

# Healthwise

SPRING 2018

## No Bones About It

New surgical technology  
at BMH Orthopaedics  
& Sports Medicine

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## New Clinicians

Learn about these and other BMH Medical Staff members at [bmhvt.org](http://bmhvt.org)



**Hannah Cressy, CNM**

Hannah Cressy, CNM joins Brattleboro OB/GYN as a new certified nurse midwife. She is accepting new patients.



**Jennifer Funaioli-Sheehan, MD**

Jennifer Funaioli-Sheehan, MD joins the BMH Post-Acute Care team as a new physician working with patients in local nursing homes.



**Katelyn Lucy, CNM**

Katelyn Lucy, CNM joins Brattleboro OB/GYN as a new certified nurse midwife. She is accepting new patients.



**Alysha Pinkerd, PA-C**

Alysha Pinkerd, PA-C joins BMH Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine as a new physician's assistant and certified athletic trainer. She is accepting new patients.



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

CONTRIBUTING STAFF • Maeve Shaughnessy • Johanna Staveley • PHOTOGRAPHY • Kelly Fletcher

# President's Corner

## Greetings!

Spring is a time of growth reminding us of all that we have to celebrate and what we have still to accomplish. From well-deserved promotions to long-awaited renovations, this spring is full of opportunities for development and change here at BMH, and I am excited to share our progress with you.

## Leadership Changes

In early December, Eilidh Pederson, MPH was promoted to VP of Medical Group Management and Population Health. Eilidh started at BMH in June 2013 as the Office Manager of Brattleboro Internal Medicine. From that role she advanced to Director of Operations and further advanced to Executive Director of BMH Medical Group Practices. She implemented BMH's Centralized Scheduling Department, and since its implementation in 2014, has created access to care to 4,000 new patients.

Recently, Jodi Dodge, RN has accepted the position of Chief Nursing Officer and VP for Patient Care Services. Jodi joined BMH in

2015 as Director of Patient Experience, going on to become Director of Community Initiatives and the VT Blueprint for Health Project Manager for the Brattleboro Health Services Area, where she has promoted an integrated approach to community health and care coordination.

## Recent Renovations

In addition to celebrating exciting promotions among our staff, we have several expansion projects that will make room for more primary care providers and improved facilities.

This month, Windham Family Practice moved into the Medical Office Building across the hall from Just So Pediatrics. This move will provide more space for their team and will free up the second floor of the Gannett Building for the expansion of Brattleboro Internal Medicine.

In addition, Brattleboro Family Medicine will be finishing up renovations at its practice on Fairview Street, and will have new and improved patient areas and clinician work spaces for a growing list of primary care providers.

We look forward to sharing these exciting changes with you in the coming months, and wish all of our friends and neighbors a happy, healthy, and productive spring!

Best Regards,

**Steven R. Gordon**  
President and CEO  
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital



# Two Allans & a Treadmill



How cardiac rehabilitation changed the lives of two local patients.

## Doctor's Note

Experiencing a heart attack can be one of the most traumatic events in a person's life. Just ask Allan Shirks, a retired physician from Townshend. After suffering a heart attack in November 2017, Allan was referred to the BMH Cardiac Rehabilitation program. Initially, both he and his wife, Charmayne, felt apprehensive about participating in the program, concerned over the possible physical demands of the exercise component.

"The heart attack didn't just happen to me, it happened to us," Allan explained, "After my heart attack, we were both anxious over my exerting any physical energy. I couldn't imagine attempting any sort of exercise. We were fearful that I would be harmed."

Fears were quickly alleviated by the rehab staff, who explained the breakdown of the program to the couple and demonstrated how Allan would be connected to a heart monitor and supervised constantly by staff. "I was scared," explained Allan, "Knowing I would be in a safe environment calmed my nerves."

Allan quickly warmed to the program, "After the first week, my attitude totally shifted from 'what are my limitations' to 'what more can I do?'" And for Allan, it was all because of the staff. "They're personable, professional, and engaging. Jeff [Harr] and his team have a great sense of humor and expertly guided us through the entire experience."



Allan Shirks exercises on a treadmill in the BMH Cardiac Rehabilitation department while monitored by program coordinator Jeff Harr, RCEP.

**"After the first week, my attitude totally shifted from 'what are my limitations' to 'what more can I do?'" - Allan Shirks, MD**



Allan Hansell works out on a rowing machine as cardiopulmonary assistant Victor LeClair checks his blood pressure.

## Having Heart

As the Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Coordinator, Jeff Harr, RCEP understands the wide range of emotions associated with beginning a program. "Each cardiac rehab program is customized to the patient. Our team develops a specific plan for each individual's recovery. Yet while it is personalized, patients will never go through the recovery period alone."

Typically eight to twelve weeks, the program requires patients to attend sessions three times per week. Each session is a combination of education and exercise. Jeff explained, "Health education helps patients understand their condition and how to improve heart health. Lifestyle change education helps them phase into different routines to improve overall physical health."

## A New Lesson

After multiple medical incidents involving stent insertions and bypass surgery, Allan Hansell, a retired biology professor from Vernon, was referred to the BMH Cardiac Rehabilitation program.

For Allan, it was a new experience, "As a professor, I knew the textbook definition of cardiac rehab. Experiencing it myself turned the tables completely. It became very personal."

Counseling and exercise solidify the program. "Monitored exercise gives patients a chance to learn how to strengthen their heart and body without injuring themselves, and at a pace that works for them. Nutrition counseling benefits those who have difficulty understanding how to incorporate healthy options into their routine."

Although he has witnessed hundreds of patients graduate from the program, Jeff continues to feel excited over each patient's progress. "Going through a heart related issue is emotionally draining. My team and I provide emotional support to help patients overcome depression and/or anxiety. It's so gratifying to watch their journeys, knowing we have made a positive impact in their recoveries."

As he began the three-month program, Allan found the routine not just comforting, but life-changing. "Deciding to join this program was literally life-prolonging. I was able to heal in a controlled environment with expert staff to direct my recovery."

After graduating from the program, Allan continued his exercise maintenance at the hospital, utilizing the equipment multiple times per week. "Without the support of the staff, I would have had no incentive. I cannot sing their praises highly enough." 🌸

# Ladies First

Coordinating prenatal care at Brattleboro OB/GYN

## A New Approach

Women’s health is an area of medicine that reaches far beyond annual pap smears and regular neonatal visits. There are many factors that contribute to the well-being of women in our area, many of whom seek care from their OB/GYN provider as their first and primary medical contact.

In working to expand OB/GYN providers’ ability to offer comprehensive, compassionate care to a diverse group of patients, the State of Vermont’s Blueprint for Health has developed the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) to ensure that providers have the resources they need to help their patients address a wide range of health and wellness issues.

## Creating a Safety Net

WHI provides OB/GYN practices with enhanced health screenings along with comprehensive family planning counseling and timely access to effective contraception. By providing education and resources to manage a wide range of wellness issues, WHI empowers patients and providers to create the best possible outcomes for women and families in Vermont.



**“Our shared goal is to help women feel empowered.”**

Amy Ripley, LICSW is the WHI social worker for Brattleboro OB/GYN. When a prenatal patient registers with the practice, they are first assessed for a wide range of personal wellness issues, from mental and physical health to tobacco use, partner violence, and food insecurity.

If a patient indicates a concern during the assessment, they are referred to Amy. “My job is to establish a relationship built on trust and safety. I’m here as a wellness partner, not in judgement, but to work collaboratively towards better health for the women I serve.”

Sessions are held individually or with the patient’s partner, and focus on ways to address current concerns in a way that will produce long term positive health outcomes. “It can be as simple as referring a woman to an outpatient clinic in the community or going with her to apply for economic benefits for herself and her children. Each patient is treated individually according to her specific needs,” Amy said.

Approaching patient care holistically can be beneficial for both patient and practice. Caring for the whole person ensures that nothing slips through the cracks, including mental health, family planning, personal safety, and secure housing.

For Amy, WHI is a perfect complement for practices like Brattleboro OB/GYN. “Our shared goal is to help women feel empowered to make positive changes in their wellness through collaboration. It’s a phenomenal experience to work with a compassionate team of care providers and to be able to bolster their care with relevant support.”

# A Quick Scan

Updates in the BMH Radiology department with Todd Fahey, MA

## By the Numbers

Every year, over a dozen BMH radiologic technologists perform over 24,000 x-ray exams with eight x-ray units. If you were to include CT, MRI, and our other modalities, the number of total exams is closer to 45,000!

To accommodate the demands of changing technology, high usage, and evolving industry regulations, our Radiology department underwent a significant makeover, replacing two portable x-ray units, entirely rebuilding our primary x-ray room, as well as upgrading all other systems to use full digital radiography.

## Did You Say Portable?

While you may think of an x-ray as a stationary machine, portable x-ray units are an integral part of care in a hospital. For patients admitted into the Emergency Department (ED) who are too critically ill to travel to the Radiology department, our staff transport the portable x-ray unit directly to them.

As new industry regulations emerged, the portable x-ray units were required to be replaced.

The unit allows the technologist and the physician in the ED to see the image in real time as it is being acquired.

The instant feedback also leads to greater efficiency and faster diagnoses. As the technologists are working, they can see whether the entire area of interest is in the field of view and whether the quality of the image is satisfactory for a diagnosis.

## What Does It Mean?

Hospitals and healthcare organizations are now required by law to transition from computerized radiology (CR) to digital radiography (DR).

CR captures images like conventional film, flashing the patient’s image onto a cassette, which is compatible over a variety of systems. However, the cassettes are at risk for damage if improperly stored or handled. Staff also wait a longer time to view the image.

DR captures images similar to a smart phone, automatically acquiring images and immediately transferring them to a computer to view. With a large capacity for high volume usage, DR is much more efficient, produces images for staff review almost instantaneously, and provides less exposure to radiation for patients.



**Todd Fahey, MA**  
BMH Imaging/Radiology  
Services Director



# No Bones About It



How a new surgical machine is changing the lives of local orthopaedic patients.

## Back in the Game

Would you let a robot perform surgery on you? For Vernon, VT resident Chris Millerick, the answer is 'Yes!'

A coach for local sports teams and former Brattleboro Union High School athlete, Chris was having increasing knee pain. At 48, his active lifestyle had taken a toll on his joints. The cartilage in his knee was almost completely worn, causing him severe pain in simple tasks like walking up stairs or even sleeping.

"I waited too long," admitted Chris. "When it even became difficult to sleep, that's when I knew I had to do something."

Familiar with BMH Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine through coaching, Chris contacted Dr. Elizabeth McLarney. "I've known Dr. McLarney over the years through the practice's affiliation with the high school sports program, so I knew I'd be in good hands."

In the first consultation, Dr. McLarney explained to Chris that he would absolutely need knee replacement surgery, but it was his decision when he wanted to undergo the procedure.

As the sales manager for masonry and landscaping at WW Building Supply in Newfane, Chris needed to schedule his operation towards the end of the calendar year during the off-season of business.

"Dr. McLarney and the administrative staff were so accommodating," said Chris. "They walked me through all the steps I needed to take prior to surgery." Within three weeks, he underwent a CT Scan and completed the necessary paperwork to proceed towards surgery.

"I can't say enough good things about the staff, they were very open and friendly every time I called with a question or to follow up," he explained. "They made it easy and relieved a lot of my stress."

When explaining the surgery, Dr. McLarney shared with Chris that he'd only need a partial knee replacement – and that he was a perfect candidate for the hospital's new surgical robot, MAKO.

*Fully recovered from surgery, Chris enjoys staying active with family and friends.*

Since acquiring the machine last summer, BMH remains the first and only hospital in Vermont to offer this new surgical enhancement.

The MAKO robotic arm-assisted surgical unit is a device operated by the orthopaedic surgeon and uses a CT Scan to create a 'road-map' of the joint, allowing the surgeon to precisely plan their surgical cuts.

"While we do call it a robot, the MAKO does not actually perform the surgery," explained Dr. McLarney. "It can't make decisions on its own and it can't move without my guidance."

After capturing a CT Scan of the knee, the image is loaded into the MAKO's software, creating a personalized pre-operative plan.

"Every patient is special to us," said Dr. McLarney. "The MAKO allows us to customize each surgery exactly to the patient. It's another way we put our patients first – we're investing in technology that will improve our patient outcomes."

For Chris, it was nothing short of life-changing. After the surgery, he embarked on a four-week recovery plan, which included physical therapy twice a week.

"Before surgery, I was in unbelievable pain. After surgery, I was sore, but it was a different pain, because I knew I was on the mend," he explained. "I was able to return to light



***"I feel better than I have in years and I have Dr. McLarney and her team to thank for that."***  
***- Chris Millerick***

duty at work. Every day, I could feel the improvement."

Three months out, Chris returned to Dr. McLarney for a check-up, and he was cleared for total return to work and active living.

"Since my surgery, I don't think twice about running, taking stairs, or loading material into customers' vehicles. I feel better than I have in years and I have Dr. McLarney and her team to thank for that." 🌸

# Care Package

Creating a new approach to wellness for vulnerable patients

Good health is often taken for granted. This is the case for 40-50% of our state's population. But what about the other half? Between 50-60% of Vermonters suffer from a chronic health condition, struggling to juggle the burdens of multiple complex diseases, financial concerns, transportation, and social stresses.

How can this most vulnerable population be cared for? Seeking to answer this question, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) and several healthcare organizations in Vermont recently partnered with OneCare Vermont, an accountable care organization (ACO). ACO's coordinate with the patient to improve quality and efficiency of care, as well as to reduce the cost of care over time.

Over the past year, BMH adopted a new plan to connect patients to a network of care coordinators. Care coordination promotes a holistic and patient-centered approach to ensure that an individual's needs and goals are understood and shared among providers, community organizations, and the patient.

Becky Burns, RN, BMH Director of Community Initiatives, explained the process, "We first identify the specific group of patients who will require care coordination. This is done through a risk-based analysis, identifying the most vulnerable and at-risk patients through their health and wellness history."

Patients are also identified through their primary care provider's office. If the patient shares concerning factors regarding their health and lifestyle wellness, they would be referred to a care coordinator.

***"This new model allows us to focus on whole-person wellness."***

Once patients are identified, BMH care coordinators reach out to patients individually to explain the program. The program is not mandatory, allowing patients to choose options that will work for their lifestyle.

If the patient agrees, the care coordinator organizes a meeting with the individual, their family member(s), and any community organizations with whom they may already be working.

"In the meeting, our care coordinators identify the wellness goals of the patient. This could range from housing, if the patient is in fear of becoming or is homeless, to medication management, or supplies that may be needed, such as new diabetic test strips," explained Becky.

While the program is in its infancy stage, Burns is optimistic that it will be a life-changing program for those who need assistance the most.

"We began to recognize a growing need for care continuity among different patient care areas, including the hospital inpatient units, Emergency Department, and areas such as primary care, home care, and community organizations," she said.

The program aims to keep patients healthier, provide support when needed, offer guidance in accessing community resources, and measure progress in their wellness navigation.

Becky continued, "I am excited to witness the beginning of this new patient care journey. This new model allows us to focus on whole-person wellness, linking key support staff together to improve the overall health and lifestyles of our patients." 🌱

# Under a Microscope

Updates in the BMH Laboratory with Imogene Drakes, PhD, Laboratory Director and Steve Cummings, VP BMH Information & Support Services

## In Our Blood

Did you know that over 50% of the information your provider uses to make care recommendations come directly from laboratory test results?

The BMH Laboratory (lab) is a busy department, working 24/7 to provide results for patients and care providers in a timely and efficient manner. Data from lab tests directly impact all aspects of patient care, including length of stay, safety, satisfaction, and resource utilization.

Recently, the College of American Pathologists (CAP) re-accredited the BMH Laboratory after a rigorous bi-annual inspection. CAP is the world's largest association composed entirely of board-certified pathologists and is widely considered the leader in laboratory quality assurance.

CAP inspectors examined two years' worth of our records, including quality control procedures, the qualifications of our entire staff, the lab's equipment and validations, environmental conditions, the safety program and monitoring, and the overall management of the lab to ensure high-quality, cost-effective care.

With this recognition, our lab maintains its status in the prestigious ranks of CAP-accredited facilities worldwide.

We are extremely proud of our performance. While preparation for a CAP inspection takes months of dedicated work to achieve compliance with stringent regulations, it is the continuous, daily commitment to patient safety and quality that sets our lab apart.

## It's a Deal

After the retirement of a longtime pathologist, BMH chose to pursue a partnership with Dartmouth-Hitchcock (D-H), providing current pathologist Christopher Appleton, DO, FCAP with much-needed peer support and resources.

The new partnership includes both Dartmouth-Hitchcock in Lebanon, NH as well as Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, NH.

This alliance allows us to perform more tests in a shorter time frame. Previously, BMH would send specimens to a different facility, waiting up to two weeks for results. With the new partnership with D-H, results are returned in a matter of days.

In addition, Dr. Appleton has remote access to peers in sub-specialties, allowing him to consult with the D-H network of specialized pathologists, while remaining full-time at BMH.

Along with the shortened time frame, the new partnership also provides our lab staff with regular detailed reports regarding responsiveness and quality of services. The reports are used to identify any opportunities for improvement and ensure optimum patient care. 🌱





## Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

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# Classes & Events

For more classes, location details, or contact info, visit [www.bmhvt.org/events](http://www.bmhvt.org/events)

Discover **FREE** and low-cost health classes at BMH:

**Chair Yoga** • Focuses on range of motion and balance • WED, 4-4:45pm

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

**Diabetes Prevention** • Discusses healthy lifestyle practices • THU, 4:30-5:30pm



# TOUCH A TRUCK

**SATURDAY MAY 12<sup>TH</sup>  
9AM - 1PM**

**BMH PARKING LOT**

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

[www.bmhvt.org/giving](http://www.bmhvt.org/giving)