

Commentary | Dr. Tony Blofson and Dr. Elizabeth McClarney: Why your first choice for care should be close to home

When it comes to your health, where you choose to receive care matters. Today, patients are often faced with the assumption that going farther away — often to larger, urban medical centers — means better care. But that isn't always the case. In fact, for most healthcare needs, the best choice may be right here in our own community.

At Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, we are proud to provide quality care close to home. That means delivering high-quality, evidence-based medicine while ensuring that care is accessible, personal, and connected to the lives of the people we serve.

As physicians, we know that healthcare is not just about procedures or technology — it's about relationships. Community hospitals like ours offer something that larger systems often struggle to replicate: continuity of care. Our clinicians live and work in the same communities as our patients. We understand the local context of your health, and we take the time to build trust. That leads to better communication, more personalized care, and ultimately, better outcomes.

We also want to emphasize the importance of choosing Brattleboro Memorial Hospital for laboratory services and imaging studies whenever possible. Services like bloodwork, X-rays, CT scans, and other radiology tests are essential not only for patient care, but also for sustaining the financial health of our community hospital. When patients choose to have these services performed locally, they help support the resources, staff, and programs that keep healthcare strong in our region. Just as importantly, there is no need to travel elsewhere for high-quality testing. BMH has invested in advanced technology and modern equipment that allow us to provide fast, efficient, and reliable care close to home.

In fact, our imaging capabilities are closely connected to the broader healthcare system. Through our relationship with Dartmouth Health, specialists have access to imaging studies performed at BMH. That means your results can be seamlessly shared and reviewed if you require follow-up care, ensuring coordination without requiring you to travel for the initial test.

We have also made significant investments in technology to improve your experience. For example, our CT scanning process has been dramatically streamlined — what once took up to 60 minutes can now often be completed in as little as 10 minutes. Faster testing means less stress, greater comfort, and quicker answers.

Convenience is more than a luxury — it's part of good healthcare. Receiving care locally means less time on the road, fewer disruptions to your daily life, and the ability to recover surrounded by family and familiar support systems. These factors matter, and they contribute meaningfully to overall health and well-being.

At the same time, strong community healthcare depends on community participation. We want to thank our patients for helping us better serve the community by keeping scheduled appointments or providing advance notice when plans change. Because of that cooperation, no-show rates have decreased, allowing us to care for more patients efficiently and improve access to services across the region. Also, if you are able, consider supporting the hospital through charitable giving, which helps sustain and expand services for everyone in our region.

Healthcare decisions are deeply personal. But they don't have to be complicated. When you choose Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, you are choosing a team that is dedicated to your well-being — not just as a patient, but as a neighbor.

You don't have to go far to find exceptional care. Often, the best choice is the one closest to home.

Dr. Tony Blofson and Dr. Elizabeth McClarney are acting co-CEOs of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. The opinions expressed by columnists and op-ed writers do not necessarily reflect the views of Vermont News & Media.

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