<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THIS ISSUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UVM Children's Hospital Named “Top Performing Hospital” [pg 2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchman Cardiac Device Earns FDA Approval [pg 3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM Names Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine [pg 4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIDEO FEATURE: Eileen Whalen Introduces Video Series for ONE [pg 5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Influenze Clinics 2016 [pg 6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Tech System Addresses Patients’ Drinking Habits [pg 7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Medicine Partners with V.A. to Bring Care Closer to Home for Veterans [pg 8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating New Voices in Vermont [pg 9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Communication Expo [pg 10]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller Fundraising Event Shines [pg 11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards &amp; Recognition [pg 12-13]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Together, We Improve People’s Lives [pg 14]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UVM Children’s Hospital Named “Top Performing Hospital”

July 19 marked a milestone for the UVM Children’s Hospital: a year free of central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) in our neonatal ICU, pediatric ICU and pediatric inpatient units. This accomplishment is the result of our longstanding focus on infection prevention – and specific steps taken to increase education and awareness among UVM Children’s Hospital staff.

As a result of this work, we have been identified as a top performing hospital for our work in CLABSI prevention with the Solutions for Patient Safety, a network of over 100 children’s hospitals.

CLABSIs are preventable bloodstream infections that can occur when bacteria or other germs travel down a central line and enter the blood. Over the past year we have built on our existing strengths in preventing central line infections by:

- Paying close attention to insertion techniques
- Performing audits to ensure that we are consistently using best practice techniques
- Using the Central Line Navigator in PRISM
- Ensuring staff proficiency – a core group of staff in the NICU routinely perform all insertions and line maintenance of central lines, creating an expertise that increases reliability.

These efforts were further supported by a number of factors:

- Our culture of safety – staff feel empowered to speak up and identify any areas or practices in which techniques do not reflect best practice.
- Patient- and family-centered care – a patient and family advisor shared insights with staff on how to educate families for when they bring home a child who is still on a central line.
- Ongoing commitment to education – The daily discussion of the necessity of the central line is a routine practice and accepted as a critical part of line maintenance. In addition, information on central lines has been given heightened focus in Central Nursing Orientation, standardizing the information that every nurse gets.

CLABSI prevention has been an area of strength for the UVM Medical Center and the UVM Children’s Hospital for several years. Staff from those areas work collaboratively to ensure that our patients benefit from the highest standards of care.

We have been identified as a top performing hospital for our work in CLABSI prevention with the Solutions for Patient Safety, a network of over 100 children’s hospitals.
Watchman Cardiac Device Earns FDA Approval

As a leader in cardiac care, The University of Vermont Medical Center offers advanced expertise in the treatment of heart rhythm disorders. Our experience is backed by a robust clinical research program that gives patients access to promising technologies and treatments not available elsewhere.

Now, thanks to our participation in a national clinical trial, the Watchman Left Atrial Appendage Closure device, which reduces the risk of clot formation and stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation, has received FDA approval.

Watchman device, which eliminates the need for blood thinners in patients with atrial fibrillation who are at high risk for developing strokes.

In atrial fibrillation, blood tends to pool in the Left Atrial Appendage (LAA), and this stagnant blood can form clots. As a result, atrial fibrillation is associated with a two-fold greater risk of stroke. The Watchman device works by permanently plugging the LAA, preventing the formation of clots.

“We played a prominent role in getting FDA approval for the Watchman device... As a result, we now have a multidisciplinary program in place that makes this device available to our patients who can benefit from it.”

DAN LUSTGARTEN, MD

From left: Sean McMahon, MD; Daniel Lustgarten, MD; Friederike Keating, MD; Sue Calame, RN; Georgiana D’Alessandro; Marcie Abdelrahman, RN; and Daniel Correa de Sa, MD

Marketing & Communications Team Volunteers at King Street Center

Each year, the Marketing & Communications team spends a summer day putting sweat equity into a cause benefiting our community. This year, they volunteered at The King Street Center in Burlington, where they spent the day helping cleaning and organizing the classrooms. They put some serious elbow grease into the cubbies, wiped down counter tops, cleaned sinks, and did some organizing and sprucing up around the building. A good time - and a serious sense of satisfaction - was had by all.

Does your team have a community service story to tell? Please send to Eleanor.Osborne@uvmhealth.org.
The University of Vermont recently announced an estate commitment with an estimated current market value of $66 million from UVM dual-degree alum and Vermont native Robert Larner ’39, MD ’42, and his wife, Helen. The commitment to donate – the largest gift ever to a public university in New England – caps decades of philanthropic support from the Larners, whose lifetime giving now will likely reach $100 million.

To recognize and express gratitude for their extraordinary commitment to medical education at UVM, the University of Vermont Board of Trustees voted to name the college of medicine in honor of Dr. Larner. The medical school will now be known as The Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at The University of Vermont. When realized and combined with previously announced gifts from the Larners, the bequest will vastly accelerate the Larner College of Medicine’s ability to reach the institutional goal inspired by Dr. Larner – to be recognized as second to none for medical education worldwide.

The Larners’ gift marks the first occasion in the United States for which a medical school is named to honor an alumnus physician and donor.

Robert Larner’s nearly 80-year relationship with The University of Vermont began during his childhood in Burlington’s Old North End, where he was one of seven children of a local roofer during the Great Depression. The only one of his siblings to go to college, he attended UVM in part thanks to a scholarship he received when he won the state debate championship. After graduating from the UVM College of Medicine, he served in World War II, settled in the Los Angeles area to build a successful medical practice and invested in the burgeoning Southern California commercial real estate market.

UVM President Tom Sullivan and Robert Larner, MD, College of Medicine at UVM Dean Frederick Morin unveil the new name of our medical school.

To interact with patients and their families and to have a positive impact on our community is what motivates me each day.”
Eileen Whalen Introduces Video Series for ONE

In her first video, UVM Medical Center President Eileen Whalen, MHA, RN, discusses patient- and family-centered care at our organization. She focuses on our achievements so far – and where we are headed with this important strategic initiative. Eileen also asks employees to share their thoughts on this new video series, and email her with any ideas for upcoming videos.

Got an idea for a video subject? Email Eileen.whalen@uvmhealth.org

DIEGO LEMOS, MD
Division Chief,
Musculoskeletal Imaging

“Although many of my patients may never see me in person, it gives me great pleasure knowing the work I’m doing often has a substantial effect on their outcomes.”

INTEGRITY & COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

The University of Vermont 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.

EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT

Discounted Ski Season Passes Now Available

The ski season will be upon us before we know it. If you are interested in season passes at one of our many mountains, see the Seasonal Discounts webpage for more information. The deadlines are approaching fast!
United Way Campaign, October 31–November 11

Calling All Champions!

Our annual workplace giving campaign for the United Way of Northwest Vermont will take place between October 31 and November 11. Our goal for this year’s campaign is to increase our participation among our employees to 20%. For the past three years, our participation has been 16%.

We need your help to do this! Your support for the United Way directly benefits many programs and initiatives that support thousands of people in our community – by putting food on the table, providing a safe place to sleep, or building bridges out of poverty. For our communities to be healthy, we need to support people in many different ways.

We are also looking for employees who are willing to step up and be Champions in their work areas.

Learn more about being a Champion.

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Volunteers are welcome at any clinic.
Low-Tech System Addresses Patients’ Drinking Habits  By Carolyn Shapiro

Primary care doctors are reluctant to talk to patients about their drinking habits, for fear of being perceived as judgmental. But a simple intervention that encourages discussion could resolve this issue, according to a recent study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

About 25 to 30 percent of the general U.S. population drinks alcohol at a level that, while not diagnosed as alcoholism, is high enough to qualify as unhealthy, says Gail Rose, Ph.D., a behavioral health researcher at the University of Vermont (UVM) and lead author on the study. “But it’s a stigmatized topic,” says Rose, and since clinicians have so many topics to discuss with patients, drinking habits often fall off the list. In addition, some physicians don’t view alcoholism as a medical problem.

In their study of more than 1,500 patients at eight internal medicine and family medicine practices affiliated with a university medical center, Rose and colleagues at UVM used an interactive voice response (IVR) system to screen patients within three days before their scheduled routine physician visit.

Among several health questions, the screening program asked how many times in the past year the patient had consumed more than five (for men) or four (for women) alcoholic drinks in a single day.

If patients responded that they had done that at least once, they were eligible for a second IVR program and were randomly chosen – after giving verbal consent – to continue on to more questions that could help determine a potential alcohol problem. That recording delivered a “brief intervention” message that encouraged the patients to talk to their doctors about their drinking and asked if they would like to change their behavior.

A few days later, the researchers called all patients who qualified as unhealthy drinkers to find out whether the IVR participants talked about alcohol use with their medical providers more than the randomized control group that didn’t do the IVR program. More than half of the IVR patients said they had the discussion, compared with 44 percent of the non-IVR group. Furthermore, IVR patients were more likely to bring up the topic themselves, and receive an alcohol-related recommendation from their provider.

That’s exactly what the researchers had hoped would happen – that the system could help overcome the stigma issue, and in turn allow providers to offer patients needed help, Rose says.

The researchers now know that patients are more likely to talk to their doctors, Rose says, “if you screen them right before a visit so it’s fresh in their minds, and they’re told it’s relevant to their medical care.”

“This is a recognized problem,” says Rose, “and a very brief, in-office discussion about a patient’s heavy drinking can have a very big impact. We have shown that these in-office discussions can be prompted by an automated pre-visit telephone call.”

Seasonal Affective Disorder Blog

The change of seasons can bring anxiety about what lies ahead. Learn from Sara Pawlowski, MD, about ways to minimize the symptoms in advance of those short, dark days.
Department of Medicine Partners with V.A. to Bring Care Closer to Home for Veterans  
By Erin E. Post

Traveling roughly 90 miles to the White River Junction, Vt.-based Veterans’ Administration Medical Center from the Burlington, Vt. area can be difficult, especially in winter. It’s even more challenging for the veteran who is living with chronic pain or has been diagnosed with a sleep disorder or cardiac arrhythmia. And if he or she doesn’t drive or have access to a car, it’s virtually impossible.

These Vermont variables – weather and geography – make access to V.A. health services in Burlington that much more important. Although the V.A. has had a presence in Burlington for many years, the October 2013 opening of a new location, called the Lakeside Clinic, combined with an ongoing partnership with the University of Vermont Department of Medicine, continues to expand care options for local veterans. Fourteen internal medicine residents routinely spend some 20 days of their outpatient medicine experience at the clinic, seeing patients who struggle with comorbid issues at a rate greater than the general population.

“It’s great for our residents to see how care, as we move forward, is going to look in the outpatient setting,” says Mark Pasanen, M.D., associate professor of medicine in the division of hospitalist medicine and director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program. The time at Lakeside, he adds, offers them “added exposure to an advanced, patient-centered medical home model.”

And residents, fellows, and faculty are providing specialized care that might otherwise have slipped through the cracks. Since a dermatology clinic was launched at Lakeside in October 2015, for example, more than 50 skin cancers have been biopsied, says Joseph Pierson, M.D., assistant professor of medicine in the division of dermatology and director of the Dermatology Residency Program.

Veterans who are diagnosed with skin cancer have the option of being treated in White River Junction or at UVM Medical Center. For those who need more delicate Mohs surgery, the nearest V.A. location is Boston; however, the UVM partnership offers a much closer alternative. It’s also allowed dermatology to add a seventh resident at the White River Junction V.A., which has historically been affiliated with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. This new relationship marks the first time the V.A. has entered into a joint venture in graduate medical education with the UVM Medical Center.

Cardiology’s relationship with the V.A. goes back more than a decade. “From our perspective,” says David Schneider, MD, director of Cardiology, “there was a clinical need there that dovetailed nicely with an educational opportunity, so the patients are getting the best care, but the fellow is really driving the interaction with the patient, which gives them that level of responsibility and provides a great learning environment,” says Schneider.

The newest focus at Lakeside is sleep medicine. Said Susan Dunning, MD, director of our Sleep Program, “The Lakeside Clinic provies a great opportunity to have veterans’ medical needs met closer to home.”
Celebrating New Voices in Vermont

Rap artist Edwin Owusu, also known as S.I.N.siZZle, will kick off the “New Voices” four-part series at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, sponsored by the UVM Medical Center. At a September 15 event for employees in Davis Auditorium, Edwin shared his story of immigrating to the United States as a child, eventually landing at the University of Vermont, where he became a national debate champion.

The “New Voices” concert series, which speaks to our organization’s focus on diversity and inclusion. We hope our employees will attend. Tickets are priced reasonably at $15.

Dates, times and artists are as follows:

October 1, 8 pm
African Rap with A2VT, Benny Nduwayo and S.I.N.siZZle

November 19, 8 pm
Tashi Sherpa (Nepal) & Grup Anwar (Syria)

February 18, 8 pm
Didgeridoo & Vermont Hindu Temple

April 8, 8 pm
Migmar Tsering (Tibet) & Walinja (Somali Bantu)

The “New Voices” concert series speaks to our organization’s focus on diversity and inclusion. Tickets are $15.

FACES of The University of Vermont Medical Center

NERMINA DOBRACA, NA
Unit Secretary/LNA, Hematology/Oncology
“‘My patients inspire me each day with their strength, courage and determination. Knowing that I can help them achieve their goals and seeing their satisfaction with the little things is the most rewarding part of my job.”

UVM Medical Center to Participate in BTV Ignite Innovation Event

The UVM Medical Center will participate in the 2016 BTV Ignite week-long event, showcasing the greater Burlington area’s entrepreneurship, innovation and technology. We will be presenting “Health Care Innovation for Sustainable Impact” on October 19, 7:30 – 9 am, in the McClure Lobby Conference Room. Speakers include:

• Jason Minor, director, Continuous Systems Improvement, and Matthew MacNeil, EdD, director of Evaluation and Outcomes at The Howard Center, will present “Beyond the White Space: Innovative Breakthroughs through Kaizen”

• Barry Finette, MD, will present “Development of a mHealth Platform to Increase Pediatric Health Care Capacity”

• Chris Holmes, MD, will present “VTE PACC: An Innovative Program to Bring Education and Prevention of Blood Clots to Cancer Patients”
2016 Communication Expo

Over 300 employees and community members attended the recent Communication Expo – an event that showcased the innovative work going on in language and communication access around the state and beyond.

Forty-five organizations were represented at the event tables. Highlights included:

- A simulation clinic that recreates the experience of interacting with a hospital when you don’t speak the language that the providers are speaking
- “Talking” medication labels for those who speak a different language
- Information about the Bhutanese culture and the needs of this population
- Wayfinding information from a team working in Marketing & Communications

“The room was buzzing from start to finish. What struck me most was the incredible level of engagement by both vendors and visitors, reflecting the dedication and enthusiasm of this community for all things language and communication-oriented.”

LYNETTE REEP
INTERPRETER AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES COORDINATOR
Replays Plays it Again, to Benefit our Medical Center

By Molly Jennings

In its 26th year, Replays Resale Shop continues its mission of providing financial support towards facilities and patient programs at the UVM Medical Center. Located off Dorset Street, in the University Mall, Replays is run by 50 volunteers and 2.5 paid staff members, whose combined efforts bring in over 100,000 dollars annually to benefit the medical center.

Carolee Boerger, the current manager of Replays, has volunteered at the store since it opened, watching it grow as donations from our community increased.

Replays spread its good will throughout the medical center community, supporting nursing scholarships and our mother-baby unit. Most recently, Replays has provided the funds for a new elliptical machine for our Cardiac Rehabilitation Center.

Looking forward, Replays is hoping to connect with more Vermonters in order to gain a wider clientele. Learn more.

Miller Fundraising Event Shines

The UVM Medical Center held a fundraising gala in honor of the new Robert E. and Holly D. Miller Building, our new inpatient bed building. National Public Radio Legal Affairs Correspondent Nina Totenberg hosted the evening, and speakers included John Brumsted, MD, President and CEO, UVM Health Network; Brian Boardman, chair, UVM Medical Center Foundation; and Bob and Holly Miller. The event raised $300,000 in support of the new building.

FACES of The University of Vermont Medical Center

CATHY BUCK
Technical Specialist, Cytogenetics Laboratory

“I love the beauty and science of chromosome analysis. Although we never meet our patients, we never forget the person as we look at their cells.”
2015 Academic Care Award Winners Honored

The recipients of the 2015 Academic Care Award were honored at a dinner in May. Pictured above, from left, are: Cheryl Rogers, Danielle DeRosa, Evan Mahakian, Jennifer Wilson, Julie Fournier and Ruveni Gogerly-Moragoda, with Claude Deschamps, MD, president and CEO, UVM Medical Group.

Chassidy DesLauriers Becomes Certified Diabetes Educator

Congratulations to Chassidy DesLauriers, who has received her certification as a Diabetes Educator – a health professional who possesses comprehensive knowledge of and experience in pre-diabetes, diabetes prevention and management. A CDE helps people affected by diabetes understand and manage their condition. To take the CDE exam, Chassidy accumulated 1000 hours of professional practice experience and completed some continuing education hours.

Pulmonary Team Receives ALA Lung Force Walk Award

Congratulations to Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, whose team members were recently recognized for “top fundraising” in this year’s American Lung Association Lung Force Walk. The purpose of the walk is to raise awareness of Lung Cancer.

Nurse Clinician and EHR Application Analyst Receive Good Catch Award

Congratulations to Janice Smith, RN, nurse clinician, and Sherry Guthrie, senior EHR Application Analyst, who recently received the Good Catch Award. Janice identified that medication instructions were incorrectly displaying on the AVs in Ambulatory Clinics. With a patient-centered focus, she persistently brought attention to the matter. With commendable focus and expertise, Sherry then worked to identify system changes to resolve the issue. Good Catch, Janice and Sherry!

Chassidy DesLauriers, Manager, Development at American Lung Association of the Northeast, Jenna Carroll PSS, Judith Wahler, RT Co-captain, Garth Garrison, MD Co-captain, Sarah Wagner NP, Susan Heney PSS, David Kaminsky MD. Missing from photo: MaryEllen Antkowiak MD, Prema Menon MD, Julia O’Shea RT.
Lewis First, MD, and David Halsey, MD, Honored by the Vermont Medical Society

Lewis First, MD, is the 2016 winner of the Vermont Medical Society’s Distinguished Service Award. The award recognizes meritorious service in the art and science of medicine and outstanding contributions to medicine, its organizations, and the welfare of the public.

David Halsey, MD, has been named by the Vermont Medical Society as its 2016 Physician of the Year. The award is presented annually to a Vermont physician who has demonstrated outstanding performance in delivering quality, skillful and compassionate patient care. The physician of the year must also demonstrate dedication to the welfare of patients in accordance with accepted principles of good medical practice.

Gallery of Gives Showcases Teamwork, Pride

Teams from across the organization showed off the accomplishments they are most proud of at a “Gallery of Gives” event, held in the McClure Lobby Conference Room. The departments involved were: Patient Financial Services; Professional Revenue Department; Corporate Accounting; Community Health Improvement - Employee and Family Assistance; Employee & Labor Relations; Benefits; Recruiting; Volunteer Services; and Graduate Medical Education. The event was infused with the spirit of teamwork, and the good feeling was felt by all.
Working Together, We Improve People’s Lives

UVM is one of the most caring friendly hospitals I have ever been to. Our normal hospital is Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake, which we love. Everyone there treats you like a person, not just a patient. Going to UVM for a specialist was a daunting thought – having to be admitted to a larger hospital, where you were one of 500 patients, not one of 100 patients, like in Saranac Lake. However, the level of care that I received was that of a large, modern and high-quality big city hospital – with the touch that a community hospital brings: compassion and respect to the patient. We now know that UVM is the place to go when we need specialist care that our small community hospital can’t provide to us. Dr. Sullivan and her nurses with Pediatric GI were so nice to me. I thank you all!

Louis Catania

Sign up for MyHealth Online

Access your medical RECORDS
Send your doctor a QUESTION.
Score $35.

With MyHealth Online, you can request appointments and prescription renewals, view lab and test results, pay your medical bills and more. Plus, as a UVM Medical Center employee, you can even receive $35* from Employee Wellness when you sign up. Here’s how:

1. Sign up for MyHealth Online now.
2. Once you’ve registered for MyHealth Online, log in to the Employee Wellness website.
3. From the menu of options in the center of the page, click next to MyHealth Online.
4. Click Submit.

It’s just that easy. Your $35* will be added to a future paycheck. So don’t wait any longer. Sign up today.

JOHN PAUL LEHTO
Volunteer, Volunteer Services
“I’ve always felt my purpose in life is to help others. It fills my heart to make someone smile or to give encouragement to those who need it. I expect nothing in return but am constantly rewarded by all I receive back.”