



Dartmouth
Health

New London Hospital

Newsletter

Fall 2023



EXPRESS CARE

**Delivering
expert care at
your speed**

Local students get hands-on
opportunity [Page 7](#)

A message from the CEO

Tom Manion, MPA, FACHE, FACMPE

Navigating the healthcare landscape can be overwhelming. When a health concern arises, it's common to search online for care options that are close to home or easy to access, like urgent care, and even to try to self-diagnose through online research. We have all been there and the next step in the process can be one of the most important decisions on the road to better health.

Our mission at New London Hospital (NLH) is to ensure every patient that walks through our doors is provided the support and care they need. Patients shouldn't feel alone or helpless when it comes to their health and wellbeing. At NLH and within the Dartmouth Health system we have the availability, services and staff to help patients navigate their various care options and financial obligations while benefiting from a unified medical record for a more seamless care experience.

To that end, I am pleased to share an encouraging update in our primary care: we recently welcomed several new providers. It has been a challenging couple years and we thank you for your patience

as we filled these vacancies. Our goal has always been to secure the best people to deliver your care and we are confident you will be pleased with our new team members. As our new staff work their way into rotations, we look forward to welcoming new patients in our primary care practices.

As we head into the cold and flu season, we are asking our community to remain diligent to help keep the spread of these viruses low. Here at NLH, we are asking patients and visitors experiencing symptoms to please wear a mask in our facilities. Our primary goal is to care for our community and we need our staff healthy in order to improve the health of others. The pandemic might be over, but we continue to monitor the flow of COVID-19 and RSV cases in our region as well. We appreciate the community's effort to ensure our staff and patients remain healthy during this winter season.

Thank you for allowing NLH to be a part of your health journey. I wish you a joyous and healthy holiday season!

— Tom



Congratulations to Tom Manion!

In September, Becker's Hospital Review listed Tom as 1 of 67 critical access hospital CEOs to know. These leaders are lauded for their dedication to innovation, safety and quality.

NLH welcomes new chief medical officer



Lauren A. Geddes Wirth, MD, has been selected as NLH's new chief medical officer (CMO). Geddes graduated from Dartmouth College and the Brown-Dartmouth Program in Medicine. She completed her pediatric residency at Brown University's Hasbro Children's Hospital/Rhode Island Hospital and was selected to serve an additional year as chief resident in Pediatrics. Upon completing her residency, she established a pediatric practice in Sudbury, MA that later became Mill Brook Pediatrics, a Mass General Brigham (MGB) health system independent affiliate. As CMO, Geddes will lead clinical and quality initiatives that support the provision of consistent clinical performance and practice standards across the hospital.

New additions—providers



Champa Abeysinghe, MD, FACP

Abeysinghe joins NLH from Laconia, where she was serving as an internal medicine primary care provider at HealthFirst Family Care Center. She recently relocated to New London to be closer to family.

"Providing care is a responsibility I take seriously every day and every one of my patients deserves my full attention," she says.



Pineal Bekere, MD

Bekere brings an abundance of global health knowledge to NLH. She earned her medical degree at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and then completed the Lancaster General Hospital Family Medicine Residency Program.

"After moving here from Ethiopia at the age of 12, I have been blessed with so many opportunities in healthcare," Bekere shares. "I want to pay it forward with each one of my patients."



Stephen Jumper, MD

Jumper earned his medical degree at Tulane University and recently relocated to New Hampshire from Pennsylvania. He and his wife are embracing the New England lifestyle.

"We often talk about the wonderful quality of life we share in this region, and I'm thrilled we can provide the same quality of care," Jumper says.

Express Care delivers

At the end of 2021, NLH launched Express Care to fill a service void in the region. Express Care provides convenient and faster access to medical care for patients who face non-life-threatening conditions such as sprains, skin rashes, minor cuts and lacerations, colds and certain infections— with no appointments necessary. Since it opened, more than 10,000 patients have utilized this service. Patients are grateful for so many elements Express Care offers including its shorter wait times, and scheduling convenience, and for those who already take advantage of Dartmouth Health services, its access to the EPIC medical record for a seamless care experience.

This past summer, after more than 21 years serving as a primary care provider here at NLH, Griffin Manning, APRN, made the transition to serve as the clinical director of Express Care. “This was a perfect opportunity for me at this time in my career as I welcome the opportunity to provide more direct patient care in an acute care setting,” says Griffin. “We have a wonderful committed team in Express Care.”



He is joined by Joseph Cameron, PA, who has 23 of experience in emergency medicine, Nicole Morris, APRN, who has 5 years of experience in acute care/express care and Nikki Peel, PA, who has been with the clinic since March 2021.

“To measure the success of Express Care simply in volumes would be a mistake,” says Tom Manion, president and CEO of NLH. “The feedback we are hearing from our patients has been exceptional and I attribute that to the staff and quality of service they are providing. However, we realize there is room for improvement as we convey what Express Care is and what it is not.”

As part of our goal for improvement, we are working to help our patients know when to seek care in the Emergency Department (ED) and when to seek care at Express Care. We advise ED evaluation for any of the following:

- Excessive bleeding.
- Seizure or loss of consciousness.
- Chest pains.
- Shortness of breath.
- Suspected overdose.
- Sudden slurred speech; vision loss, dizziness, limb weakness.
- Persistent vomiting.



“Feedback we are hearing from our patients has been exceptional and I attribute that to the staff and quality of service they are providing.”



Express Care support staff, from left: Caitlin Waltzer, CCMA, Calista Fuller, Lead CMA, and Joseph Montgomery, CCMA.



We recommend that people consider Express Care for non-emergent / non-life-threatening concerns or issues, such as:

- **Cuts, scrapes and minor wounds.**
- **Cold and flu symptoms.**
- **Rashes.**
- **Sprains, minor fractures, sports injuries.**
- **Muscle aches, joint pains/injuries.**
- **Insect bites/stings.**
- **Minor eye injuries, infections, irritations.**

Billing for Express Care at NLH can vary from other walk-in type clinics. Express Care is classified as an emergency room type B, which is different than a walk-in, non-emergent clinic or urgent care center like ConvenientMD or Clear Choice. Being designated as a type B emergency room allows NLH Express Care to provide a higher level of care, including lab work, imaging and transfer to the ED within the hospital if needed. This designation may affect the way you are billed based on your insurance.

In most cases, the charges fall below those you would incur if you went to the NLH ED and fall in line with the charges you would receive at an urgent care center,

however, some insurance plans may require you to pay a ED-level copayment and coinsurance. Some of the payments required are contingent on a patient's deductible at the time of the visit. A visit to Express Care will be noted as an emergency room visit on the patient's bill or explanation of benefits from their insurer. This is how insurance companies categorize Express Care, however, the charges are based on Express Care levels, not emergency room.

Location

Located on the first floor at the back of the main entrance to the hospital, Express Care has its own designated entrance, parking and registration.

Hours

Open seven days a week:

Weekdays from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Saturdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sundays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Most insurances are accepted, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Donor generosity making an impact

At the NLH Annual Benefit Gala in 2019, members of our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team presented to donors the benefits of incorporating LUCAS Devices into ambulances. The LUCAS is an automated compression device that provides consistent, high-quality CPR compressions for patients in need. At the conclusion of the Gala, donors generously contributed \$70,000 for the purchase of these life-saving devices. NLH now has five LUCAS devices, one for each of its ambulances.

“Performing CPR is an extremely tiring task and the LUCAS can be properly deployed in 30 seconds and then perform CPR for its battery life, if needed, for over two hours,” says Derick Aumann, NLH director of EMS.

Effective CPR is achieved with a steady rate and a consistent compression depth with the fewest pauses, or slowdowns, as possible. A LUCAS, properly applied, delivers all of that—leaving the provider(s) able to focus on addressing other vital needs, including ECG (electrocardiogram) interpretation, venous access, medication administration and defibrillation.



Proven results

On August 17, 2023, NLH EMS was called to the scene of a drowning victim in New London. Upon arrival, paramedics relieved law enforcement who had been giving CPR to a 67-year-old female who was unresponsive, not breathing and had no pulse. Paramedics applied the LUCAS, freeing up team members to do a complete analysis of the victim. After approximately 10 minutes, the victim's pulse and breathing were restored.

“Beside the actual physical benefits of the device, we’ve noticed that when it is utilized the scene is much calmer, as we are not rotating staff to do compression shifts,” says Ben Jarrell, NLH paramedic. “It really allows us to do a full assessment of the patient without the distraction and tension of manual CPR.”

Last year alone, NLH EMS used the LUCAS 25 times at the scene of emergencies.



2023 Annual Benefit

Thank you to everyone who made the 2023 NLH Annual Benefit a tremendous success. This year, more than \$74,000 was raised to support nursing education at NLH and Newport Health Center, which will have positive ripple effects in our community for years to come.



LNA team and program participants, from left: Sophie Anderson, Molly Finnegan, Ava Bidlack, LNA Health Careers Program Director Melissa Smith, LPN, Piper Moran, Lilian Chapman and Maria Blanchette.

Kearsarge students' healthcare journey at New London Hospital

This fall, six Kearsarge Regional High School students embarked on an educational endeavor on the floors of New London Hospital (NLH) as part of a joint LNA (Licensed Nursing Assistant) program in association with LNA Health Careers.

After completing their necessary classroom course work in the middle of September, the six students eagerly gathered at NLH every Tuesday and Thursday to apply their knowledge in a real-world healthcare setting.

"This program is designed to foster a culture of learning and mentorship," says Nicole Wakeman, clinical manager of Inpatient Services. "The students definitely arrive with some nerves in the beginning, as they have to adapt to being in the close proximity to the patients in need of their assistance, but it is our role to guide them, develop their skills, and while to see them gain confidence is rewarding for us, it is especially for them."

Ava Bidlack, an 17-year-old senior student in the program, joined the program with little knowledge of what to expect.

"As a senior in high school, I'm starting to really think about my future and I do see something in the healthcare field in my future, so this is a great step," says Ava. "The nurses and staff at NLH are so welcoming and kind. A lot more happens behind the scenes than I ever realized, but they walk you through everything that I will do as an LNA."

The program, spearheaded by Melissa Smith, LPN program director at LNA Health Careers provides high school students the opportunity to start a career in healthcare at no cost, including training and licensing fees.

"This is a great way for students to get into the field of healthcare while learning lifetime skills, gaining academic credit and clinical hours for the future," says Melissa.

Once the students complete the course, the program provides job placement support to start their careers. For more information about this and other LNA programs, visit Inahealthcareers.com.

New London Hospital

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Happy Holidays
from all of us at New London Hospital
& Newport Health Center

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