

Healthwise

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President's Corner

Greetings! For several months, we have been collaborating with staff members at Springfield Hospital in Springfield, VT to support patient care transitions for the upcoming closure of the hospital's Childbirth Center.

Recognizing that childbirth is a special time for families, we wanted to continue to make high quality, accessible, and cost effective obstetric services available for residents of this region.

Brattleboro OB/GYN ("BOG"), a department of BMH, will establish a practice in Springfield, VT. Expectant mothers will be able to see one of the BOG providers for their pre- and post-natal care and deliver at our Birthing Center here in Brattleboro, VT. The BOG office will be open in Springfield at least two days per week, and staffed by a physician and a Certified Nurse Midwife.

Pre-natal services will be offered at the Springfield BOG office location, and lab work, ultrasound and other testing will be provided at Springfield Hospital. Immediate RN Care Coordination services are available to patients for immediate transfer and review of care. Our teams have collaborated with community partners to ensure that transportation assistance is available for those with commuting needs.

We'll also provide guidance to our patients through pre- and post-natal programs through our popular Centering Pregnancy program and wide variety of childbirth and education classes. Additionally, BOG clinicians will be available to provide gynecological surgical services at Springfield Hospital as needed.

We recently participated in a Meet and Greet event with other area hospitals to connect expecting families with our care team, share the services we are able to provide, and help the patients in making personal choices for their prenatal care and childbirth needs.

I am proud of our clinicians and support staff who have worked diligently to ensure that care will remain accessible to patients within the Springfield area.

Together, we focus our efforts on the future and will continue to work collaboratively with hospitals across the area to develop a regional solution.

Best Regards,
Steven R. Gordon
President and CEO
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital



Tooth Be Told

Introducing the Windham County Dental Center

For many local residents, access to health care is not easy. In pain and unsure where to turn for care, many will visit the hospital emergency department desperate for relief.

However, when it comes to dental conditions, the hospital is not the most appropriate place for care. Many times, all that can be done is to provide prescriptions for antibiotics for temporary relief, leaving the underlying dental condition unsolved.

For the past several years, BMH has collaborated with the United Way of Windham County to evaluate the possibility of establishing a dental center to serve the local community.

Both organizations recognized the need for accessible, affordable dental care for local patients enrolled in Medicaid or without dental insurance, as identified in the latest Community Health Needs Assessment.

Both organizations are excited to announce that the new Windham County Dental Center will be located in space donated by BMH at 375 Canal Street, formally the BMH Urology practice.

Thanks to GPI Construction, the Rotary Club of Brattleboro, A.L. Tyler and Sons Electric, and Alliance Mechanical, minor renovations to the space have transformed the office into a fully functional dentistry practice.

Additionally, after relocating to a new building, Horizon Dental of Brattleboro generously donated dental equipment to set up three complete dental rooms.

Many thanks are also extended to the Vermont Regional Economic Development Program and

the Thompson Trust for their robust support of operations, additional equipment, and staffing costs.

Robert Ruhl, DMD, will serve as the Center's dentist and dental director.

A graduate of Temple University School of Dental Medicine and fellow of the International College of Dentistry, he practices dental care for Deerfield Valley Dental Care in Wilmington, VT.



Dr. Robert Ruhl

Dr. Ruhl is an active member of the BMH Medical staff, the current chair of the Vermont Board of Dental Examiners, and a champion of public health dentistry in Windham County.

The Windham County Dental Center will open in May 2019 and is open to patients with or without dental insurance.

To learn more about the upcoming opening date, find them on Facebook: Windham County Dental Center.

Once the opening date has been listed, patients may call the Center at (802) 490-2923 to sign up and book an appointment.

For more information, patients can contact Debbie Cloutier, office manager: debbie@windhamcountydental.org

Something to Shout About

New physical therapy options offer hope for area patients with Parkinson's Disease

If someone told you they could provide exercise as a prescription, what would you say? For Brattleboro resident Bob “Woody” Woodworth, it was just what he needed.

In 2018, Woody was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease (PD), a neurological disorder that commonly causes stiffness or slowing of bodily movement. Prior to his diagnosis, Woody experienced symptoms gradually over the course of three years, noticing differences in his gait, balance, and softening of his speech.

Longtime owner of Burrow's Specialized Sports and avid runner and cyclist, Woody knew that PD could not be cured, but was determined to find treatment that would improve his symptoms and enable him to maintain his lifestyle.

Fellow runner and friend Carol Bailey, physical therapist for BMH Rehabilitation, suggested to Woody a new and innovative program the department was offering for PD patients called LSVT BIG. She explained to Woody that the treatment trains patients to use exaggerated exercises for smoother movement and walking.

“My initial thought was that it made sense, but I was not quite sure if it would benefit me. However, I trusted Carol and the Rehab department, and knew if they were suggesting it, it must be a good thing,” reflected Woody.

After consulting with his primary care provider and signing up for the program, Woody's biggest concern was his ability to follow through with the program.

“Most people associate PD with shaking, but symptoms can vary. I was worried I wouldn't be able to make any difference in my balance and voice issues,” he said.

Upon starting the program with Carol, Woody's concerns were quickly alleviated. The 4-week



Bob “Woody” Woodworth

program required Woody to meet with Carol four times per week to practice big, exaggerated steps and large body movement exercises plus daily “homework.” The standardized program is research and evidence-based, individualized for each patient's needs, and implemented by certified clinicians like Carol and her colleague, fellow BMH physical therapist, Alina Alvarado, PT.

“The way Carol approached the treatment made it fun and comfortable. She was very supportive,” Woody smiled, “We had fun yelling together.”

However, not all members of Woody's household were amused with the exercises. “I'm not a loud person, so the first time I started the exercises, my dog jumped up and scrambled out of the room to hide under a table,” he chuckled.

Since beginning treatment in January, Woody diligently followed the program's treatment

plan, practicing exercises twice a day and continues to check in with Carol and her colleagues in the Rehabilitation department.

“It's the combination of highly intensive work and large amplitude of arm, leg, and trunk movements that improve the slow and small movements caused by PD,” explained Carol. “Balance, flexibility, and strength are also improved.”

Best results come from starting during early to middle stages of PD. Treatment helps maintain functioning and decreases the chance of a rapid decline.

While the steps toward treating the disease may be slow and at times unsteady, they are steps nonetheless. And for Woody, each bit of progress offers more hope.

A Closer Look with Carol Bailey, PT



What is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's Disease (PD) can occur when there is a loss of brain cells that produce a chemical called dopamine. It usually presents in people over the age of 60, but it can present earlier in life as well.

What are the symptoms?

The four common symptoms include tremors, limb and trunk stiffness, the slowing down of movement, and weak balance or coordination. Since PD symptoms exacerbate over time, as they become worse, patients can have trouble with simple tasks such as getting in and out of bed or even walking and talking. People with PD may also experience “freezing,” where they have extreme difficulty starting to walk again after having stopped, or difficulty stopping walking once started.

What is LSVT BIG?

LSVT BIG is a physical therapy treatment for people with PD and other neurological conditions. It was adopted and established after the LSVT LOUD program, named for Lee Silverman, (Lee Silverman Voice Treatment), a woman living with PD, and has been scientifically studied for over 25 years. The key to the treatment is helping people recalibrate their movements.

LSVT BIG improves walking, self-care, and other tasks by helping people reexamine how they perceive their movements with what others actually see. It also teaches them how and when to apply extra effort to produce bigger motions – more like the movements of everyone around them.

How long do treatments last?

For LSVT BIG, research demonstrates that if home exercises are continued, improvements continue beyond the end of the treatment.

Just as people take daily doses of medicine to help manage their symptoms, it is just as important for patients to take their daily dose of LSVT BIG exercises to keep their movements normal and voices strong. Twice daily practice of the exercises takes only 15-20 minutes, allowing flexibility for the patient to fit in the exercises when most convenient for them.

To learn more about the program, visit www.lsvtglobal.com.

If you are interested in learning about LSVT BIG therapy options, consult your primary care clinician to learn if the program could be right for you.

To contact the BMH Rehabilitation Department, call (802) 257-8255, and ask to speak with our LSVT BIG certified clinicians: Carol Bailey, PT and Alina Alvarado, PT.



Learning By Heart

Local high school students participate in nurse assisting program



Heidi Fischer with Windham Regional Career Center students

For most high school students, juggling homework, club meetings, and sports practices can feel like a long and hectic day.

For Brattleboro Union High School junior Amanda Frankiewicz and her fellow classmates at the Windham Regional Career Center (WRCC), it's only a fraction of their schedules.

As students in the Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) Program, Amanda and her friends have class two days per week and practice skills in a laboratory setting at WRCC. In addition, they participate in clinical rotations one day per week at both BMH and local long-term care facilities.

Throughout the intensive 10-week program, they are trained to assist with activities of daily living, including dressing, bathing, feeding, taking blood pressure, personal hygiene, and moving and positioning bedridden patients.

"What's special about this program is that the students are able to learn the different needs and mindsets between patients placed in hospitals and long-term care facilities," explained clinical instructor and BMH Emergency Department nurse, Heidi Fischer, RN.

"Most often, LNA students will only see patients within the nursing home, limiting their exposure and view of patient care."

After arriving at the hospital, Heidi provides the students with a brief synopsis of the condition of the patients on BMH's 3rd floor Progressive Care Unit.

For the next two hours, the students are then assigned to be active shadows to BMH licensed nursing assistants, responding to call bells and assisting patients with basic needs.

Additionally, they complete reflection assignments, such as interviewing patients about their experience within the hospital and their view of the care they received.

For Amanda, the program was a natural step. "I was already familiar with nursing, having taken care of my mother when she was hospitalized," she reflected.

"But taking part in the program has taught me a lot about empathy. As a nurse, it is so critical to understand how patients feel and how to make them the most comfortable."

Amanda plans on participating in a nursing cooperative program next year in BMH's Birthing Center.

BUHS senior Ethan Williams agreed, "I have always had an interest in the medical field, and previously took the Center's EMS course, but it wasn't the right fit for me."

He continued, "After enrolling in this program, I knew I made the right choice. It's an awesome opportunity to be able to immerse myself through hands-on experience, something I could never have received through just a textbook."

After graduation, Ethan plans to join the United States Air Force.

As the 10 week program comes to a close, the students will sit for the Red Cross national licensing exam, jumping into summer vacation with the school year behind and a promising career ahead.



Ethan Williams with BMH LNA Sydney Clark



Amanda Frankiewicz & Lexi Miner with instructor Heidi Fischer



Windham Regional Career Center

To learn more about the Windham Regional Career Center's LNA program and other learning opportunities, visit www.wrccvt.com.



Find Your Tribe

Area mothers find kinship in longtime local support group

For more than two decades, mothers across Windham County and beyond have gathered weekly at BMH for a special support group.

The New Moms Network, established by former BMH perinatal educator Dawn Kersula, RN, IBCLC, invites new mothers and their babies to a weekly session to get together and support each other during the often challenging and rewarding season of new motherhood.

Sally Pennington, RNC, IBCLC, RLC, is the Maternal Child Health Nurse and Lactation Consultant for Winston Prouty Center for Child & Family Development and recently became the facilitator for the group with her colleague Jean Vulte, RN, WHNP, LC.

“It was a natural and logical transition for us to staff the New Mom’s group,” explained Sally. “We already work very closely with both Brattleboro OB/GYN and the Birthing Center providing postpartum, lactation, and family support.

“Facilitating this group really adds to Prouty’s robust support for our area families. Mothers can access other Prouty services including assistance locating and paying for child care, and accessing early intervention, mental health, and other supports via Children’s Integrated Services at Prouty.”

Meeting weekly on Wednesdays from 9:30am – 11am at the hospital, the group enables new moms to enjoy each other’s company, have access to skilled lactation support, and learn from community presenters on a variety of topics including infant physical and emotional development, dental health, starting solids, planning a return to work, and so much more.

The group is free of charge and no registration is required.



Brianna Davenport



Geneva Morse



Sarah Mattingley & Stephanie Globus-Hoenich

To learn more, visit www.winstonprouty.org/new-moms or call (802) 257-7852.

Join and follow the group on Facebook by searching “Brattleboro New Moms Network.”

New Mom-ing in Brattleboro with Nancy Vitale



“We arrived in Brattleboro two weeks before our baby was due. There was no time to feel at sea. We had so much to cross off the list – nesting, midwife appointments, prenatal yoga, ice cream at Blueberry Haus (priorities).

And then baby came tearing into the world in a blaze of nitrous oxide and adrenaline before we knew it (but not before we picked up a couple of pints for the freezer).

We spent the first week in a grateful daze of diapers and meal trains. Soon, however, the extra strength ibuprofen and oxytocin wore off, and everything felt impossible – nursing, healing, sleeping.

Even with a great partner, I felt alone, afraid, and broken by rapidly-descending baby blues.

At the prompting of Brattleboro OB/GYN Care Coordinator Jessica Bird, and in an effort to connect with others in my situation, I ventured into the BMH basement’s fitness room for the New Mom’s Group when baby was just two or three weeks old.

Immediately, those hard working, generous, and courageous moms shared their struggles, triumphs, and nursing tips with us.

Over the weeks and months that followed, they taught us about baby massage, starting solids, making tie-dye onesies, sign language, and baby wearing all while nursing, chatting, and changing diapers.

Most importantly, they had compassion; they listened and empathized. And, yes, we had ice cream, too.

It was the hardest summer of my life, and I cannot imagine a better place or a kinder group of people to spend it with as we learned how to be parents.”

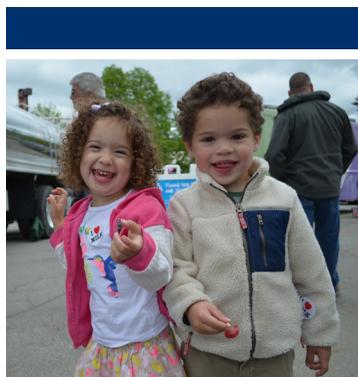
Keep on Trucking

Celebrating eleven years of BMH's Touch a Truck fundraiser

Every year, dozens of trucks converge in the BMH parking lot for the hospital's annual fundraiser, Touch a Truck.

Families are able to spend the day in the driver's seat playing with buttons and levers, moving mulch in a mini-tractor, and so much more! With admission at \$5 per child, capped at \$15 for families with three or more children, the event provides the promise for a day filled with fun, laughter, and learning about all things motorized!

This year's event will be **Saturday, May 11 from 9am to 1pm**. Come for the trucks and stay for the raffles, health fair, and more fun activities! **To learn more, visit www.bmhvt.org/touch-a-truck.**



Under The Hood

Ever wonder how all the trucks and big rigs arrive at the BMH parking lot every year? Meet the small but mighty Touch a Truck committee.

These three community members begin meeting with staff from the BMH Development office in January to plan the event, contact trucking companies and local organizations, and coordinate times of arrival and location for the vehicles.

Arne Hammarlund of West Dummerston, Kerry Amidon, and Brian Tietze, both of Vernon, are the essential cogs in the Touch a Truck machine!



Arne Hammarlund, Kerry Amidon, and Brian Tietze



New Clinicians

Introducing new members to the BMH Medical Staff

Michael Wack, MD

Dr. Wack joins BMH Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine as a new orthopaedic surgeon.

He received his medical degree from and completed his orthopaedic residency with the University of Illinois - Chicago. Dr. Wack enjoys staying active by skiing and golfing.

Dr. Wack is accepting new patients! To make an appointment, call the BMH Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine office: (802) 251-8611.



Dr. Michael Wack

Gilbert Green, DO

Dr. Green joins Brattleboro Internal Medicine as a neurologist.

He received his medical degree from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency and headache medicine fellowship with Ohio State University Medical Center.

Dr. Green is accepting new patients! To make an appointment, call the Brattleboro Internal Medicine office: (802) 251-8787.



Dr. Gilbert Green

A Dog's Tale

“ Last autumn, my parents and I were driving home to Connecticut from a short vacation in Vermont and a car crossed over the line and collided with us. Even though my mom was a nurse for more than 30 years, she became a worried patient and wife as we were rushed to the Emergency Department at BMH.

Luckily, my parents only had minor injuries. They were both so thankful for the kindness, compassion, and support shown to us by the staff. And I'm thankful for the sweet staff that sat with me when my parents were being evaluated - I even got a treat for being such a good girl! We'll always remember the care we received at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. With warm regards and a wet nose, Stella.”





**Brattleboro
Memorial Hospital**

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For more classes, location details, or contact info, visit www.bmhvt.org/events or call (802) 251-8604.

Discover FREE and low-cost health classes at BMH:

Bone Builders • Osteoporosis prevention exercises • MON & FRI, 10-11am

Tobacco Cessation • Nicotine replacement therapy • MON, 1:30-2:30pm, WED, 5-6pm

Lamaze Birthing Classes • Prenatal and labor preparation • MONTHLY, visit website for specific dates

TOUCH A TRUCK

SATURDAY MAY 11TH • 9AM - 1PM

BMH PARKING LOT • 17 BELMONT AVE

\$5 per child, \$15 family pack for 3+ children

www.bmhvt.org/giving • Follow us on Facebook for event updates!

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Brattleboro Retreat