, and together they moved back to the United States—specifically Pacific Grove, California, so she could attend graduate school at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. As Kaitlin worked toward her Masters, Eric took a job at a local electronics shop as a repair technician, which, he says, “was my apprenticeship that led to the job I have today.” They then relocated to Burlington, where she finished her graduate degree and Eric started at UVM Medical Center as a temp, becoming a full time technician a few months later.

Today, you never know where you are going to see Eric at 1 South Prospect Street. His busy days include troubleshooting application issues, replacing computers and much more. Work tends to ebb and flow, with some days chock full of requests and others a more manageable pace. He enjoys the variety of his work, especially because he works with both clinical and administrative staff, “There’s always something challenging and interesting to work on,” he says. “It’s never dull.”

When he’s not here on the job, Eric enjoys tinkering with his computers, playing PC games, and learning Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. He also loves exploring the great outdoors of Vermont with Kaitlin, as well as the cozy indoors with their two cats, Boris and Ike—two rescue cats from Taiwan. Eric and Kaitlin also continue to practice speaking Mandarin Chinese at home—or, rather, she speaks fluently and Eric works hard to keep up.

Apparently, it’s never dull at home, either.

“There's always something challenging and interesting to work on… It's never dull.”

ERIC WEISS

Can Food Help Fight Chronic Pain?
Learn more about the link between what you eat and how your body handles pain.
If life had turned out differently for Kristi Bogner, you wouldn’t find her here in the Miller Building: she’d be typing away in a courtroom somewhere, working as a court stenographer.

That was the original plan, but thanks to an early stint at an architecture firm, Kristi developed a talent and affinity for designing spaces to meet people’s needs.

Kristi wears several hats in the Miller Building project. Her primary role is to create a space that supports our patients’ healing. During the design process, she acted as a liaison between our staff and patient advisors while working with the architect during our design process. “I helped them understand what the architect is designing and advised how the space will feel, how staff will flow through the space and identified any concerns for our patients and staff.”

Kristi is also developing the plan and cost estimates for all of the furnishings and equipment that will be required for the Miller Building. She is responsible for a daunting list of approximately 20,000 new items that will be ordered and delivered in the coming weeks and months.

The last step to opening the Miller Building is to work with the nursing units on their interior finishes. She is currently starting the process of designing the furniture palette and picking out artwork for each floor, which includes all 128 patient rooms.

And as if all this weren’t enough, Kristi is responsible for all the moves that happen at this organization—from a simple request to move a bookcase to a departmental move. Every Tuesday, she works with a team to coordinate the often-complex work of displacing people and things.

In all this work, patients’ needs come first. So, if it’s a question of moving a bookcase of a patient exam table, it’s the exam table that gets priority.

How is all this accomplished in a working day? “I’ve become really good at time management,” she says.

When she’s not here, she’s not sitting still at home, either. “Vermont has four amazing seasons, and I want to be out in all of them.” That means hiking, golfing, snowshoeing and skiing (which she just took up five years ago), and enjoying family time with her husband and grown daughters.

While there are challenges aplenty in a multifaceted job like Kristi’s, her biggest struggle stems from her desire to give everything her all. “I never want to disappoint anyone—or myself—in the work I’m doing,” she says. “And of course it’s not always possible to fulfill every request.”

That aside, she enjoys the process of creating comfortable, welcoming, efficient spaces. “Whatever I touch, I want to make sure the patients are in the forefront of my mind. I want them to feel, from the moment they walk through our doors, that they’re taken care of. And I want our staff to know they are valued—that the spaces will meet their needs as they support our patients and families.”

Kristi and her family, enjoying the great Vermont outdoors.
Leah Fullem Leads Data Management Team

Leah Fullem, Network Vice President of Enterprise Information Management & Analytics, had a much shorter job title when she first joined this organization 18 years ago: temp receptionist. Today, she is leading our effort to improve the quality and accessibility of the data we rely upon to make better decisions for our patients, our people and our business.

With the growth of the UVM Health Network and the increasing need for trustworthy, consistent and available data, we must innovate our data management strategy and practices. In her new role, Leah will oversee the creation of a network data management service that will help us manage and standardize the tremendous amount of data we generate across our network. This work is critically important as we move toward a population health model.

But first...back to how Leah got here. She wasn’t initially planning on doing anything in the field of data analytics. After graduating from Saint Michael’s College with a Bachelor of Science degree, her plan was to be a Fisheries Biologist. “But one hot day I got lost in the woods wearing heavy waders, and I decided that career path wasn’t for me.”

And so it was that Leah joined this organization as a temp, before beginning her official career as an analyst. Along her trajectory in analytics, she became Director of Informatics at OneCare Vermont and earned a Masters in Health Care Delivery Science at Dartmouth.

In her current role, Leah is committed to building a data management team that will:

• Make it easier for Health Network employees to get the data they need to make decisions benefiting our patients, our employees and our business overall
• Significantly improve inefficient or redundant analytics and reporting processes
• Leverage all Network systems that house data, including EPIC, to ensure these systems are used to their full potential to support analytics for data-driven decision-making

It may sound daunting, but Leah is not a person who is easily daunted. At work and at home, she keeps busy. If she’s not in her office on Shelburne Road, you might find her coaching her daughter’s basketball team, or tending to the family menagerie in Underhill—one husband, three kids, two goats, a dog, a turtle, and a school of goldfish.

“T’m very excited about the focus of our work going forward,” she says. “I know that, as a team, we will build a system that provides consistent, reliable and meaningful data across our Network, which is foundational to improving the health of the populations we serve.”

Epic Project Update

The UVM Medical Center is upgrading to the latest version of Epic on November 11, 2018. This upgrade includes new enhancements and improved functionality and efficiency. It is a critical step toward the move to a single electronic health record system for the UVM Health Network, which will allow us to provide seamless care for our patients—wherever they enter into our care.

Thanks to everyone for your support during this process. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to epicproject@uvmhealth.org.
Project Search Intern Relishes Learning New Skills

By Gillian English

This summer, Project SEARCH, a workplace immersion program for high school seniors with intellectual disabilities, kicked off at the UVM Medical Center. Over the course of the year-long program, students will have three different ten-week internships in different departments. This is the first in a series following Project SEARCH students.

There’s hardly a tile on the floor of the UVM Medical Center’s main campus that Matt Giannuzzi hasn’t walked over. As part of his distribution internship, he spends his day pushing a cart around nearly every wing on every floor to make sure each room is stocked with everything the provider or the patient may need.

On a typical day, Matt takes the bus from Essex Junction to arrive just in time for class. First thing every morning, the Project SEARCH students get together for an hour to discuss a range of topics, including their goals and values. After their day’s work, they meet for another class to regroup and review their accomplishments of the day. Then Matt heads back on the bus to do it all over again the next day.

At home, Matt is an avid reader. He loves fantasy books and he spends a lot of time brainstorming ideas for his own writing. He also enjoys game design and has spent the past two years creating his own tabletop card game.

Matt’s favorite part of the program is his own steady progress. “I used to be so exhausted by the end of the day after pushing the cart around everywhere,” he says, “but now I don’t even break a sweat. I’m getting a lot stronger and more efficient.” He is already looking forward to the new learning opportunities that his next internship will bring.

Women’s Health & Cancer Conference

The 21st annual Women’s Health & Cancer conference, presented by the UVM Cancer Center on October 5, provided information and insights on a broad range of topics related to cancer, including genetic testing, pain management, parenting with cancer, medical marijuana, fertility and much more.
Physical and Occupational Therapists Celebrate Collaborative Patient Care

By Gillian English

In honor of Physical Therapy Month, the Occupational Therapists (OTs) put together a potluck lunch to honor their physical therapy (PT) colleagues. This year, the OTs collaborated to create a bigger celebration across their sites, with food and fun and over 60 in attendance.

The PT and OT departments work hand-in-hand and it is important to them to make celebrating each other a tradition. Every year, the OTs plan this lunch to celebrate the hard work of their PT colleagues. During OT month in April, the PTs will reciprocate. Says Nicki Hawko, OT, “We have the most amazing staff. Everyone is so collaborative, patient-focused and a team player.”

Variety is also key to the department’s success: some staff have just started in the practice and others have been here for over 30 years. They all bring different skills and interests to the department and they all learn from each other.

When the PTs and OTs collaborate, their first priority is what’s best for the patient. Further, says Nicki, the work environment is fun and supportive. Celebrating their hard work further enhances this environment.

Further, she says, “The PTs are really good about keeping up with current practice. They’re always learning new ways to provide the best care for our patients.”

Take a moment this month to appreciate the impact of Physical Therapists and all of the work they do!

LISA PHILLIPS
Lead, Pulmonary Function Tech, Pulmonary Laboratory

“Often patients are under a lot of stress and need someone just to listen to them—this simple gesture can have such a positive impact. The result of these interactions is a special bond that I’ve developed with many patients.”
Flu Experience Carries Lifelong Lessons for Former Patient

Jason Kirchick knows firsthand just how serious the flu can be. In 2014, he contracted the H1N1 influenza virus and became critically ill. He was transported to the UVM Medical Center and placed in an induced coma for two months. It was a long recovery.

Jason had not had a flu shot that year.

The medical and nursing care Jason received while a patient here ignited in him the passion and drive to become a nurse, and to make an impact on patient- and family-centered care. After coming home from the hospital, he started taking prerequisite classes for nursing school. After finishing his prerequisites, he was accepted into the nursing program at Vermont Tech. At the same time, he became a Patient Advisor at the medical center and completed graduate work in public health.

In May 2018, he graduated from nursing school.

Today, Jason is a pediatric hi-tech nurse for UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice, formerly known as the VNA, and is working on his graduate thesis. He continues his work as a Patient Advisor and sits on various groups and committees, including the Critical Care Quality Assurance group and Patient and Family Experience council for Nursing Professional Governance.

And if that weren’t enough, he’s also participated in service work outside the U.S. During nursing school, he traveled with fellow Vermont Tech students to Cusco and Machu Picchu in Peru as part of a MedLife service trip. There, they provided medical service and assistance to impoverished members of that community. Kirchick remembers seeing a young burn victim who could barely move his head as a result of his injuries. Jason and his MedLife colleagues worked hard to provide the young man and his family with medical assistance and a fully updated kitchen in their home. “It was a real eye-opener,” he says, “seeing what health care is like in other countries. We don’t appreciate what we have here.”

Jason has never forgotten the illness or the incredible interdisciplinary team and community that sparked his decision to become a nurse. When it comes to getting his flu shot, he gets together with his family and friends and they go to a clinic together as part of an annual tradition. “I would never want anyone to go through what I did. Getting your flu shot is such a simple thing, with potentially enormous consequences for your health.” It is especially important for health care workers like himself, he says. “We work with a very vulnerable population. It’s our responsibility as health care workers to protect and educate the people around us.”

Flu shot clinics continue in November and December. Please visit the home page of our intranet to view the schedule.
SANELA RAVNJAK  
Pharmacy Compliance Analyst,  
Outpatient Pharmacy

“Wherever life may take you, if you bring your compassion, integrity, perseverance and a work ethic, you are bound to make a positive impact on the world around you.”

FACES  
of The University of Vermont Medical Center

Celebrating 50 Years of our Midwifery Service

The Nurse Midwifery Program at the UVM Medical Center was founded in 1968 by obstetrician John Van Sicklen Maeck, MD with the support of Stowe-based philanthropist Claire Lintilhac. Over the next 50 years, the Midwifery Program flourished. Today, hundreds of women participate in pregnancy screenings and wellness programs and over 450 babies are delivered annually by nurse midwives at the UVM Medical Center. An October 7 event celebrated the success of the midwifery program and the longstanding philanthropic support of the Lintilhac Foundation.

Pictured above are a few Gynecology staff who are experiencing the joys of pregnancy and soon-to-be motherhood firsthand. From left to right, Jessie Westfall (Medical Assistant), Eugenia Long (RN), Amy Lang (RN), Alyssa Mercy (Patient Service Specialist), Jessica Ryniec (Fellow, REI)
**Pediatric Resource Fair**

The second annual Pediatric Community Resource Fair took place in September. The event, sponsored by UVM Children’s Hospital’s Advocacy Creativity Team—a group of individuals committed to engaging in ongoing conversation and action to improve the health of children and their families—aims to build knowledge about the important community resources that enhance children’s quality of life. This year’s theme was Resiliency and Adverse Childhood Experiences.

In attendance were our community partners, pediatric staff and our patients and families.

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**Second Annual Critical Care/Progressive Care Conference for Nurses**

In September nurses put on the second annual Critical Care/Progressive Care conference. The conference, which was initiated in 2017 through a donation from a patient who was impressed by the skill and training of our critical care nurses, featured a number of speakers:

- **Evelyn Sikorski**, manager, Health Management, spoke about the importance of nurses caring for themselves as they care for others.

- **Sally Bliss**, interim director, Clinical Ethics, addressed ethical dilemmas in health care.

The event also included a poster session, which featured a number of projects happening around the organization, including the Stop the Bleed trainings.

By all accounts, says Deb Hebert, nurse manager, McClure 4, the event was well attended and well received. About 170 nurses participated, from UVM Medical Center and from around the network. “People are already asking about next year.”
AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Elizabeth Trakas, RN

Elizabeth Trakas, RN, has received the Vision Award. Elizabeth was recognized by her nominator, Brandon Lentine, MD, for “being an outstanding example of how our values turn into action to improve people’s lives... [her] dedication makes a positive impact on patients, family and staff... her attitude makes her a great role model, mentor and an educator for nursing students.” Congratulations, Elizabeth!

Brenda Outly Receives July Academic Care Award

Medical Assistant Brenda Outly was the winner of the July 2018 Academic Care Award. Her matter-of-fact style puts patients at ease, letting them know what to expect including who will be coming into the room next and what their role is. Outly is consistently passionate about ensuring our patients get the best care possible. She was nominated by Elizabeth McGee, MD, division chief of Reproductive Medicine in the Women’s health care service.

FACES of The University of Vermont Medical Center

PATRICK BENDER, MD
Director,
General/Subspecialty Surgery
Critical Care—Anesthesiology
“I really enjoy forming positive personal connections with my patients and colleagues to create a caring and safe environment.”

Elizabeth, center, after receiving her Vision Award.

Brenda, center, with Elizabeth McGee, MD and Hjonis Hanson, MD.

Brenda, center, with Elizabeth McGee, MD and Hjonis Hanson, MD.

UVM Children’s Hospital Transgender Youth Program Speaks Out

Our Transgender Youth Program stands in support of our community.
Ryan Polly Named 40 Under 40 by Vermont Business Magazine

Congratulations to Ryan Polly, just named by Vermont Business Magazine as one of their Rising Stars—40 winners under the age of 40. Awardees were selected from 220 nominees for their commitment to business growth, professional excellence and involvement in their communities.

Correction: In the September issue of ONE, the caption for Lana Huante’s Academic Care Award photo incorrectly identified Daniel Bertges, MD—it should have read Matt Alef, MD.

Employee Discount

The UVM Medical Center is having their annual UVM Hockey Group Night on Friday, December 28, 2018. Don’t miss the action at historic Gutterson Fieldhouse as UVM takes on Alabama-Huntsville at 7pm (this is the second game of the Catamount Cup. Your ticket is good for both games.) Game one that day is RPI vs Northeastern beginning at 4 pm. Buy tickets here.

Staff Recognized During Child Passenger Safety Week

Each year during Child Passenger Safety Week the state recognizes the excellent work done in Vermont to help keep children safe in vehicles. Child passenger safety technicians play a key role in educating caregivers in car seat safety best practices. This year’s honorees include:

- **Christina Keating**, Safe Kids Coordinator for Vermont—Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year
- **Maureen Johnson**, Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor—Health Care Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year
- **Heidi Sargent, RN**, Child Passenger Safety Technician Instructor—Volunteer Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year

Lauren Curry

Lauren Curry

Patient & Family Advisor, Volunteer Services

“I believe in real partnership between patients, providers and loved ones. It means more professional satisfaction for my friends and neighbors who work here, an easier time during tough experiences, and the best health outcomes for everyone.”
On the Go with Finn

Finn Peterson is quite the traveler. He’s driven across the US three times. He’s visited Mt. Rushmore and Niagara Falls; climbed Camels’ Hump and seen the world from a hot air balloon. He’s even been to Graceland, though he wasn’t allowed inside. Because, well, Finn is a golden retriever.

More specifically, he’s a golden retriever whose loving owners, ICU nurse Cynthia Peterson and husband Robert are making sure he has one last great run, as they check off items on his bucket list while he battles T-cell lymphoma.

Cynthia’s devotion to Finn began from the moment he came into her life, somewhat impractically during her first year as a full-time nurse in Utah. Flash forward six years, and Finn has been her stalwart, devoted companion though all that life has to offer.

Today, Cynthia and Robert are determined that Finn’s remaining time on this earth will be filled with joy, adventure, love and plenty of snacks.

And for Cynthia, supporting Finn on his journey has a larger message for us all. “It’s really important for all of us to live life intentionally, to create memories with those you love.”