



Weeks Medical Center

Community

HealthLink

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Weeks Medical Center
Fall/Winter 2012

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call 603-788-4911.



Back row- Randy Chauvette, Chris Seguin, Alan Rich, Missy Labonville, Brenda Ruggles, Jim Santorello, Michael Brigati. Middle row- Ashley Cotter, Betty Santerre, Lynda Paquette, Beth Rancloes, Tony Ellingwood, Jim Gibson, Sandy Mason, Jessica Flynn. Front row Dr. Jeff Johnson, Dr. Mederic Leblanc

The Front Door...

Emergency Department Staff Offers the Best in Professional Emergency Care

A visit to the **Emergency Department** for many people can be an extremely stressful and scary event. Not only is the patient dealing with an emergency medical issue, but images from shows like *Grey's Anatomy* or negative stories about real world emergency rooms have left many people nervous about the type of medical care they can expect. After talking with Week's ED staff members and former patients, the North Country is fortunate to have a first-rate ED that has a strong commitment to the total medical needs of its patients, while offering efficient and personalized emergency treatment.

According to Michael Brigati, the Critical Care Manager in the ED, the types of medical conditions that arrive at Weeks' ED on a daily basis is wide ranging, from pediatrics to geriatrics. Based on an initial screening and interview to determine the severity, the patient is taken to one of two trauma rooms or one of four private treatment rooms. With a staff of six board certified physicians and 20 emergency nurses, the department is staffed 24/7 and provides care for 6,000 patients a year. Approximately 80% of the hospital's admitted patients arrive through the doors of the ED, and about 150 patients a year are either airlifted or taken by ambulance to specialty hospitals.

Three full-time, highly trained paramedics are a critical part of the ED team, providing

The Front Door... (continued from page 1)

paramedic services to ambulance crews in Lancaster, Whitefield, and Groveton. They service a 500 square mile area and assisted with over 340 calls in 2011. When one of the local EMS units do not have a Paramedic available, the ED is called and the Weeks Paramedic and 'intercept vehicle' meet the ambulance either on-scene or enroute to the hospital. With their advanced field skills, the Paramedic can provide life-saving procedures, such as endotracheal intubation, respiratory support, advanced cardiac monitoring, and a variety of cardiac and other emergency drugs.

The department prides itself on the numerous advanced certifications that their doctors, nurses and paramedics have completed. All ED nursing and paramedic staff are current in Advanced Care Life Support, Pediatrics Advanced Life Support and Neo-natal Resuscitation. All nurses are certified in Trauma Nurse Care Curriculum and all paramedics are certified in Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support.

To improve workflow and efficiency, the department has recently 'gone live' with ED management software that provides effective management of the ED patient care process and workflow using a electronic tracking board. The tracking board keeps medical personnel up-to-date on things like pending lab tests and results, diagnostic tests, pending medication orders, patient's length of stay, etc. The electronic system also allows

primary care providers to easily check on their patients in the ED.

Weeks' Family Support Team is a group of trained volunteers in the ED who facilitate communications between families and the ED medical team during a time of crisis. This assistance allows the medical team to keep their focus solely on the patient. The support team offers both in-house response and aftercare support. "We're honored to be able to work with a group of volunteers who provide such a valuable service in our patients time of critical need," says Brigati. "They are an invaluable resource."

When asked if it takes a certain personality type to work in the ED, Brigati says "The person who works in the ED is typically a Type A personality who enjoys controlled chaos in life and is always expecting the unknown. They are autonomous but are able to work as part of a team. The team at Weeks is one of the best group of medical professionals I've had the pleasure of working with."

While nobody wants to visit the Emergency Department, residents in the North Country can be comforted with the fact that the highly trained and dedicated staff at Weeks' ED offer the finest in professional emergency medical care in an efficient and compassionate setting.



Jim Gibson, Sandy Mason, Jessica Flynn, Tony Ellingwood

Women's Healthcare at Weeks

Expert Diagnostic Imaging Leads the Fight Against Breast Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates that the risk for a woman developing breast cancer in the U.S. is 13% in 2012, or more than one in eight. Early detection of breast cancer is critical in reducing the mortality rate by as much as 20% to 30% in women over 50 years of age. Studies have shown that the smaller the size of the breast cancer when detected, the better the chance of a surgical cure and long-term survival.

"It is extremely important for a woman to have regular breast examinations as well as mammograms to detect early breast cancer," says Scott Baxter, Director of Radiology. "Weeks has recently added the most advanced mammographic imaging technology available today for the early detection of breast cancer. In fact, Weeks is the first hospital in the United States to install the Aspire HD Full Field Digital Mammography System from Fujifilm Medical Systems U.S.A."

This new FDA approved system offers image clarity that enables extraordinary detail of potential abnormalities, such as microcalcifications and tumors, for a more accurate and reliable diagnosis. These high quality images enhance visualization of breast tissue and allow for better differentiation between normal and abnormal.

Weeks performs approximately 1200 mammograms annually. If there are changes in the breast, the woman is notified immediately. "We don't want to scare patients, but want to impress upon them the seriousness of an abnormal exam," says Baxter. "It doesn't mean the outcome is going to be bad. It may be just normal and there are all kinds of variations of normal."

Weeks is staffed by a well-qualified team of breast health experts. If surgery or further cancer care is required, such as radiation or chemotherapy, Weeks has a dedicated team of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Oncologists to offer the most comprehensive, coordinated care possible — quality care you need when you need it and all close to home.



Susie Short, RT (R) (M), operates the new Fujifilm Aspire HD Full Field Digital Mammography System

Symptoms of Breast Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society, the most common symptom of breast cancer is a new lump or mass. A painless, hard mass that has irregular edges is more likely to be cancerous, but breast cancers can be tender, soft, or rounded. They can even be painful. For this reason, it is important to have any new breast mass or lump checked by a health care professional experienced in diagnosing breast diseases.

Other possible signs of breast cancer include:

- Swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no distinct lump is felt)
- Skin irritation or dimpling
- Breast or nipple pain
- Nipple retraction (turning inward)
- Redness, scaliness, or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)

Sometimes a breast cancer can spread to lymph nodes under the arm or around the collar bone and cause a lump or swelling there, even before the original tumor in the breast tissue is large enough to be felt.

If you think you have any signs or symptoms that might mean breast cancer, be sure to see your doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor will ask you questions about your symptoms, any other health problems, and possible risk factors for benign breast conditions or breast cancer.

Weeks Medical Center Celebrates Electronic Milestone

The entire staff of Weeks Medical Center celebrated a tremendous milestone this past August with an employee wide family cookout at the hospital in Lancaster. The weather cooperated and the “Green T-Shirts” were out in full force serving a fabulous meal that even included a make-your-own ice cream stand.



Over the past several years, Weeks has been in the process of instituting a facility-wide electronic health records system (EHR). The development of this complex system took countless hours and the dedicated work of many departments at the hospital and all the physician’s offices.

The system has been certified by the Federal Government and meets its very stringent federal guidelines. Having “certified”

technology is critical to ensuring the Weeks’ system is secure and meets the goals of error reduction, data availability, reminders and alerts, as well as clinical decision support. This new certification means that Weeks is now among the elite hospitals in the US that have achieved this certification.

“We continue to strive for excellence in everything we do,” stated Scott Howe, Weeks CEO. “This is a major achievement for our hospital. The patients and communities that we serve can feel confident that Weeks is providing the most up-to-date technologies to ensure the best possible health care. I am very proud of our entire staff who worked so hard to achieve this important designation.”

New Weeks Medical Professionals



Amber Schmidt, DO

Lancaster Primary Care Family Medicine
Specialty: Family Medicine
Medical School: University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine
Residency: Maine Dartmouth Family Medicine, Augusta, Maine



Jayne Tarkleson, DO

Lancaster Primary Care Family Medicine
Specialty: Pediatrics
Medical School: University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine
Residency: Sparrow Hospital/Michigan State University



Mariah McHose, BSN, RN, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Lancaster Primary Care Family Medicine
Specialty: Psychiatry
Education: Master of Science, Nursing, University of Pennsylvania
Bachelor of Science, Nursing, University of New Hampshire

2012 Annual Giving Campaign to Raise Money for Lab Equipment

Every year Weeks ends the year with its Annual Giving Campaign to raise money for a significant piece of equipment that will improve patient care. Weeks has the skilled doctors and nurses, but wants to give patients the edge with the latest equipment as well.

This year the hospital has selected a state-of-the-art laboratory analyzer that does blood clot testing. The Siemens Sysmex CA-660 Hemostasis Analyzer accurately and precisely measures the factors required to stop bleeding and identifies possible abnormalities that could lead to excessive bleeding or thrombosis.

“It is extremely important to be able to provide rapid and accurate results of coagulation factors,” states Lorily York, Laboratory Director. “Some situations, such as stroke and emboli, are life threatening and the treatment of these conditions relies on getting these results. This instrumentation also is important in monitoring therapy with anticoagulants. It is very important that these patients know their results are within the therapeutic range prescribed by their providers.”

The Annual Fund Goal is \$30,000. Your gift, no matter how



Weeks Laboratory Department: Gilda Lazotte, Lorily York, Lorraine Dziegielewski, Wendy Mitchell, Mona Riendeau, and Richard Cotter

large or small, will make a tremendous difference to the lives and well-being of residents living in the North Country.

To make a gift (mail to): Weeks Medical Center, Fund Development, 173 Middle Street, Lancaster, NH 03584.

The Giving Tree for The Giving Season

The Weeks Medical Center Auxiliary will once again place “Giving Trees” at the following locations:

- All four physician offices
- Northwoods Home Health & Hospice
- The Hospital:
 - Outpatient Lobby
 - Central Nurses Station
 - Dining Room
 - Volunteer Office

Donations to the “Giving Trees” provide gift certificates for groceries to people who are having a difficult time making ends meet this winter.

Place your donation in one of the envelopes and send it to Margo Cliche, Volunteer Services Department at the hospital or mail to Weeks Medical Auxiliary at 173 Middle Street, Lancaster. Checks should be payable to: Weeks Medical Center Auxiliary. Donation deadline is Friday, December 17th.

If you care to suggest the name of someone you feel needs a little extra help this year, contact Margo Cliche at 788-5221

Plant the seed of kindness this season with your gift to “The Giving Tree.”



Over 70 People Attend Weeks Annual Auxiliary Dinner and Alzheimer's Education Program

Weeks annual Auxiliary dinner, meeting and education program was held on Wednesday, September 26 at the United Methodist Church Hall. With over 70 people attending, a full turkey dinner was served. After the business meeting, a presentation entitled Alzheimer's Disease — Caring For Our Loved Ones was presented

by Cheryl O'Malley, Social Services Director, and Wendy Colby, Administrator at the Morrison Nursing Home in Whitefield.



Popular Health & Wellness Program Offered to Weeks Employees

Started three years ago, Weeks Health & Wellness Program has become a popular and important healthcare initiative for hospital employees. The goal is to improve the health of employees, regardless of their personal health status. The program includes all facets of wellness and introduces employees to numerous options, both in the hospital and in the community.

Programs like health risk assessments, exercise, nutrition, and weight loss, are offered to employees. One of the more popular programs is called *Take 5 +2*. By participating in the Weeks "*Take 5 +2*" or "*Take 5*" For Your Health program, employees can earn up to **\$250 (Take 5) or \$350 (Take 5 +2) cash bonus** for

themselves and also for their spouse— for a **maximum total of \$700 per couple!**

The Biggest Loser contest, based on the television show, was also very popular this year with over fifty people participating either on a team or individually. Rather than prizes, Weeks donated the total weight lost, pound per pound, to Lancaster's Food Pantry.

"Beyond promoting better health and wellness, we feel there is a secondary benefit to the program," says Sharyl Phelps, Wellness Committee Chair. "If employees are healthier, they will probably be happier, more productive employees and better team players. It also helps to boost camaraderie amongst employees."

Northwoods Home Health & Hospice Receives Top National Honors

Lancaster – For the second year in a row, Northwoods Home Health & Hospice announced that it has achieved HomeCare Elite status. This prestigious ranking places Northwoods in the top 25% of all home health agencies in the United States. The strict criteria for this listing are an analysis of performance measures in quality of care, quality improvement, patient experience, process measure implementation, and financial management. OCS HomeCare, the leading provider of homecare information, and DecisionHealth, publisher of the industry's most respected independent Newsletter, Home Health Line and Complete Home Health, determined the naming of Northwoods to the HomeCare Elite.

Northwoods Home Health & Hospice Director, Gail Tattan-Giampaolo, credits the hard work of each and every staff member who works together to ensure excellence in patient care. "It takes each member of our team to work in unison to meet the needs of our patients and their families and this national ranking is a testament to the hard work of everyone at Northwoods" said Ms. Tattan-Giampaolo.

Northwoods Home Health and Hospice, with offices in Lancaster and Colebrook, is a division of Weeks Medical Center and provides both medical and non-medical assisted living and hospice support in many North Country communities. If you, a family member or friend are in need of home health or hospice support please call Northwoods Home Health & Hospice at 800-750-2366.

Weeks Offers Confidential Family Planning and Women's Health Services

Weeks Medical Center's Family Planning Service focuses on vital health issues faced by teenagers in the North Country, including reproductive health and breast and cervical cancer. These highly trained, caring medical professionals provide confidential reproductive healthcare services, counseling and education to teens. Some of the many services provided include:

- Birth control options
- Pregnancy testing
- Breast exams
- Pap smears
- Testing for sexually transmitted disease

Family planning services are offered at Weeks' primary care offices in Lancaster and North Stratford. To learn more, call 603-788-5090 for more information, hours or to make an appointment at either location.



Gina Bedell, ARNP and Raylene Degreenia, MA

Breathing Easier

New Pulmonologist Joins Weeks Medical Team

For most of us, breathing is an involuntary reflex often taken for granted, but for many people breathing complications can be a serious health issue. Weeks patients who have chronic respiratory conditions, such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema, asthma, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, sleep disorders or other serious chest infections and pulmonary disorders, can now, with a referral from their primary care provider, make an appointment with Dr. Peggy Simon. Dr. Simon, a board-certified pulmonologist, has joined the Weeks medical team on a part-time basis and is a member of AVH Surgical Associates in Berlin.



Dr. Simon

Dr. Simon received her medical degree at Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and did her residency in Internal Medicine at Barnes Hospital, Washington University in St. Louis, MO. She completed her Research Fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School in Boston.

To schedule an appointment, please call 603-326-5770.

4 Reasons to Quit Smoking Now

The statistics speak for themselves:

- After one year off cigarettes, the excess risk of coronary heart disease caused by smoking is reduced by half.
- After 15 years of abstinence, the risk of coronary heart disease is similar to that for people who never smoked.
- Male smokers who quit between ages 35 to 39 add an average of five years to their lives; female quitters in this age group add three years.
- On average, with good smoking cessation counseling, nicotine gum and medications, and behavior modification, between 20 and 40 percent are able to quit smoking.

Events

December

2nd Sunday

Santa Claus Comes to Weeks

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Weeks Medical Center Cafeteria

Cost: \$2.00 per picture

Sundaes Free for kids, \$2.00 for adults.

Bill Rutherford Photo Exhibit

Current photo exhibit at Weeks in the main hallway is by local photographer Bill Rutherford. Stop by and see these beautiful images of the North Country.

January

Smoking Cessation Classes

Classes will be coming back again in January.

Call 788-5221 for more information.

February

13th Wednesday & 14th Thursday

Everything Handbags

Purses, clutches & more will be on sale
Weeks Dining Room Hallway

March

18th Monday

Daffodil Days

Call or order your daffodils at 788-5023.

April

A Taste of Healthcare

An introduction to the healthcare field for area high school students will be held in April.

Call 788-5023 for more information.

Weeks Medical Center's Primary Care Offices

Lancaster Physicians Offices

170 Middle Street
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-2521
Toll Free 1-888-779-3539

Groveton Physicians Offices

47 Church Street
Groveton, NH 03582
603-636-1101
Toll Free 1-888-880-6371

Whitefield Physicians Offices

8 Clover Lane
Whitefield, NH 03598
603-837-9005
Toll Free 1-888-905-6933

North Stratford Physicians Offices

43 Main Street
North Stratford, NH 03590
603-922-5039

Northwoods Home Health & Hospice

278 Main Street
Lancaster, NH 03584
Toll Free 1-800-750-2366

Northwoods Home Health & Hospice

120 Main Street
Colebrook, NH 03576
Toll Free 1-800-750-2366

