

Health Beat

Spring 2015 | The Newsletter of Speare Memorial Hospital

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A Critical Access Hospital



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Focus on Fall Prevention

By: Michelle McEwen, FACHE, President & CEO

It's not an unfamiliar story...

an elderly family member or friend has fallen and sustained a life-changing injury. In fact one in three adults over the age of 65 falls each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Further, 20 to 30 percent of them will suffer moderate to severe injuries that can impact their mobility and/or ability to continue living independently. Based on 2013 data, the CDC reports the cost of falls in older adults to be \$34 billion annually.

Fall prevention in the hospital setting has been a key patient safety issue. Three years ago Spaulding Memorial Hospital signed on with the Partnership for Patients; a national and statewide effort to reduce preventable harm (unintentional injury that could have been prevented) in hospitals. It's an initiative supported by both the American Hospital Association and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and demonstrates our commitment to quality and safety.

At Spaulding, patients believed to be at risk for falling are identified in many ways. As yellow is viewed as a universal color of caution, patients wear a yellow wrist band noting they are at risk for falling. They are also outfitted with yellow socks that have slip-free grips on the bottom. Additionally, a yellow leaf is affixed to the doorway outside their rooms—it is called our Falling Leaf program and another visible indicator that the patient within is at risk for a fall. Together these visible indicators alert anyone—doctor, nurse, food service provider, housekeeping, etc.—to be mindful and seek help if a patient may be at an immediate risk for falling.

However, falls in the healthcare setting are only part of the issue. The CDC reports that emergency departments annually treat about 2.5 million nonfatal fall injuries among older adults; more than 30%, or about 734,000 of

these patients have to be hospitalized. For patients and their families, a fall is more than just a physical challenge to overcome, but a financial and emotional one as well. In addition to the significant medical rehabilitation and recovery costs associated with getting a loved one back on their feet, a fall raises a lot of questions and concerns: "Will I fall again? Is dad using his walker properly? Should mom continue to live alone?"

Given over 15% of the population in our central New Hampshire towns is 65 or older, and growing, fall prevention in older adults is a topic healthcare providers, patients and their families should be addressing. A physical or occupational therapist can conduct a balance assessment to assess a person's potential fall risk, identify underlying contributing factors and recommend balance and strength exercises to help reduce the risk. Our local rehabilitation specialists note that in many cases, it is the patients themselves who make an inquiry about balance issues, as they realize something isn't quite right and are concerned they might fall.

A fear of falling itself can be a major contributing factor in fall risk among older adults. This fear can be compounded by a person choosing to be less active, which leads to decreased physical strength and stamina, both of which could lead to an actual fall. That being said, the following have been identified as the most likely factors to contribute to a fall:

- *A previous fall*
- *Balance issues*
- *Level of consciousness*
- *Ability to walk and toilet independently*
- *Side effects of medications*
- *Underlying diseases/conditions*
- *Using assistive walking devices properly*

This is why the conversation between patients, their families and providers is critical to helping older adults understand and address specific safety issues contributing to their individual risk for a fall. While each person's situation is going to be different, a good place to start is by taking preventative measures in the home. The CDC offer the following checklist:

- *Remove things that can be tripped over (such as papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and high traffic areas in the home.*
- *Install handrails and lights on all staircases.*
- *Keep items used often in cabinets so they can be reached easily without using a step stool.*
- *Put grab bars inside and next to the tub or shower and next to the toilet.*
- *Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.*
- *Improve the lighting in the home. As we get older, we need brighter lights to see well. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.*
- *Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.*

Just as the African proverb says, "it takes a whole village to raise a child," it takes a community—both inside the healthcare setting or at home—to help prevent falls in older adults. By working together as healthcare providers, at-home caregivers and/or senior-based programming centers, we can reduce falls among older adults, helping them to live fuller, more active lives.



Places to Go and Things to Do

Bob Keith gets back to living thanks to Speare's Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center

"We can fix that," were four words Bob Keith of Moultonborough thought he would never hear. Over the last decade Bob's quality of life had diminished due to growing discomfort from a surgical wound that would not heal. Then the Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center opened at Speare, and Dr. Koren gave Bob new hope for healing his old wound.

His story begins 10 years ago, when Bob was scheduled to have a routine colonoscopy at another hospital. Both Bob and his doctors were aware that he had a naval hernia, but it wasn't believed to be very large and it wasn't bothering him. The hernia became more of a focal point after Bob's colon was ruptured during his colonoscopy. The doctors recommended fixing the hernia at the same time they repaired his colon.

"That's when the trouble began," explains Bob, as he describes how his six inch incision was supposed to heal from the inside out, but instead sores developed around the incision site. Despite at-home care immediately following surgery, and follow-ups with two other hospitals, including thrice weekly visits with a wound specialist two years ago, the sores became the "norm" for Bob.

Robin and Peter Adams, Bob's daughter and son-in-law reflect on his quality of life at the time, "We remember that the basic feeling was 'this is the way things

are going to be, so just deal with it." One hospital said [further] surgery was too risky at his age and the other never offered to do anything but change the bandage. His quality of life was very poor. He didn't want to move, had trouble bathing and was calling 911 constantly when he couldn't control the bleeding."

Robin and Peter also noted that the hernia itself was growing. Admitted to the hospital a couple of years ago with pneumonia, they noticed how big the hernia had gotten... about the size of a kid's basketball.

Then last year Bob saw an ad in the newspaper announcing the opening of the Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center at Speare. He immediately called and spoke with Katie Hedberg, APRN, the Wound Care Center's program director and clinical coordinator. "He was our first patient," says Katie.

"Thank God for Dr. Koren and the Wound Care Center," exclaims Bob. Robin and Peter agree, "We felt that there was a 'can do' spirit. We were impressed that Speare was willing to listen to us, see the degrading situation for what it was and come up with a plan. Bob is a guy who has seen a lot in his life . . . Marines in Korea, extensive travel, a fun loving guy. To see him wasting away was heartbreaking."

"Dr. Koren and the Wound Care Center team were able to listen and come up



with a plan quickly," the Adams continue, "assessing not only Bob's health, but his quality of life and ability to take the risk."

Bob says he had his hernia repaired on April 4, 2014. After surgery, he spent a couple of months at Golden View in Meredith for rehabilitation before going home in June. Since then Bob says, "Life is better. I've lost 20 pounds and my diabetes is under control. I'm living. I've got places to go and things to do."

From scenic drives with his lady friend, bus trips with the Moultonborough Recreation Department and dinners at the Lions Club, to playing cards friends and working out three times a week at the Winnepesaukee Wellness Center, "Bob's dance card is full," say Robin and Peter. "Since the surgery he is on the go like he was so many years ago. He is up and out with friends and his quality of life is 180 degrees from where it was."

For more information about Speare's Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center please call (603) 481-8780 or visit online at www.spearehospital.com.

Let's Get Social!

In our fast-paced, technology driven society, it's important to stay connected on many levels. In addition to relaying news and information via traditional media sources like newspapers, radio and television, it is absolutely necessary to use today's most popular websites to engage, interact and share information. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Youtube, social media is fast becoming the go-to source for all that's newsworthy.

At Speare Memorial Hospital, we're utilizing social media to reach and connect with more patients, staff and the community at large. "In addition to the printed HealthBeat newsletter mailed to homes

throughout the area, and our vibrant website, we use social media to help spread the word about news, events and things happening at the hospital, and in the greater community" says Amy Lyn Kench, online content coordinator. "On Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter you might find profiles of new employees, health and fitness tips, recipes, information about upcoming events and more. Social media is also a great way to connect, join in conversations and share information. Our Youtube channel has some really informative videos that are engaging, and easy to share with patients, staff and the community."

Get social with Speare on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and LinkedIn.



Back Home at Boulder Point

Despite its “higher” elevation located off Tenney Mountain Highway in Plymouth, Speare Memorial at Boulder Point—home of Speare Memorial Hospital’s affiliated practices, Choice Physical Therapy and RehabFIT medical fitness program— found itself underwater the morning of January 12. A water pipe that fed the building’s humidification system located on the roof had burst. The result was three to four inches of water collecting on the second floor of the building that subsequently flowed down to the first floor. No structural damage was sustained by the building, but there was extensive cosmetic damage throughout that had to be cleaned up and repaired.

After being closed for four weeks and having operations temporarily relocated the Hospital, or in the case of RehabFIT, closed for the duration, Speare Memorial at Boulder Point reopened the week of February 9. Staff and providers are grateful to patients for their patience during this challenging time, but are appreciative of the teamwork and collaboration with their Hospital colleagues to ensure continuity of patient care.

Choice Physical Therapy and RehabFIT (603) 238-2225

Offering comprehensive outpatient physical and rehabilitative therapy services, to help individuals recover from occupational and sports injury, rehabilitate after surgery, and experience relief from chronic conditions. The RehabFIT medical fitness program is a membership-based, medically supervised program featuring Technogym equipment and the Technogym SmartKey wellness system software to track, monitor and analyze performance.

Laboratory Services (603) 238-2147

The blood drawing station at Boulder Point is open Monday - Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed noon - 1 p.m. for lunch.

Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Clinic (603) 536-1565

Offering the full range of orthopedic service and comprehensive musculoskeletal specialty care including fractures, joint replacement, shoulders, occupational injuries, sports medicine and spinal surgery. Onsite radiology ensures patients receive timely diagnostics and treatment plan options.

Speare Primary Care (603) 536-1881

Speare Primary Care is committed to excellence in patient-centered care that is fully integrated with other Hospital practices and departments, in the community where you live, from providers you know and trust. Speare Primary Care is accepting new patients and offers care options for patients of all ages.

White Mountain Eye Care & Optical (603) 536-1284

Providing comprehensive eye care for the whole family including annual eye exams and treatment of disease: cataracts, glaucoma, implants, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy. Our full-service Optical Shop can fit you with glasses and contact lenses that best suit your lifestyle and your budget. Featuring Hoya Lenses and an in-house lab.

Learn more about our providers and services at www.spearehospital.com.



Boulder Point staff and providers gather together, reunited after being displaced due to water damage from a burst pipe. They extend their appreciation to patients for their patience during the building’s closure and are pleased to welcome them back to their healthcare “home.”

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Harvard Pilgrim Names Speare to 2014 Honor Roll

Speare Memorial Hospital has been named to Harvard Pilgrim Health Care’s 2014 Hospital Honor Roll recognizing those hospitals whose performance was among the top 25% of those measured nationally on a set of composite quality and patient experience measures, as reported by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Hospital Compare (www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov), and Leapfrog (www.theleapfroggroup.org).



Speare Named 2015 HealthStrong™ Top Hospital

For the fourth consecutive year, Speare is nationally ranked as a 2015 HealthStrong Top Hospital based on 62 publicly reported metrics that make up the Health Strength Index™, healthcare’s most comprehensive rating system of hospitals. This designation is given to 572 of the 4,334 acute care hospitals in the United States. More information about the Index can be found at www.ivantagehealth.com.



Call to Action: National Healthcare Decisions Day

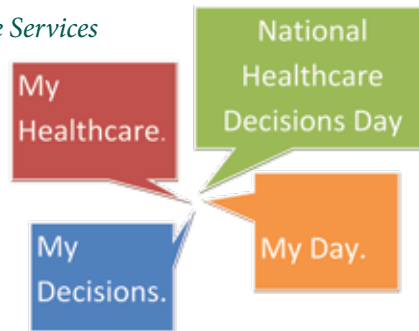
To inspire, educate, and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning.

By: *Kathy Wieliczko, Director of Patient Care Services*

Speare Memorial Hospital, along with Pemi-Baker Community Health and Mid-State Health Center, are leading an effort locally to highlight the importance of advance healthcare decision-making. We will be providing information and tools for the public to talk about their wishes with family, friends and healthcare providers, and execute written advance directives (healthcare power of attorney and living will) in accordance with New Hampshire State Laws.

Specifically, on April 23, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., we are inviting people to come to Speare Memorial Hospital throughout the day at, to talk with representatives from Speare, Pemi-Baker and Mid-State and receive free information about advance care planning and advance directive forms. No appointment is necessary.

“As a result of National Healthcare Decisions Day, many more people in our community can be expected to have thoughtful conversations about their



healthcare decisions and complete reliable advance directives to make their wishes known,” said Kathy Wieliczko, Director Patient Care Management. “Fewer families and healthcare providers will have to struggle with making difficult healthcare decisions in the absence of guidance from the patient, and healthcare providers and facilities will be better equipped to address advance healthcare planning issues before a crisis and be better able to honor patient wishes when the time comes to do so.”

For more information about National Healthcare Decision Day, please visit www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org. If you have questions about the event at Speare on April 23, please call 238-2216.

Speare Primary Care Welcomes Dr. Dana Merrithew

Dr. Dana Merrithew has returned to his primary care roots, joining the patient care team at Speare Primary Care. Well known in the community, Dr. Merrithew has most recently been a familiar face as one of the hospitalists at Speare—a hospital-based physician responsible for coordinating a patient’s care in the hospital.

Trained as an internal medicine physician, Dr. Merrithew is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, with an additional certification in Geriatrics. After earning both his bachelor’s and doctorate from Boston University, he

completed his residency at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Boston. Of particular clinical interest to Dr. Merrithew is helping patients with chronic disease management, including diabetes, COPD, and dementia.

“We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Merrithew to Speare Primary Care,” notes Practice Administrator Chuck Hulse. “Specializing in geriatric medicine, and being a long-term resident of central New Hampshire, Dr. Merrithew brings another level of confidence and comfort to our patient population, and assuring their continuity of care.”



Art of Healing: Spring’s Promise

The Oncology Clinic at Speare, a regional affiliate of Dartmouth Hitchcock Norris Cotton Cancer Center, hosted its second Art of Healing painting party on March 4. Spring’s Promise bloomed in 25 different variations as painters received step-by-step instruction from Lindsey at Kil’n Time Art Studio on Main Street in Plymouth.

The Art of Healing painting party is an opportunity for the community to come together in a shared experience of reflection, hope, moral support and/or memories on canvas for loved ones, friends neighbors or coworkers—we all know someone who has been diagnosed with cancer. Paintings were displayed throughout the Hospital and Speare Memorial at Boulder Point through the first of April.



Located at Speare’s medical office building at Boulder Point in Plymouth, Speare Primary Care offers expanded care options for patients of all ages. Speare Primary Care is accepting new patients. Call 536-1881 to schedule an appointment.

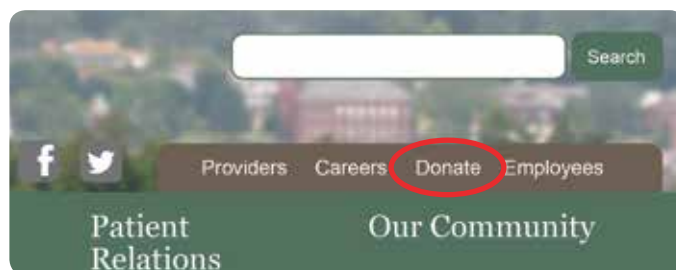
Giving Matters

By: Julie DeGalan, Director of Development

Do you spend time surfing the Internet or checking Facebook using your PC or tablet? Do you use your mobile phone to stay in contact with family and friends? It seems that everywhere we turn, we rely on these types of devices to make our lives easier and more enjoyable.

Correspondingly, more and more donors are choosing to make donations online. We at Speare want to help make life easier by offering this option to our donors. You can now make a secure online gift by visiting our website, www.spearehospital.com and selecting the Donate link in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Then select the link to make a secure online donation.

MasterCard, VISA and DISCOVER cards are accepted, and your gift will be confirmed immediately.



We recognize and thank the 258 donors listed below who made gifts totaling \$348,320 from October 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. Your support helps us achieve our mission to provide excellent healthcare for our community every day. Philanthropy helps make it happen. Your gift makes a difference!

Every effort has been made to spell names correctly and acknowledge gifts as you prefer. If you see an error please contact the Development Office at (603) 238-2211 or donate@spearehospital.com.

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A Springboard to Healing

By: Kendall Mattson, RehabFIT Member

I chose RehabFIT after a long struggle with health issues. I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, in 1989. I am thankful for the radiation treatments that cured my cancer; however, the treatments scarred my aortic valve in my heart, creating aortic stenosis. I then needed open heart surgery, including an aortic valve replacement and double bypass. I was extremely deconditioned, especially in my core muscles.

After a few weeks at in-patient rehab in Concord, I transitioned into the Speare's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. After graduating from Cardiac Rehab, I moved to the medical fitness program at RehabFIT to continue to build my cardiac capacity and work to regain my muscular stability, strength and endurance. The exercise specialists have been my mentors and guided me through my program to show me what specific exercises are right for me and how to modify traditional exercises to meet my individual, very specific needs.

My experience at RehabFIT has been very positive and has taken me to a place of fitness I did not know I could achieve. RehabFIT has become a part of my overall health plan, going there two to three times per week. I am also very pleased with the staff at RehabFIT. It certainly feels more like a close group of friends, versus, just a staff people. Each of them made me feel welcome, from the beginning and I really appreciate that. I constantly

recommended RehabFIT to my friends so others can benefit from the outstanding level of caring and professional expertise.

In addition to setting personal goals for my physical strength and rehab, I am always looking for ways to better myself, physically, emotionally and spiritually. A place that helps me in all three of these areas is Abenaki Farm & Stables, in Campton, NH. The farm provides a unique, powerful and effective haven for me. As a result, I am also working to create a cancer survivor support group for both adults and children, at Abenaki. The innate ability of horses to sense human needs and to heal via their own energy is amazing.

RehabFIT was a springboard for my healing. Through the ever-increasing physical strength gained, I also gained the confidence to try new healing vehicles, such as working with Abenaki Farm. I am grateful for all the benefits gained thru RehabFIT. We in the Plymouth area are so very fortunate to have RehabFIT at Boulder Point!

