

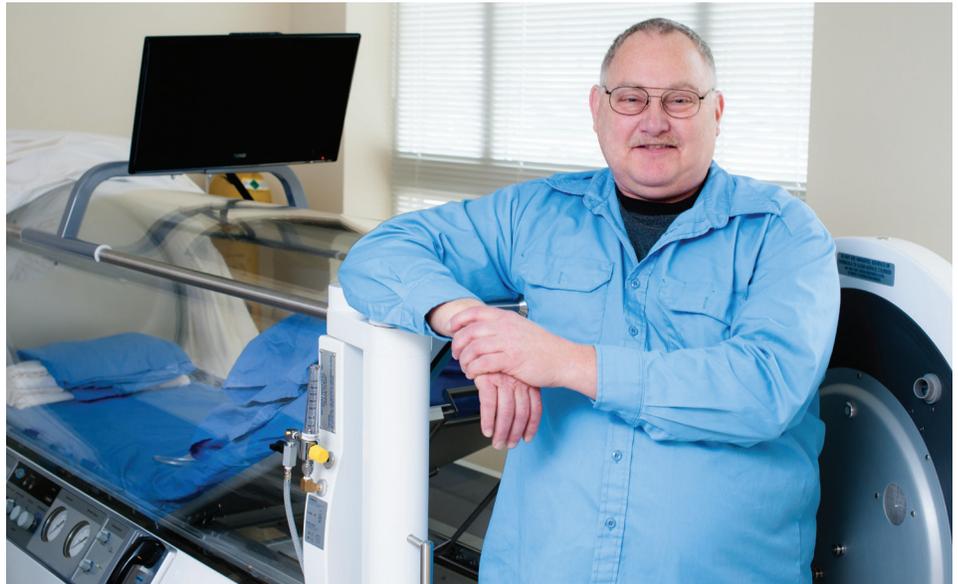


## A Commitment to Healing

When Jim Leonard from Bellows Falls, Vermont came to the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Center for Wound Healing last summer, he was ready to try anything to treat the deep, open wound on his left foot. It had been about two years since he had an operation to remove an infection. His weekly follow-up appointments with his doctor consisted of little more than monitoring and re-dressing the wound and he became frustrated with the progress.

Jim had heard that BMH's newly opened Wound Center offered Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) and decided to go there for a second opinion. Greg Gadowski, MD, the center's Medical Director, said they could try 30 HBOT treatments along with a regimen of other techniques to close the wound, but there were no guarantees. "Dr. Gadowski told me I've got to make a commitment," recalled Jim. "I told him I would."

Having lived with Type I diabetes since the age of five, Jim was already



Jim Leonard stands in front of one of the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) chambers at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

accustomed to making commitments to his health. He admits he did not always pay close attention to the lifestyle do's and don'ts of his chronic disease as a young man growing up in Stamford, Connecticut. These days,

he is grateful for modern technologies, like the pump, that make it easier to regulate his insulin. Still, over the course of more than 50 years, he has been afflicted by many of the health complications that result from

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## Improving the Patient Experience

Tom Romard, RN always understood there are many factors beyond medical treatment that contribute to a patient having a positive hospital stay. When Brattleboro Memorial Hospital offered him the newly created Director of Patient Experience position last year, Romard jumped at the chance. He was excited to build a culture where both staff and patients played a role in improving how patients are cared for at BMH.

"I do have a passion for the patient who is sick and needs those things that come along with providing medical care," said Romard, who came to BMH two years ago from Cheshire Medical Center. "Whether I was working in the Emergency Department, the Intensive Care Unit or another department, I would try to see things from the patient's perspective. That's how I approach this role, too."

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# Patient Experience continued from page 1



**Steven Gordon**  
President/CEO

**Kathleen McGraw, MD**  
Chief Medical Officer

**Bonnie McKellar**  
VP Physician &  
Business Development

**Michael Rogers**  
VP Finance

**Mary Urquhart**  
VP Patient Care Services

**Healthwise** is published for our patients and their families, our friends, and our community twice a year. *Healthwise* articles are written by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

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Please call Ellen Smith at 802-257-8314 if you have comments about this newsletter and/or suggestions for future articles.

#### Mission

Brattleboro Memorial Hospital will provide community-based health services delivered with compassion and respect.

#### Vision

Best patient care experience - every patient; every time.  
Best place to work - employees / volunteers / medical staff

“It is important to look at every facet of the hospital, every department and each patient interaction to constantly improve how we care for our patients and our community” stresses Steven Gordon, CEO. “The Director of Patient Experience position was created to help guide this process and Tom is the right person for the job!”

Another source utilized to obtain patient feedback is a formal patient survey called HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) This survey tool consists of 32 questions asking patients to evaluate different aspects of their stay. Questions range from communication with doctors and nurses, effective pain management, to hospital noise and cleanliness. However, rather than waiting to receive the survey results compiled by an outside vendor, Romard or other

BMH nurses will call patients within 24 to 72 hours of returning home. He has tailored his calls in a way that not only provides the patients with a chance to address any issues they had during their stay, but also to provide some additional patient education and preventive care.

“These calls are an opportunity to help keep patients home safely. Did they get their prescriptions filled? Do they know how to take their meds? Do they have the help they need? Are there any risks for tripping that can be removed? You never know what kind of safety issues come up during a phone conversation that we can help with,” Romard said.

Romard would prefer to address any issues a patient might have had with their hospital stay even before he or she goes home. To that end, he has developed a checklist based on previous patient experiences, and each morning he participates in rounds on (visits) all admitted patients to see whether these checklist tasks are being accomplished. The immediate feedback he’s able to provide the staff through this process had led to tangible improvements on an individual basis and at BMH as a whole.

“It’s about trying to do the right thing all the time,” said Romard. “One of the most exciting parts of my day is when I come back to my desk and someone has slapped a sticky note on my desk saying, ‘Go talk to the patient in 327B,’ because that means the staff feels safe about participating in the process of improving the patient experience.”

Patient feedback -whether it is positive or negative- is the most critical factor in improving the patient experience. Romard always shares this feedback with the staff involved and the appropriate manager. His boots-on-the-ground approach frequently helps resolve a negative situation before it escalates.

“My real goal is to try and make sure that patients get what they need when they’re here,” Romard said. “I want patients to feel safe when they come here. I want them to know we’re going to give them the best care we can and that they have a voice, and that we will work with them.”



**Tom Romard, RN**

*“My real goal is to try and make sure that patients get what they need when they’re here.”*



# BMH Physician Group Q & A with Bonnie McKellar

Bonnie McKellar was hired as Vice President of Physician and Business Services in the fall of 2012. She came to BMH after 12 years serving in a similar role for Catholic Medical Center (CMC) in Manchester, New Hampshire. McKellar recently sat down with Healthwise to talk about the hospital's vision for the BMH Physician Group and how it integrates with other parts of the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Healthcare System.

## **HW: What did you bring to the BMH Physician Group from your previous job?**

MCKELLAR: BMH Physician Group had been created less than a year before. There were a lot of independent practices that had just become employed, so it was new territory for everyone. BMH was looking to establish systems which brought all providers together under one umbrella.

## **HW: What kinds of adjustments were made to assist in establishing the BMH Physician Group?**

MCKELLAR: Initially, we restructured the management of the BMH Physician Group to have more commonality. There's me as the Vice President; Elizabeth Acquaviva is the director of all practices; Cindy Pearson provides clinical coordination and Sue Kapral oversees billing. We also established dozens of new policies and procedures that standardized patient care across the practices.

Additionally, the clinicians have a Physician Group Medical Director, Dr. Tony Blofson, which is a new position and a clinician leadership committee has been created. A number of committees and teams across each practice have been established to ensure everyone's voice is represented, from the clinicians to the nurses to the billing and reception desk staff. All of these things helped everybody feel like they are part of a single entity known as the BMH Physician Group.

## **HW: The practices were also in the midst of changing over to the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) when you came on board. Was that the biggest challenge?**

MCKELLAR: The EMR is always difficult. There's a huge learning curve and all the products are not as user-friendly as one might think. I've been through it twice, so I knew that it was eventually going to be okay but it takes time for everyone to learn the system and become comfortable.

## **HW: How does the EMR help the BMH Physician Group practices work with other hospital services?**

MCKELLAR: With EMR we have a greater opportunity to take care of all the patient's needs because as providers we can see everything that is going on. If I'm a patient of a primary care practice and I have to go to cardiology or I have to have surgery, these practices/providers have access to all my records in the system. That's really helpful in making sure there isn't any repeat testing or confusion about what medications have been prescribed.

## **HW: In what ways do patients see the benefits of all these changes?**

MCKELLAR: All of the changes we continue to implement put the patients first. The patient experience starts with the phone call to the practice to address a need and isn't complete until their total healthcare concerns have been addressed – either by new or refilled medications, referrals for further testing or



Bonnie McKellar

specialty services. Our goal is to address the whole patient and to minimize unnecessary phone calls, costly testing or unwarranted appointments in the future.

Another priority for me is getting all the BMH Physician Group practices qualified under the Vermont Blueprint for Health as patient-centered medical homes. By the end of this year, all our primary care practices will be Blueprint-certified. We are now focusing on the wellness of patients and trying to keep them healthy instead of managing their disease or illnesses. That is transforming how we provide healthcare services in a way that it is much more satisfying to the patient.

## **HW: At the same time you're making all these adjustments, the number of practices and the scope of services offered by BMH Physician Group is growing, correct?**

MCKELLAR: We have more than forty clinicians overall and each practice has its own staff. Of the thirteen practices, four are family medicine practices that see patients from ages zero to infinity, as I like to say. They are Brattleboro Family Medicine, Maplewood Family Practice, Putney Family Healthcare

*continued on back cover*

# STAR Program® Q & A with Eileen Casey

Last May, through the support of an anonymous funder, the Rehabilitation Services Department achieved its STAR® program certification from Oncology Rehab Partners. STAR® (Survivorship Training and Rehabilitation) helps patients with cancer cope with the effects of the disease and the potential difficulties arising from medical treatment. Healthwise asked BMH Rehabilitation Services Director Eileen Casey for a description of the program and how it's been working in our community.

## **HW: What patients are eligible for STAR® and how do they enroll?**

CASEY: Anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer is eligible for the STAR® program, but different patients may find it helpful at different times. Some people may be referred to the STAR® program at the time of their cancer diagnosis to help improve fitness before cancer treatments are done. Many people are referred at or near the end of their cancer treatments to regain function and fitness. There are also patients who get referred well after their chemo or radiation due to problems that may not have been apparent at the time of treatment.

## **HW: How do you determine program goals for individual patients?**

CASEY: In every case where a patient is referred to rehabilitation services, a licensed therapist takes the patient's history and performs an evaluation. The therapist uses these findings to discuss what the program might offer that patient and sets reasonable goals. From there, an individualized treatment plan is set up.

## **HW: What benchmarks do you use to monitor progress?**

CASEY: Every individual is affected differently by their cancer and its treatment. STAR® has a variety of tools that can measure progress

based upon the difficulty someone is experiencing. We use a number of published outcome tools that may look at how well you use your arm, how quickly you can walk a measured distance, how much swelling you have in a limb, and scales that rate how much pain or fatigue you are feeling, just to name just a few.

## **HW: How many patients have participated so far?**

CASEY: Since we started the STAR® program in late May 2013, twenty-six patients have come through. Each month we are seeing a slight increase in referrals as more and more people are becoming aware of the program.

## **HW: What kind of feedback have you heard from patients so far?**

CASEY: Patients have been overwhelmingly positive about the program. As patients finish the program, we give a STAR® Program Satisfaction survey to patients to gain feedback. To date 100% of the surveys responded that they would come back to the program in the future if needed and 100% would recommend the STAR® program to others.

## **HW: What kind of feedback have you heard from the staff?**

CASEY: Staff have also been very enthusiastic about the program.



Eileen Casey

They are excited to be able to work so closely with the Oncology Department staff and to help patients recover from their cancer diagnosis.

## **HW: As cancer treatment advances, how does Oncology Rehab Partners keep BMH staff up to date on best practices?**

CASEY: The great thing about being a STAR® certified program is that Oncology Rehab Partners, the founders of the program, truly are partners. They continue to work with us, and provide education modules for our staff. They also offer discussion forums, newsletters, webinars and conferences we can access. Oncology Rehab Partners is also actively partnering with STAR® programs to help support and gather research about the benefits of rehab in oncology patients.

For more information about the STAR® Program at BMH, contact the Rehabilitation Services Department at 802-257-8255.

*“Once you choose hope, anything’s possible.” - Christopher Reeve*



## Just So Pediatrics Moved to New, Larger Location

Just So Pediatrics has moved to a new location in the Medical Office Building at 19 Belmont Avenue, Suite G102 on the ground floor, at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

Situated just across the street from their old location at 16 Belmont Avenue, the new office provides larger space and updated facilities, including five exam rooms instead of four.

Just So Pediatrics offers comprehensive care to infants, children, and adolescents. The pediatric group includes Dr. Valerie Rooney, Dr. Jane Katz Field, and certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Cynthia Howes. Along with their staff, they share the goal of making your child's visit a comfortable one.

"We are excited to have a new, roomier, and warmer space for patients and staff," says Dr. Rooney. "We plan to continue providing the homey atmosphere and personal relationships that are so important to our families."

Just So Pediatrics is a member of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital's Physician Group, a multi-specialty group practice of primary care and specialty care physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The mission of the BMH Healthcare System is to provide community-based, quality health services delivered with compassion and respect.

For more information, please call Just So Pediatrics at their new telephone number 802-251-8626 or visit them online at [www.bmhphysiciangroup.org](http://www.bmhphysiciangroup.org).

## Center for Cardiovascular Health: Anticoagulation Clinic



The Center for Cardiovascular Health at BMH is pleased to announce its new Anticoagulation Clinic, Monday thru Friday, 7:30 AM-1:30 PM, beginning late February. The clinic offers a painless method for evaluating Coumadin (Warfarin) therapy and provides rapid and accurate results coupled with enhanced education for patients.

The clinic will work with your doctor to help manage your Warfarin/Coumadin by offering point of care testing, which uses a painless finger prick to determine the international normalized ratio (INR) which does not require a blood draw.

The average appointments will last 10 minutes during which the staff will go over drug dosing, side effects and possible drug interactions as well as provide comprehensive education to patients and family members. Because point of care testing provides instant results, you will no longer need to wait for results at the end of the day. By the end of your appointment, you will leave knowing what your INR is and your anticoagulant dosage.

All patients interested in enrolling in our clinic should speak with their primary care provider.

Anticoagulation clinics have proven highly effective in regulating warfarin dosing so patients have less fluctuations in their INR and fewer side effects.

## Introducing

**Heather M. Ferreira, CNM, WHNP**  
Certified Nurse Midwife  
Brattleboro Obstetrics & Gynecology  
*Specialty: Midwifery, Obstetrics, GYN*



**Before I joined BMH I was:** practicing as a certified nurse-midwife for one year in rural upstate New York. I worked in a private practice, primarily with medically underserved women. I also provided care to Native American women on the nearby Mohawk reservation.

**What I've learned about Brattleboro since coming here is that:** the community is very welcoming and supportive of new arrivals like us. I also get a sense that there is a lot of community investment - the people who live here are very proud of their community and love where they live.

**You may not guess it by looking at me, but I:** love music! I enjoy many genres but my favorite is definitely blue grass. My husband bought me a banjo for Christmas, so my goal for the year is to learn to play it.

**To me, "Exceptional care for our community" means:** Embracing the hallmarks of midwifery (as outlined by the American College of Nurse-Midwives). The hallmarks that resonate with me are empowerment of women as partners in their health care and recognition of pregnancy, birth and menopause as normal physiologic processes.

**802-251-9965**

# Commitment to Healing continued from page 1

diabetes, including heart disease, cataracts and Charcot foot syndrome.

The Charcot foot syndrome was directly responsible for Jim's wound. The condition created deformities in his ankles, and one day while stacking 300 and 400 pound boards at his job with Cersosimo Lumber Company, his left heel just blew out. The heel bone could not be re-attached and Jim was fitted with a brace to stabilize his leg. He went to work as a machine operator at VerMed, which prompted his move from Brattleboro to Bellows Falls. Over the years he had grown accustomed to checking his feet daily for wounds and one day he discovered a blister had formed at a pressure point underneath the brace.

"I don't know if I could have caught the blister any sooner. I went to my doctor the next day and she had me in the operating room within an hour," said Jim. "She said the infection had tunneled down to the bone, so she had to cut a whole big chunk of meat out of there."

Jim had the little toe on his right foot amputated due to an ulceration a few years before, and he feared he would lose his whole left foot if this large wound couldn't be closed. That fear is what gave him the determination to catch the 5:50 AM Connecticut River Transit bus to Brattleboro every weekday morning for 30 days. Then from there transfer to The Current's blue line, which stops at BMH, to get treatment for his wound. It also enabled him to overcome the claustrophobic feelings he experienced when first entering the HBOT chamber. Jim is quick to give a lion's share of credit to the Center's nurses and staff for making his whole experience more comfortable.



"Going down there every day on the bus, I'd get there a little after 7:00 AM. You don't go into the HBOT chamber until about 8:00 AM," said Jim. "The first couple of days I was sitting out in the hallway. One of the nurses, Tracy, came walking through and asked what I was doing sitting there. I told her I get here early so I wait. She said 'I'm going to open early for you.' Then she started coming in every day early. She'd make me a cup of coffee and sit and talk to me while doing her work."

HBOT promotes healing by using pressurized oxygen to move blood into a wounded area. In addition to the

two hours Jim spent in the HBOT chamber each day, his wound underwent regular debridement -- a process of cutting the edges of a wound and



roughing the center to facilitate healthy bleeding. He was also fitted with a total contact cast: a regular brown tubing sock underneath a mesh sock that is then wrapped in fiberglass. A special boot is then placed over the fiberglass and two braces connect to the heel so all the weight is off the wound.

There were no miracles after 30 treatments, but Jim did notice the wound had started to close in certain spots. Dr. Gadowski recommended another 30 treatments and Jim says that's when he started seeing real progress. "Every week I started seeing it closing in and closing in and closing in," said Jim. "When the second set of thirty treatments finished, the wound opening had shrunk to about the size of a pencil eraser. The insurance company approved another 10 treatments, and according to the chart they keep at the Center my wound is now 99.9 percent healed."

Rather than dwell on what might have happened had he not gone to the Center for Wound Healing, Jim chooses to focus on the future. He's been fitted for diabetic shoes to help his Charcot foot syndrome. His primary care provider, Andrea Galasso, DO of Brattleboro Internal Medicine, has helped him with his diet and he has lost 19 pounds thus far. He is currently investigating job re-training programs that can get him back into the workforce and he hopes to move back to Brattleboro. Most of all, he looks forward to walking over to the Connecticut River and continue the passion for fishing he developed while growing up on Stamford's side of Long Island Sound. "I can go down there and catch nothing and have a great day. I like sitting by the water, nice and quiet," said Jim. "I'll take it easy but I am going to do what I like to do."

Jim said he's already written a thank you letter to Healogics, BMH's partner in providing the Center for Wound Healing's technology and training. "I can't boast about those people enough: Jim, Jen, Lynne, the whole crew. They don't just look at a wound. They knew how I was feeling inside about the whole thing when I first started going there and they didn't let that just go off to the side. They tackled the whole problem all at once," said Jim. "They keep saying to me, 'don't thank us, you're the one who made the commitment.'"

*For more information about the BMH Center for Wound Healing, visit [www.bmhvt.org](http://www.bmhvt.org) or call 802-275-3674.*



# BMH in the Community

by Ellen Smith, Executive Director of Development/Community Relations

When BMH asks the community for support, I am often the one at the forefront. You see my signature on the appeal letters and some of you probably heard from me during “The Doorway to Exceptional Care” capital campaign for the BMH Emergency Department. Year after year, your generosity never ceases to amaze me, and the stories I get to hear about how BMH has touched some of your lives are heartwarming.

Part of our Emergency Department campaign was a music video that featured physicians and BMH staff singing “We’re here for you.” Even though the song was about how we provide healthcare services, it got me thinking about how all of us at BMH engage with the community beyond our day to day jobs. So I sent an email to BMH staff asking how they give back to the area where we all live and work. My inbox very quickly filled up with close to 50 responses. The same generosity and caring for our community that I see from BMH supporters was also reflected in these short email responses. I hope the small sampling below illustrates our commitment and love of the great Brattleboro community.

- *I volunteer two evenings a week for Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.*
- *I am on the boards of Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center and Stonewall Farm. I also knit hats for homeless shelters.*
- *I’m a volunteer Tae Kwon Do instructor for the Deerfield Valley Elementary School Winter Sports program.*
- *I am on the board for the Boys & Girls Club, the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce, The Brattleboro County Club and Vermont Association of Hospitals & Health Systems. I am a long time active member of Rotary and my wife and I enjoy attending many of the local non-profit events including; the Harris Hill Ski Jump, The Hatch productions, Strolling of the Heifers and the Brattleboro Retreat gala.*
- *I volunteer at the Community Kitchen in Keene. Through my church, I sang Christmas carols for those hospitalized over the holidays, contributed baked goods for the motorcycle tent during Laconia Week, and helped with Vacation Bible School. I recently painted for a Habitat for Humanity project and will make a 2nd trip to Haiti this fall.*
- *I am a local Kiwanis member, which pairs with Rescue Inc. to hand out free bike helmets to children. I am a committee member for Windham County’s Relay For Life and I donate my Saturday mornings to the Learn to Skate program through BHA.*
- *I am Financial Secretary of my church’s women’s group, I volunteer at the potluck suppers and bake for the various church sales, I volunteer at the Humane Society and am the leader of a Girl Scout Brownie Troop.*
- *I serve on the advisory boards of VTC-Brattleboro Campus Nursing Program and the Keene State College Nursing program. I am a member of the Vermont State Board Nursing Practice Council.*
- *I volunteer at the Windham County Humane Society.*
- *I belong to two Motorcycle groups that raise money for cancer treatment. I also ride for other charities, including the Retreat’s Ride for Heroes.*
- *I volunteer for Latchis Arts, the Guilford Fair, Friends of Algiers Village, and more.*
- *I am on the board of Guilford Cares.*
- *I volunteer for Southeastern Therapeutic Riding Center and The Warrior Connection.*
- *I am on the board at CareNet Pregnancy of Windham County.*
- *I participate in blood drives, Project Feed the Thousands, Bowl For Kids’ Sake and Walk the Night. I am part of the prevention coalition in two towns.*
- *I am a Board Member at West Bee Nursery School.*

continued on page 8

## Introducing

### Maureen Mahoney, PA

Physician Assistant  
BMH Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine  
Specialty: Sports Medicine



**Before I joined BMH I was:** a physician assistant in orthopaedics at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Keene NH, and also worked at Grace Cottage Hospital. I did my training at Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University in New York City. I am also a Certified Athletic Trainer and have over 20 years of health care experience.

**What I’ve learned about Brattleboro since coming here is that:** I grew up in this community and I am very lucky to live in such a welcoming place, like Brattleboro. It is unique in it’s diversity and environmental awareness.

**You may not guess it by looking at me, but I:** I enjoy reading as much as playing sports.

**To me, “Exceptional care for our community” means:** It means we take care of each other. We should approach each and every patient with the same care and compassion we would give to a family member and that we will try our best every day to give the best possible care.

**802-251-8611**



## Introducing

**Paul Stanchfield, PA**  
Physician Assistant  
Brattleboro Internal Medicine  
Specialty: Internal Medicine



**Before I joined BMH I was:** a Physician Assistant hospitalist at the Brattleboro Retreat for 2.5 years. There I worked with a very dedicated group of individuals responsible for all of the admissions to the Retreat and caring for their varied medical needs. Before that, I spent almost five years in internal medicine locally.

**What I've learned about Brattleboro since coming here is that:** I have been in Vermont for 12 years now and spent the last seven practicing medicine in Brattleboro. Prior to that, I had never been to Vermont but knew I wanted to return to the mountains to live and am happy I did so here.

**You may not guess it by looking at me, but I:** am learning to play blues harmonica and I enjoy riding my motorcycle.

**To me, "Exceptional care for our community" means:** Not only providing proficient medical care for disease or illness but also promoting health and wellness among our patients.

802-257-2611

## BMH in the Community continued from page 7

- I am the founder and current medical director of the Putney Free Clinic.
- I am on the board of the Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic and on the hospital auxiliary.
- I am a volunteer with New England Organ Bank and Donate Life.
- I coach The Mount Snow Bluebirds Special Olympic Alpine Race Team.
- I serve on the board and volunteer at the Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic. I participate in fundraisers for Big Brother/Big Sister.
- I have been a volunteer doctor at the Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic since 1993.
- I donate food for food drives, toys and clothes to the Salvation Army.
- I'm an EMT and am part of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.
- I was a founding member and volunteer with Westminster Cares. I have also served on the board of directors.
- I am on the Board of the local synagogue, Brattleboro Area Jewish Community.
- I'm not sure I even know all the places we support, but I am a long-time supporter of Parks Place in Bellows Falls.
- I am the President of Brattleboro Winter Carnival this year.
- I serve on the Board of Putney Cares, am on the Steering Committee for Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition, participate in the Hunger Council, support Food Connects and I am a member of the Putney Democratic Town committee. I have gleaned as part of the Vermont Food Bank's gleaning project.
- I have organized BMH teams for the last several years at the Youth Services annual Bowl for Kid's Sake. I am also Secretary on the Board for Guardians of the Ribbon – Windham County Vermont Chapter.
- I volunteer my cooking and serving skills at the overflow shelter during the winter.
- I am on the New England Youth Theater Board. I volunteer at the Latchis Theater, the Memorial Park ski lift, and for the BUHS Nordic Team.
- I am a volunteer EMT.
- I donate to Gerda's Animal Aid.
- I volunteer for Girls on the Run, Harris Hill Ski Jump and the Dummerston Social Service Committee.
- I have been on the Vernon Elementary School Board for the past 12 years.
- I am part of Brattleboro Rotary and am on the Board at Holton Home. I volunteer at Overflow Dinners and Project Feed the Thousands.
- I just finished 7 years serving on the Grafton Public Library board, and continue on to my 11th year on the HOLT fund distribution review committee. I am also on the executive board of the Vermont chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- I coach girls' soccer at the high and middle school, as well as a small team at the Bernardston Dome. I am a stage manager for the Brattleboro School of Dance. I am an organizer of the Green Mountain bike race and I run a fitness camp for high school athletes.
- My husband and I find a family every Christmas and give to them.
- I very recently joined the board for the Brattleboro Walk-In Clinic.
- I have coached youth ice hockey for 14 years and am a Brattleboro Hockey Association board member.

In addition to the volunteer hours listed, numerous BMH physicians and staff listed donations of both money and time to local and regional charities such as Vermont Food Bank, Reformer Stocking, Hospice, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Secret Santa, Project Feed the Thousands, Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center, several area churches and Brattleboro Free Christmas as well as to national charities such as American Cancer Society, Diabetes Foundation, and the National Wildlife Foundation.



# Contributions

...making a difference

## Donor Profile: Charmaine Vinton, BMH Director of Health Information

Finding summer employment is part of the job description for most teachers. Charmaine Vinton was fortunate that when the school bell rang for the final time every June, she had a standing opportunity at her father's medical practice in the town of Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey. What Charmaine didn't count on, however, was having that job turn into a new and exciting career.

The healthcare coding and billing tasks Charmaine performed for her father were a distant cry from teaching elementary school math and science. Yet the appeal was undeniable. "You felt like you were a detective," she recalls. "The codes changed. You had to learn all the new techniques. It kept you involved in the clinical part even though you weren't clinical."

Along with her new career path, Charmaine decided a change of scenery was necessary. She had fond memories of family getaways to their Vermont vacation home near Burke Mountain. It was a major factor in her decision to attend Lyndon State College, so why not go back to the Green Mountain State to pursue her new direction? She applied to several places in Vermont, but ultimately accepted an offer from Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. Brattleboro seemed like a good geographic compromise between New Jersey and the Northeast Kingdom. Now she and her husband, Doug, and their yellow labrador, Butters, have the enviable option to head north for a backwoods hike or down to the Jersey Shore for a family visit.

Charmaine's career shift also came at a time when the field of Health Information Management was rapidly transforming. She juggled her full-time job at BMH with online coursework, earning an Associate's Degree in Records and Health Information Technology as well as professional coding certifications from the American Health Information Association and the American Academy of Professional Coders. These credentials prepared Charmaine well for the age of Electronic Health Records. It wasn't long before she assumed the mantle of Director of Health Information at the hospital.

Almost 10 years later, Charmaine is still passionate about her work. She sees her job as a continuation of the care the hospital provides for patients and she



Charmaine and Doug Vinton and their dog Butters

wouldn't trade it for anything. "Many times in the larger hospitals you have to mail your request or leave a phone message. We are open to the public," she says. "Some people are very surprised when they come in. They think there's going to be a lot of red tape. It's a big relief for them when they realize we are working for them just like the doctors and nurses."

Charmaine's love for BMH and the community it serves also compels her to give back to the hospital, both through her own monetary contributions and helping with fundraising. Most recently, she was part the hospital's efforts to encourage fellow employees to contribute to the Emergency Department renovation and expansion project.

"I believe in BMH. The hospital is a big part of the community. I feel people deserve access to exceptional medical care, and it's important to sustain and improve our current initiatives," says Charmaine. "We have a great team of doctors, nurses and staff, and I'm proud to be a part of this team. I can honestly tell my friends and co-workers that BMH is truly worth supporting."

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

Thank you for helping us reach, and even exceed, our \$3.5 million goal in the Campaign for BMH Emergency Department.

Your generous contribution has helped open a new *Doorway to Exceptional Care* for our community.

## Life Insurance, an Option for Charitable Support

by Kelli Warriner Crego, CFP

Have you ever thought about making a gift of your life insurance to a charitable institution? Life insurance gifts are a wonderful way that an individual can make a significant and lasting gift to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH).

Life insurance allows you to make a larger gift to charity than you might otherwise be able to afford. Although the cost to you (your premiums) is relatively small, the amount the charity will receive (the death benefit) can be quite substantial. For instance, an individual may irrevocably assign BMH an existing life insurance policy that is no longer needed for family protection, making the hospital both owner and beneficiary. As long as you continue to pay the premiums on the life insurance policy, the charity is guaranteed to receive the proceeds of the policy when you die. (Guarantees are subject to the claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company.) Since life insurance proceeds paid to a charity are not subject to income and estate taxes, probate costs, and other expenses, the charity can count on receiving 100% of your gift. (If the donor is not sure whether they wish to continue to pay the premiums, BMH may elect to.)

Giving life insurance to charity also has certain income tax benefits. Depending on how you structure your gift, you may be able to take an income tax deduction equal to your basis in the policy or its fair market value (FMV), and you may be able to deduct the premiums you pay for the policy on your annual income tax return. When an insurance contract is transferred to a charity, the donor's income tax charitable deduction is based on the lesser of FMV or adjusted cost basis.

Options for supporters gifting life insurance are:

- Continue payment of the premiums and receive the full face value of the policy at the donor's death; or
- Convert the policy to paid-up insurance in a reduced amount with no further payments; or
- Surrender the policy for its present cash value.

*Kelli Warriner Crego, CFP is a financial advisor practicing at Park Place Financial Advisors, 57 Western Ave. in Brattleboro, VT. She offers securities and advisory services as an investment adviser representative of Commonwealth Financial Network®, a member firm of FINRA/SIPC and a Registered Investment Adviser. She can be reached at 802-257-7766 or at [kelli@vtplanners.com](mailto:kelli@vtplanners.com).*

# BMH Honors our Docs on National Doctors Day

Add your expressions of appreciation to the celebration

To honor our dedicated doctors, BMH is once again celebrating National Doctors Day on March, 30<sup>th</sup>. Please join us in thanking your doctor for the care they've provided you, your family and community.

In addition to your tribute, you can honor your doctor by making an unrestricted gift to BMH. Unrestricted gifts enable BMH to provide our physicians and hospital staff with the tools and technology needed to continue their exceptional care to our community.

To join the celebration, please use this tribute form and return it to the BMH Development Office, 17 Belmont Avenue, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Tributes will be displayed in the Richards Building lobby from March 30<sup>th</sup> to April 7<sup>th</sup> and we invite you to come view them!

Recognizing: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Physician's Name*

If you would like to make a gift to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in honor of your doctor, please complete the following gift information:

Name of Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a tax-deductible cash gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please make your check payable to BMH)

Please charge:  Visa  MC  Discover \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ VTC#: (back of card) \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Recognize Anonymously

Please return form to BMH Development Office • 17 Belmont Avenue • Brattleboro, VT 05301





Brattleboro Memorial Hospital  
EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

17 Belmont Avenue • Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-257-0341 • 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.*

## BMH Physician Group Q & A continued from page 3

and Windham Family Practice. We have one practice dedicated to internal medicine, Brattleboro Internal Medicine, and then two pediatric practices: Cornerstone Pediatrics and Just So Pediatrics. And then we have five specialty practices, which are BMH Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, Brattleboro Cardiology, Brattleboro General Surgery, Brattleboro OB/GYN and Four Seasons Midwifery, and Southern Vermont Ear, Nose & Throat. We also have post-acute services, which serve the three nursing homes in the community: Thompson House, Pine Heights and Vernon Green.

### **HW: Has the restructuring helped increase patient access and improved coordination of care?**

MCKELLAR: Absolutely! The continuum of care and the transitions of care are critical. It's the difference between thinking "these are my patients" and "these are our patients." We're all responsible for making sure someone has a good experience, whether they go to the orthopaedic practice or a family practitioner. Between the new practice management structure, finishing the EMR implementation and adding new clinicians, the BMH Physician Group has dramatically improved access and streamlined care in the past 12 to 15 months. At the same time, the patient will still get the same personal experience they've always enjoyed when walking in the door and being greeted by their first name.

For more information about the BMH Physician Group, including contact information for all of the offices and clinician profiles, visit [www.bmhphysiciangroup.org](http://www.bmhphysiciangroup.org)

### You Are Invited ...

Estate Planning Seminar  
Thursday, May 1, 2014  
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Brattleboro Memorial Hospital  
Brew Barry Conference Room #2

#### **Topic:**

Prepare for the Future: How An Estate Plan Helps Put You In Control

#### **Speakers:**

Jonathan D. Secrest, Attorney, Corum  
Mabie Cook Prodan Angell & Secrest,  
PLC, & Travis Shine, Certified  
Financial Planner, Ameriprise Financial  
Services, Inc.

Please RSVP to [development@bmhvt.org](mailto:development@bmhvt.org)  
or 802-257-8314.

