

SPRING 2021

 New London Hospital
Dartmouth-Hitchcock

Friends newsletter

Here for You.



NLH EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT

Committed
To Quality
Care

Remembering
a Local Hero

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Tom Manion, NLH
president and CEO

Tom Manion

a message from the CEO

As spring approaches, we should be encouraged about where we are in the COVID-19 pandemic and the months ahead. We just passed the year milestone of the pandemic's start, and vaccination rates are climbing. Our biggest enemies right now are complacency and a false sense of security. Even with the high efficacy of the vaccines, we can still become infected and spread the virus to those who are immunocompromised.

TO RECEIVE THE LATEST NLH updates please visit our website homepage and click on **"Subscribe to eNews."**

We must remain steadfast in the practices we've been promoting over the past year: washing our hands diligently, remaining socially distant from others and, yes,

wearing face masks. While we should be optimistic at this point in time, it's also critical to be pragmatic.

Vaccinations

At New London Hospital (NLH) and Newport Health Center (NHC), we have proudly vaccinated more than 80% of our staff. Hundreds of thousands of New Hampshire residents have signed up for their vaccinations at state-run sites, and the state is receiving tens of thousands of new vaccines every week. Those numbers will increase with the

upcoming Johnson & Johnson vaccine and we're hopeful that herd immunity will be in place by the end of the summer. We're almost there. When you're given the opportunity, please get vaccinated.


Clinical Update

I want to acknowledge the recent challenges regarding access to Primary Care. Over the past few months, we have experienced some provider turnover at NLH. Fortunately, we have successfully recruited several new providers and continue our recruiting efforts. Our goal is to improve wait times for both new and established patients while providing the same high quality care you are accustomed to receiving. We are committed to achieving this objective and are grateful for your patience and trust in the meantime.

Express Care

Express Care is on track to open this summer. This seven-day-a-week clinic will address a variety of issues, such as sprains, tick bites, cuts, sniffles and earaches. While it is not a replacement for your primary care provider, we are excited to offer this convenient and accessible healthcare alternative to our community.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tom Manion
president and CEO 



Q+A with Director of Diagnostic Imaging, Bonnie Smith, B.S., RT

As COVID-19 tightened its grip on our region in the spring of 2020, the NLH Radiology Department quickly adapted techniques and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements to safely provide patient care. For a short period, all screening exams were halted. This deferral allowed us to focus on our sickest patients while adapting to new protocols for the performance of outpatient exams. Ultimately, we were able to resume Mammography, Lung Cancer Screening and Bone Mineral Density exams – all vital screening tests that aid in the early diagnosis of serious health conditions.

What services does Radiology offer?

We offer routine radiology services, 3D mammography, ultrasonography, MRI, CT scan, bone mineral analysis and nuclear medicine. We provide nuclear medicine services every Monday and have a MRI scanner on site Tuesday through Friday. Our CT and Radiography (X-ray) are staffed 24/7.



From left, Stacie McAllister, RT; Kristen Hartley, RT; Bonnie Smith, BS, RT; Ashli Worden, LNA; Shaela King, BS, RDMS, RVT; Taylor George.

How does your team represent the quality of services you provide?

Our radiologic technologists are dedicated to providing quality imaging and compassionate care to our patients during times of vulnerability. Patients may have multiple exams performed by the same

technologist, giving them a sense of comfort and providing a personal experience that a larger facility may be unable to offer.

What does it say about NLH, that we are able to provide Radiology services?


There is a common misconception that a smaller facility is limited in the services it can provide to its communities. NLH Radiology prides itself on reframing that idea.

We are designated as a Diagnostic Imaging Center of Excellence™ (DICOE) by the American College of Radiology (ACR). This allows us to establish benchmarks for quality improvement while comparing measures – including turnaround times, patient wait times and patient satisfaction – with similar-sized facilities nationwide.

In addition to this designation, our mammography services at NLH and NHC are annually regulated and certified by the FDA Mammography Quality Standards Act. These accreditations are not required, but NLH is committed to the highest standards.

Each NLH technologist is nationally registered in multiple imaging modalities by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists.

How has the transition to EPIC benefited patients?

While there has always been consistency within the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health System (D-HH) regarding imaging protocols, the EPIC transition has had a positive impact on our department. Electronic orders have eliminated approximately 75% of our paper usage and save valuable time in the documentation and communication process. The ability to “instantly” communicate electronically with D-H providers across physical locations improves efficiencies and allows us to deliver even higher quality care to our patients. 

“We are very fortunate to have such cutting edge technology operated by dedicated, talented staff. I am particularly proud of how, during such a challenging year, we all came together to better serve our community.”

Kris Eschbach, DO, medical director, Radiology



From left,
Shawn Riley, director, EMS
Kim Hardin, RN, inpatient director
Trevor Swan, RN, nursing director
of Emergency Department.

NLH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

A Commitment to *kindness*

A visit to the emergency department (ED) can be stressful. The urgency of the ailment, combined with the uncertainty of the wait, cost and registration process—and understanding the eventual diagnosis and treatment options—often proves overwhelming.

Hospitals are commonly assessed on their ability to deliver effective and efficient emergency services to their patients, and it's typically patient care basics like communication and kindness that make all the difference. The ED at NLH is committed to these fundamental principles that are the foundation of our core values.

The ED at NLH might not be the largest in the state, but with its excellent emergency medical service (EMS), radiology, laboratory and telemed resources, providers have access to the tools they need to provide quality care. In the summer of 2020, NLH welcomed Trevor Swan, nursing director of Emergency Department. Trevor came to NLH from Holy Rosary Healthcare in Miles City, Montana. Similar to NLH, Holy Rosary is a critical access hospital in a rural setting and a member of a larger health system.

“As soon as I arrived, I knew this was a perfect fit,” Trevor says. “The nurse staff in the NLH ED has decades of experience,

along with a strong passion to address the challenges necessary to improve the patient experience.”

A busy day in the ED requires a team effort across departmental lines, as the ED is physically small and staffed accordingly. In an effort to meet the rising demand of emergency services, Trevor is partnering closely with Shawn Riley, NLH Director of Emergency Medical Services, to integrate EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) and paramedics into the ED workflow.

“Working with Shawn and his team brings us the immediate support to upgrade our workflow,” explains Trevor. “It seems obvious, but it requires essential training—which the EMTs and paramedics have embraced.”

Focusing on the circle of care, Trevor is also working closely with the inpatient team led by Kim Hardin. Together, Trevor and Kim address potential gaps in communication that could impact a patient’s transition of care.

Tanja Mauzy-Shaffer, a nurse in the ED for eight years, is encouraged with the recent direction.

“We’ve always had the foundation in place with the amount of experience on the floor,” she says. “Trevor’s leadership style focuses on the fundamentals of communication and he does it with such a positive attitude. It’s contagious—which can be a dangerous word in our line of work—but not in this case.”

“Working with Shawn and his team brings us the immediate support to upgrade our workflow. It seems obvious, but it requires essential training—which the EMTs and paramedics have embraced.”

Trevor Swan, RN, nursing director of Emergency Department

The ED team is also developing a new call back program to assess patient health and determine if further care is required after patients leave NLH. Currently, due to COVID-19 visitor restrictions, they are providing hourly updates by phone to loved ones of patients in the ED.

These steps to advance the circle of care help

ensure positive ED experiences for patients and their family members. Trevor believes little, thoughtful acts go a long way.

“A simple ‘thank you’ when someone leaves our department makes a difference. Kindness is our number one focus every day,” he explains. //



Tanja Mauzy-Shaffer, RN, connected to D-H Emergency Telehealth.

TO DO MORE TO GIVE BACK

Remembering **ROBERT FREITAS**



Respiratory therapist, EMT, helicopter flight medic, Boston EMS paramedic and supervisor, hospital COO, emergency medicine international consultant. These are some of the professional healthcare roles that Robert (Rob) Freitas played before he moved to New London in retirement in 2016. After he and his newlywed wife Karen Zurheide—following her own retirement from a vice president position at NLH—walked 570 miles

together across Spain on the Camino Frances route of the Camino de Santiago historic pilgrimage path, Rob sought to become more involved in his new community. Besides pursuing hobbyist interests in photography and drumming, doing plenty of fishing and other outdoor activities, and leading work with children in Newport through his church, Rob wanted to do more to “give back.”

“Many patients will benefit from Rob’s generosity”

A portion of Rob Freitas’ generous commitment to the NLH ED is being used to purchase two Stryker Prime X X-ray stretchers. The new trauma stretchers fill an urgent and critical need in the ED and will help providers and staff deliver exceptional patient care throughout the hospital.

“Rob’s passion for emergency medicine and his thoughtful generosity will allow us to provide a level of care that was not previously possible,” shares Trevor Swan, RN, nursing director of Emergency Department.

“Many patients will benefit from Rob’s generosity.” Swan recently experienced the unexpected need to put not only one, but two, trauma stretchers out of commission. He has also been trialing a Stryker Prime X at NLH and was aware of its benefits from using one at a previous employer.



Trevor Swan, RN, nursing director of Emergency Department demonstrates the features of Stryker Prime X.

Each year about 7,500 people visit the NLH ED and many of them require some type of diagnostic radiological test. Prior to the addition of the new stretcher, clinicians would have to lift and reposition patients for each required image. Using the stretcher, the emergency department now has 360 degrees of access to position the X-ray cassettes. The stretcher’s numerous features include X-ray capabilities, which ease the process for patients.

“The stretcher will enable us to get critical X-ray images of a patient without having to reposition them and place a hard X-ray cassette under them,” says Bonnie Smith, director of Radiology. “The X-ray stretcher is a way to provide faster, more efficient patient care while keeping patients as comfortable as possible.”


While volunteering in an area associated with one's prior profession might not be right for everyone, Rob was intrigued by the possibility of helping in NLH's Emergency Department (ED). He and Karen lived near NLH, where Rob received his primary healthcare and some specialty services from Dartmouth-Hitchcock (for prostate cancer that unfortunately had recurred after several years of remission). So Rob reached out to NLH's Nancy Collins, manager of Volunteer Services, to learn what opportunities might be available, and sure enough, he was assigned to work in the ED.

Rob had spent years as a consultant with Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians in Denmark, India, Italy, Sweden, the Middle East and elsewhere, advising government entities on effective and efficient ED strategy and operations. He was also a co-founder of the International Emergency Department Leadership Institute. By



contrast, at NLH Rob performed simple tasks in support of the ED staff and in service to patients and their families.

Aware that cancer was going to shorten his life, Rob prepared by naming NLH's ED as a beneficiary of his estate, specifying that his gift be used for capital equipment. Karen says, "More than most of us, Rob understood the importance of pre-hospital services. He was grateful for an exciting and successful career in emergency medicine leadership. He appreciated the care that he received at NLH's ED several times as a patient. And he greatly enjoyed his time volunteering there, including camaraderie with NLH staff."

Rob recognized the value of our community hospital and, in particular, our ED. We are grateful for Rob and his generous legacy gift that will be used to support capital equipment in the ED (see supplemental story on page 6 on a need that Rob's gift funded). 

Our Hematology-Oncology Infusion Suite is *convenient and accessible*.

Our outpatient clinic provides comprehensive medical care to patients who have cancer and blood disorders, and care to individuals with other medical infusion and/or injection needs.

Our team of Oncology-trained nurses strive to ensure that patients are provided compassionate care and the personal attention required to receive the education, resources and support needed to manage their disease and treatment options.

Our board-certified Hematologist/Oncologist is a physician with the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Norris Cotton Cancer Center.

“ The nurses here have been marvelous. They have been more than professional and courteous, they are knowledgeable, experienced and have explained everything each step of the way. I really couldn't ask for a better team to help me through this difficult time – Michelle and Jill do an incredible job!”

Dennis, New London



From left,
Jill Tully, BSN, RN
Michelle Miller, RN, OCN

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COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS 2021: *we need YOUR input*



Every three years, New London Hospital, Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital, Valley Regional Hospital, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Care, VNH of Vermont and New Hampshire, and Lake Sunapee Region VNA & Hospice conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment to better understand what needs our community is most concerned about and what conditions are impacting the health and well-being of our region's residents. This assessment helps inform hospital services and community health initiatives, and is also used by community organizations when planning services.

**It will take about
10 TO 15 MINUTES
to complete.**

**Your input makes a
difference!**

PLEASE VISIT THIS LINK OR SCAN THE
QR CODE TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY:

bit.ly/NLH-LSRVNA



If you'd like to see how information generated by this survey is used, you can see our last Community Health Needs Assessment on the NLH website here: <https://www.newlondonhospital.org/about/annual-community-reports/>.