



“I USED THE WALKER FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS. THEN I USED A PAIR OF CRUTCHES, AND WITHIN A WEEK I WAS WALKING WITHOUT ANY SORT OF ASSISTANCE.”

- KEITH GRAVES, PAGE 4

# Health *wise*

BRATTLEBORO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL | FALL 2014

# BMH Treats Total Joint Replacement Patients with Class

**T**otal joint replacement surgery is advancing at an incredible rate. It's not only the technological improvements that continue to enhance outcomes and shorten recovery times, but also the way a hospital's medical and administrative staff coordinate the care that ensures hip and knee replacement patients receive excellent outcomes.

Staff from various BMH departments created a task force that included orthopaedic surgeons to look at the current process, and then worked to create a Total Joint Pathway. Each discipline contributed experience and information regarding latest trends in patient care. After attending the National Association of Orthopedic Nurses conference, Lisa Eaton RN, BA, MSM brought back information about standardizing order sets and the creation of a Total Joint Patient Education class. The result of this task force is a seamless

experience for patients - from the consultation with the orthopaedic surgeon, through pre-op testing, joint class and the in-patient hospital stay, ending with discharge and an after care plan from Care Management. The team developed order sets and a patient brochure to act as a "road map" for the inpatient stay. It is important that all staff and the patient understand the goals from operative day to the transition back home. This knowledge has been proven to decrease complications and improve a patient's feeling of readiness, both physically and emotionally, for discharge.

At the center of the program is the pre-op joint class that all patients attend before surgery. In this class, the patients are shown a PowerPoint presentation with team members educating about their specialty and addressing questions and concerns. There is also the opportunity to share concerns with fellow joint patients.

"We recognized that patients had similar questions. It just made more sense to bring the departments and the patients together than to have individual visits," says Christine Gooley, APRN, BC. Her pre-operative assessment clinic is the first stop for anyone getting surgery at BMH, but she says a total joint replacement is more complex than other procedures. "The preparation is greater because we're putting a foreign object into the patient's body. Prevention of infection starts prior to the day of surgery. Patients are asked to use antiseptic body cleansing washcloths, which the hospital provides, for 3 days before surgery. This decreases the number of germs on the skin. We also check total joint replacement patients for specific bacteria's, such as penicillin resistant and penicillin sensitive staph aureus. Some folks are carriers of these germs and I will treat them before

*continued on page 6*

We are happy to  
welcome new providers  
to our community.



**Sarah Fulham, MD**  
Brattleboro Internal Medicine  
802-251-8787



**Heather Lesage-  
Horton, MD**  
Just So Pediatrics  
802-251-8626

## Second Floor Turns Focus on Surgical Patients

BMH's Medical/Surgical Unit occupies the second and third floor of the hospital's Main Building. Patients admitted due to a medical illness are generally placed on the third floor, while those recovering from a surgery recuperate on the second floor.

Patient rooms are organized in this manner for a number of reasons; from infection control to providing the type of nursing care each patient needs. The challenge for a community hospital comes when there are significantly more patients of one type than the other.

When this occurred in the past, the hospital would close its second floor and move the few post-surgical patients up one level. It was not ideal, but BMH nurses are trained to care for both medical illness and surgical patients, so the situation was manageable.

About a year ago, BMH asked Lisa Eaton, the Director of Nursing for the Med/Surg Units to explore how delivery of care might be enhanced and efficiencies created for the individuals requiring hospitalization. She examined the data on medical and surgical patients, looking at how many patients were hospitalized over weekends and when patients were scheduled to have surgeries. Ultimately, she felt the hospital could operate its second floor, post-surgical unit on weekdays, optimizing the patient experience and creating efficiencies only if it made a few changes.

"There is more predictability with the surgical patients. We can't anticipate when someone with a medical condition is going to get sick," Eaton says. "but Total Joint Replacements, OB/GYN cases, gall bladder procedures, colon resections and the like are all scheduled operations. We can control when those happen and the recovery time they need is short enough that we can provide care for these patients while maintaining a Monday through Friday schedule."

"BMH's Operating Room now schedules its major surgeries for the beginning of the week whenever possible. Barring any complications, the patient can be discharged from the hospital before the weekend thanks to advancements in both the technology as well as this post-surgical approach to care," says Eaton. "This includes pre-surgical interviews with the nursing staff, education about pain management and efforts to get the patient out of their hospital bed and moving independently earlier than before."

"It sounds cookie-cutter, but in some ways that's what you want. The more we can control the patient experience, the less risk there is of something untoward occurring," Eaton says. "The staff has really taken ownership of this new approach. Everybody knows what's supposed to happen, they think about it from the patient's point of view and adjust with confidence."



**Fred Landes, MD**  
Center for Wound Healing  
802-275-3674



**Meredith Merritt, CNM**  
Brattleboro OB/GYN  
802-251-9965



**Wayne Temmen, PA-C**  
BMH Orthopaedics  
& Sports Medicine  
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**Emily Kolpa, MD**  
Brattleboro Primary Care  
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# Partial Knee Replacement a Total Success for Patient

**K**eith Graves thought he was making the right decision for the osteoarthritis that plagued both his knees. After four years of temporary relief from Synvisc injections and arthroscopic procedures, it was time to seek a more permanent solution. His own research led him to the conclusion that a total joint replacement would be the best option.

Given the recovery time from such a surgery, he wanted to get both knees done at the same time. He made an appointment in January to discuss it with his orthopaedist, Jon Thatcher, MD, of BMH Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. His intention was to schedule the operation for later in the spring.

“Everything I’d read said it was probably going to be six to eight weeks before I could get back to work. So if I go in mid-April, I wouldn’t have to contend with all the ice and snow while I recovered,” said Graves. It would also enable him to have a pain-free summer enjoying activities like kayaking, gardening and walking his black labrador, Belle.

Dr. Thatcher had an alternative suggestion. After looking at the MRI and x-rays, he thought performing a partial knee replacement would serve Graves just as well. A uni-compartmental replacement, as it’s known, would be much, much less invasive and have a considerably shorter recovery period.

Graves did some additional research into the uni-compartmental procedure and decided to go ahead with Dr. Thatcher’s

recommendation. Meanwhile, the pain in his knees was getting so unbearable that he decided to move the date of his surgery up to early March.

Even though Graves is a lifelong resident of Brattleboro, he had never spent much time inside Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. He and his family have been fairly healthy over the years, other than a childhood tonsillectomy and a few Emergency Department visits. He had every reason to expect the operation and overnight stay to go just fine, but he said he was “blown away” by the level of care he received.

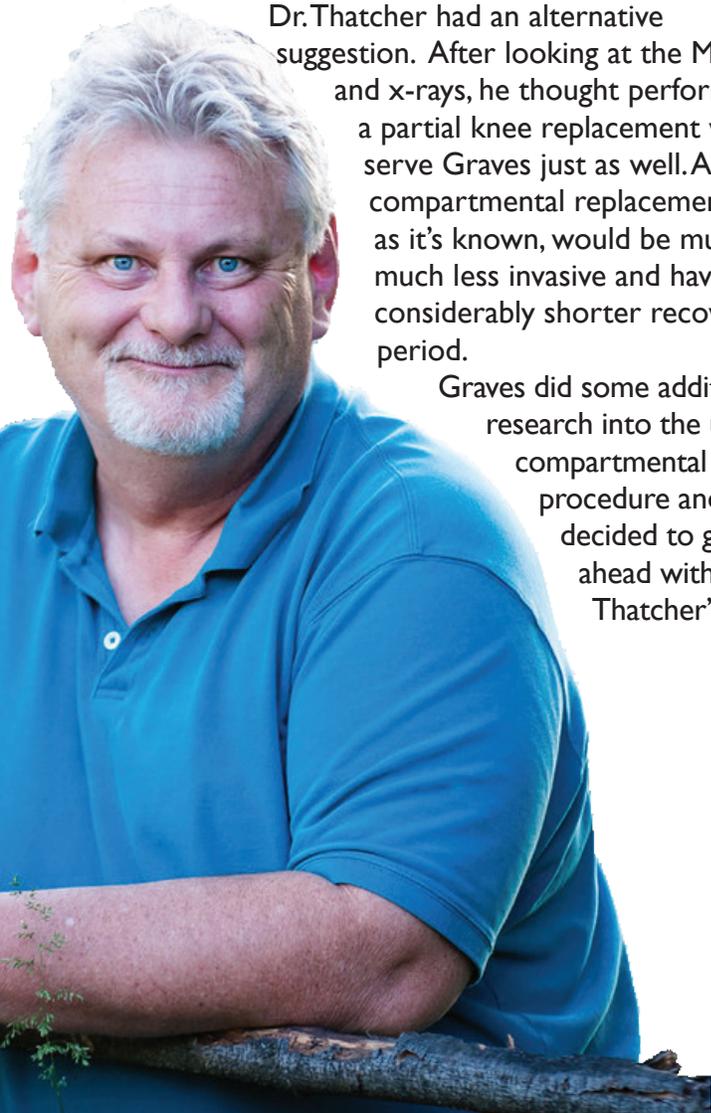
“Right from the first person I spoke with during admission, everyone couldn’t have been more helpful,” Graves said. “Even when the surgeons and anesthesiologists are telling you what they’re going to do, they’re couching it in terms that are easily understandable. I had a really good idea of what was going to happen but their explanations and the time they took was very reassuring and comforting.”

Graves said many members of the BMH staff made extra efforts to provide care following his surgery. The anesthesiologist, Ithiel Fuller, MD, visited his room to check on how he was recovering. The discharge nurse, Diane Vergara, RN, made sure he had a proper walker before he left the hospital. He was also very touched to receive a card signed by the entire post-operative nursing staff soon after arriving back home.

The operations were a total success according to Graves. Both knees are now free from the osteoarthritic pain he was experiencing, and he has resumed many of his normal activities. He has even begun building his endurance for kayaking by simulating the same sitting position on his living room floor.

“I used the walker for about two or three days. Then I used a pair of crutches, and within a week I was walking without any sort of assistance,” Graves said. “I’m really thankful for Dr. Thatcher’s sound advice and surgical skills. I’m very glad I went ahead with the procedure he recommended, and I tell everybody that I couldn’t have been happier having it done at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.”

*“Right from the first person I spoke with during admission, everyone couldn’t have been more helpful.”*



## Saying Goodbye *By Kathleen McGraw, BMH Chief Medical Officer*

In Vermont the evidence of the cycle of life can be seen now in the changing colors of leaves. At BMH, we also see the change in the faces of our colleagues. Recent announcements have introduced the community to the new faces of many physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. However, I also want to take a few minutes now to thank those who are retiring from their years of service to the community.

The journey from birth through childhood and on to mature adulthood can be filled with many adventures, expectations and experiences. For over 100 years the physicians at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital have been there for us and our neighbors. In the past year, four of these dedicated individuals have retired. These doctors, in their unique practices and specialties, have quite literally supported us from birth through our senior years.

As an Obstetrician/Gynecologist, in practice for over 34 years, Hector Carrasquillo, MD, fondly called "Artie" to those who know and love him, has been a mainstay at BMH. Quiet, and devoted, he started in practice with his brother here at BMH, and over the decades he has supported many women in our community through their pregnancies and beyond. Said

*"The only constant in life is change" - Heraclitus*

one nurse of his retirement, "I miss him in the hospital. He made the best cheesecake ever and always made a special one for the nurses on Nurse's Day! His genuine raw sense of humor and opinion were priceless. He always had time to listen."

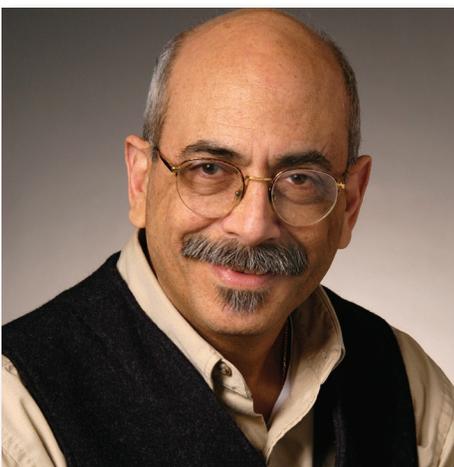
Pediatrician Jane Katz-Field, MD has cared for countless area newborn babies, young children, and adolescents. With a background also in occupational and environmental medicine, she brought her pediatric skills to Vermont 10 years ago. Her interest and involvement extended to the hospital's ethics committee, serving for a while as Chair. One family practice physician commented on her devotion to her patients' family issues: "Her strength of character and expert clinical skills have made her a real advocate for her patients."

Supporting them all for an astounding 41 years has been Peter Gibbons, MD, a Radiologist who read the thousands of X-Rays, CT scans and MRIs that were taken to help diagnose and treat all those expectant mothers, youngsters and adults. An unceasing optimist, "his vision in the radiology department kept it afloat through

many transitions" says one colleague. His retirement means his enthusiastic focus has turned to his beloved garden and other more vigorous activities. "His exploits on skis or his bicycle remain frequent topics of discussion at morning coffee," comments one Radiologist. True to form, while his duties in the hospital have come to a close, he remains quite active as the President of the Windham County Medical Society.

Between them, these three highly skilled physicians have 85 years of service to the greater Brattleboro community. We are so very grateful to them for their dedication and expertise, and for the care they have given us in good times and in bad. BMH is sad to see them leave active practice. Yet, as we wish them well, we also welcome new physicians with excitement and great joy. They come to us with all the talent, skill, hope and caring spirit that filled the hearts and careers of those who have retired. It is they who will care of us and our neighbors in the years ahead. The cycle continues, and we, as patients of knowledgeable and caring physicians, will continue benefit from this. Thanks to all of them.

Hector Carrasquillo, MD



Jane Katz-Field, MD



Peter Gibbons, MD



## Total Joint Replacement *continued from page 2*

surgery so they are not.” Other information that is reviewed at the pre-op appointment with the nurse practitioner includes medication instruction, health history, physical exam, and day-of-surgery routine.

A recent adjustment to the Total Joint Pathway is that patients are admitted to the surgical unit preoperatively. They meet the nurse who will be caring for them, which Eaton points out is of benefit to both parties.

“Overall, we’re trying to increase the knowledge of the patient and decrease their anxiety. We are able to establish a bit of rapport and understand the kinds of concerns they have about the surgery,” says Eaton. “This helps us to better respond to their needs during recovery.”

The final portion of the pathway, physical therapy, begins immediately after surgery. A room on the second floor medical/surgical unit is outfitted with all the equipment necessary to get patients on the road to recovery. A BMH licensed therapist works with the patient to regain strength and mobility

and manage their pain. The sooner the patient gets moving the sooner they can go home.

Rehab Services Director Eileen Casey says, the Total Joint Class plays a key role in helping someone mentally prepare themselves for this part of the pathway. The number of patients who are discharged directly home without requiring an in-patient rehabilitation stay has increased from 50 percent to 87 percent because of this approach.

“We let the patients know there is always pain involved with surgery but we have several effective ways to help manage it to a tolerable level. People are put more at ease having that information up front,” says Casey. “We also encourage all patients to schedule their outpatient physical therapy evaluation ahead of time, even before they have had their surgery, so they can keep their new joint moving in order to get the best outcome from their surgery.”

In a way, the Total Joint Pathway is more of a loop than a straight line because it ends up back at the orthopaedic surgeon’s office for periodic follow-ups. The



orthopaedic surgeon’s offices are located right across the hall from Rehab Services on the first floor of the Richards Building. This ease of access makes it a seamless process between the doctors and physical therapists to share information about a patient’s progress.

“Patients have an excellent surgical experience because of this full-circle of care, short-term and long-term.” says Elizabeth Acquaviva, practice manager for BMH Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine.

## Primary Care Practices offer Saturday Clinic

In response to patient requests, five BMH Physician Group primary care practices will begin a pilot program of Saturday morning clinics starting September 27. Appointments will be available for current patients with illnesses or injuries that require acute care but not an Emergency Department visit.

Participating practices are Brattleboro Family Medicine, Brattleboro Internal Medicine, Maplewood Family Practice, Putney Family Healthcare and Windham Family Medicine. All patients of those

practices with Saturday clinic appointments will be seen at the Brattleboro Internal Medicine office, located on the second floor of the Gannett Building (21 Belmont Avenue in Brattleboro).

Patients seeking a Saturday clinic appointment must call Brattleboro Internal Medicine 802-251-8787 on Saturday morning between the hours of 9 AM - 12 PM. After being seen by a provider, referral requests can be initiated and follow up appointments scheduled upon check-out.

## MEET THE PHYSICIANS

# CENTER FOR WOUND HEALING



Greg Gadowski, MD  
*Wound Center Medical Director*



Remeline Damasco, MD



Amy Gadowski, MD



George Idelkope, MD



Fred Landes, MD



Carolyn Taylor-Olson, MD

**F**or people with a wound that won't heal, everyday activities can be a challenge. Whether it's going for a walk or doing weekly grocery shopping, a non-healing wound can be more than an annoyance. It can mean restricted activities and another day of pain or discomfort.

The BMH Center for Wound Healing provides specialized treatment for non-healing, chronic wounds or wounds that have not significantly improved from conventional treatments.

Wounds associated with poor circulation, immobility or other chronic illnesses may lead to a lower quality of life. When wounds persist, a specialized approach is required for healing. We offer state-of-the-art treatments such as debridement, biologic skin substitutes, advanced dressings and hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Making an appointment is the first step to getting better. Ask your doctor to contact us, or feel free to call yourself. Our number is 802-275-3674.



# Contributions

*... making a difference*

## Mary Harrington

Sitting in the living room of her Hinsdale home, Mary Harrington raps her knuckles on a side table when talking about how good her health has been since having a stent inserted 11 years ago. On the Thursday before Independence Day weekend in 2003, she could tell something was wrong but couldn't articulate exactly what. Her husband, Walter, could tell as well, even though she tried to conceal it. After having a "spell" carrying a fan downstairs from their bedroom he urged her to go to the hospital. It took an additional episode a couple of hours later before Mary finally conceded.

Fortunately, Mary's visit to the BMH Emergency Department came on an evening when cardiologist Burt Tepfer, MD was visiting patients before a holiday getaway. He examined her and set-up an appointment to have the stent inserted at Dartmouth-Hitchcock the following Monday. In the meantime, Mary would spend Fourth of July weekend in BMH's Intensive Care Unit. "Which was fine with me," she recalls. "The nursing staff was wonderful. It was air-conditioned. I got good food and I could watch the Red Sox. I was perfectly happy."

Up until then, the Harrington's had not had much interaction with the hospital despite a long history in the area. Walter was a Brattleboro native and Mary had been a student at Northfield Mount Hermon. Even though her father's job as a civil engineer took the family to the Panama Canal Zone and North Africa before she graduated high school, she always had a sense she would ultimately

put roots down in New England. "My father was a Dartmouth man and he wanted to settle there for retirement. So this was home turf," Mary said.

Brattleboro became home turf for Mary after meeting Walter. She was back at Northfield Mount Hermon as an employee and chaperoning a student trip to Hogback Mountain, where Walter was the ski patrol director. After they married, Mary took a job in the operations division at The Experiment in International Living. She stayed there for more than 30 years and loved the work as well as the opportunity to interact with people from so many different cultures.

Mary had been retired for a full seven years at the time she had her stent, and she was eager to volunteer someplace where she could be part of a community. A friend who volunteered at the

front desk at BMH encouraged her to volunteer, which she continues to do today. "Not everybody feels comfortable when they come to the hospital," Mary says. "If I can do anything to make people feel more comfortable in the hospital, it makes the doctor's job easier and the patient gets better service."

She also donates to the Annual Fund and recently included BMH as a beneficiary in her will. Her support is modest, but having worked at educational institutions and volunteered in the hospital's development office she understands the value of every contribution. "I think that if everybody gives a small share, it makes a big share," says Mary. "It's nice that people can give generously but if all of us do our own little part, it goes a lot further. And we all feel a better connection with the hospital because of it."

## Susan Sebastian Foundation

Thanks to a generous donation by the Susan Sebastian Foundation of Williston, Vermont, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital was the recipient of more than two dozen pieces of original Vermont artwork.

The Foundation was established in April 2009 by Elise Braun of Waterbury, Vermont, following the death of her daughter, Susan Sebastian in 2008. Born at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital on July 31, 1956, Susan suffered from a long illness before her death. She spent a good deal of time staring at hospital room walls with her mother by her side. She told her mother, "When I get out of here, I am going to sell my house to buy art for hospital patient rooms."

Braun was determined to see her daughter's wishes realized. The Susan Sebastian Foundation was established to meet this vision. So far, the Foundation has given more than 200 pieces of Vermont art to eight Vermont hospitals. More than half of the 27 pieces of artwork that will adorn patient room walls at BMH are by artists local to the Brattleboro area.

# Look What You Did Now!

“Now look what you’ve done!” Typically you might not want to hear the follow-up to that statement, but in this case, trust us, you do!

In the last year, your gifts to BMH’s Annual Fund have been the catalyst for some great developments here at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital:



You helped to open BMH’s Center for Wound Healing, Vermont’s first and only comprehensive treatment center for patients with chronic and non-healing wounds, featuring hyperbaric oxygen therapy.



Your support has launched the use of Electronic Medical Records throughout all 12 of our physician practices, making it easier for your providers to share your critical health information.



You have made it possible for our Oncology Department to celebrate its 25th anniversary of providing locally-based, compassionate care to cancer patients.

These are but a few of BMH’s many successes this year, and every single one of them has been made possible by your generosity. Thank You!

As we celebrate our shared accomplishments we’d like to ask you to continue and consider expanding your support for BMH. We depend on your gifts to improve patient care, and a modest increase of 10%, or even \$25, in your Annual gift has an immediate and direct impact.

## Live Like A Rockefeller

Most of us were not born into a philanthropic legacy like that of the Rockefellers, but did you know that even as a person of modest means you have the capacity to be a major philanthropist within your own community?

A former BMH patient, Gladys, recently sent a generous \$400 gift to the hospital. As someone who lives on a fixed income, Gladys has benefitted from BMH’s services and has made a pledge to herself that she would find a way to support the hospital. **“I try to put away \$20 a month to pay for my hospital stays, but can never seem to stay out of there long enough to save enough, so I’m sending what I have saved.”** read her accompanying note. **“I would like it to be used for the program that helps others like me, but if it is needed elsewhere more, you decide where it goes.”**

BMH has been there for Gladys in her time of need, and she has found her unique way to give back. While her means may not be extensive, she makes the most generous gift she can by establishing a modest monthly habit she can continue for many years, “paying it forward” to the next patient in need. **“I’ve already started saving for next year!”** she joyfully reports. Through this practice Gladys has become a major donor to a cause that is important to her.

Here at BMH, we’re harnessing the power of technology to make it easier than ever to establish a program of personal philanthropy that accrues over time into significant support for the hospital.

By setting up a recurring monthly gift to BMH you can easily support the hospital at a far greater level than you might have thought possible.

And it’s easy! Go to <https://www.bmhvt.org/giving/donate-online> to set up your monthly recurring gift. With no additional effort on your part, your credit card is charged each month, BMH begins to benefit immediately from your generosity and the impact of your gift grows over time. A recurring gift also saves administrative time and postage, freeing up resources that can go directly to patient care. You’ll be a Rockefeller before you know it!

In Gladys’ words: **“Thank you for all”**.



On April 10 2014, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital hosted a dedication ceremony of the new lobby honoring long-time Brattleboro residents Roland and Harriet Fisher. The new "Roland and Harriet Fisher Lobby" recognizes the couple's final and generous gift in support of BMH's \$3.5 million "Doorway to Exceptional Care" capital campaign for the new Emergency Department and front entrance at the hospital. The ceremony culminated with the unveiling of an oil painting of Harriet and Roland Fisher, which will grace the new lobby. It was painted by New England artist Kyle Stuckey.

## Benefits of Charitable Gift Annuities

*By Christopher Chapman, Vice President & Principal, Trust Company of Vermont*

Low interest rates are vexing to anyone who lives on a fixed income or who wants to avoid risk. Many wonder where they can find a safe and steady source of income during these very interesting times in the bond and stock markets.

We have a suggestion: consider using a charitable gift annuity backed by the full faith and credit of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, whose assets include soundly managed operating and endowment funds.

A charitable gift annuity is an arrangement between you and the hospital to pay you a fixed amount of money in exchange for a contribution of at least \$10,000. It is very much like an insurance annuity. The difference is that a charitable gift annuity qualifies for a partial income tax deduction on the amount contributed to fund the annuity. That is because when the annuity expires (usually at the death of the annuity beneficiary), the balance of the contribution will revert to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

Here is a summary of the benefits:

- The tax deduction for the donor is substantial.
- The stream of payments is paid out at a rate far in excess of what is available in money market funds or savings accounts.
- The donor accomplishes a substantial long-term gift to the hospital.
- Capital gain tax relief is also available when appreciated assets are used to fund the annuity agreement.

**Questions?** Give a call to the BMH Development Office at 802-257-8314.



**Brattleboro Memorial Hospital**  
EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

17 Belmont Avenue • Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-257-0341 • [www.bmhvt.org](http://www.bmhvt.org)

## POSTAL CUSTOMER

*In order to save the hospital money, we distribute Healthwise by sending to POSTAL CUSTOMER. Hence, there is no mailing list (other than specifically to our donors). If you have received more than one copy of Healthwise, we request that you consider passing it on to a friend or neighbor.*

## Beards Are Back

**S**park conversation and raise awareness about men's health issues by doing nothing! Well, not exactly nothing, but by forgoing shaving for the month of November you can help educate our community and other men about the importance of preventative and proactive men's health care.

Throughout the month of November, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital will once again be sponsoring "Beards for BMH" to raise awareness of men's health issues such as prostate cancer screening, erectile dysfunction, testicular cancer, cardio-vascular disease and other men's health concerns.

Participants in the campaign will pay a \$10 registration fee, solicit sponsors, shave their faces clean on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and grow their beards over the next 30 days. Armed with facts and talking points about men's health, participants are encouraged to respond to questions about the state of their beards with information about a range of health issues that affect men at all stages of their lives. You can participate as an individual or you can organize a team of friends, family or co-workers and challenge another local team to a "Grow-Off" – see who can raise the most!

All participants will receive a kit containing registration information, men's health facts, tips and

instructions for setting up your personal or team web page and donation site and a set of coasters

Not a "grower"? No problem! There are ways that women, partners, and others who care about men's health can get involved. Even if you are prohibited from growing facial hair due to professional obligations or dress codes, you can join the fun. See all the details at: [www.bmhvt.org](http://www.bmhvt.org).

Raising awareness is the first step in improving men's health. BEARDS for BMH is a fun way to remind men that they need to be having regular conversations with their doctors, their friends and their families about taking care of their health. The temporary itchiness of my face is a minor inconvenience if it encourages a single man to schedule his colonoscopy!  
- Steven R. Gordon  
BMH CEO/President

