



Weeks Medical Center

Community

HealthLink

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Advanced Personalized Cancer Care Close to Home

One of the most challenging medical fields today is the field of oncology, but it can also be one of the most rewarding. Because oncology doctors, and especially nurses, have longer contact with their patients, they are able to build strong and trusting relationships. For cancer patients living in Coos County, Weeks Medical Center offers Oncology and Hematology clinics and treatments in a comfortable, home-like atmosphere. These highly trained medical professionals understand the importance of having local access to physical, psychological, and emotional care for cancer patients and their families.

"We have the opportunity to help people through a very difficult time. We care about them and provide a steady presence," says Robin Grubby, lead oncology nurse in the department. "A diagnosis of cancer can be quite frightening. One of our primary goals is to meet the needs of the person while we are also treating the disease. It can be hugely nourishing being an oncology nurse. We are often inspired by and learn from the people we serve."

The Oncology Department traces back 20 years when Marion McCaig, a long-time nurse at Weeks, became trained and certified in oncology care. An oncology doctor affiliated with the Norris Cotton Cancer Center at Dartmouth-Hitchcock visited Weeks once a month for a clinic. Fast forward 20 years and today's department is open



ONCOLOGY TEAM: Nancy Davidowicz, Carroll Frizzell, Anita Newell, Lisa Boudle, Gail McGee, and Robin Grubby

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Dr. John Peterson, Oncologist

five days a week and is staffed by three highly skilled oncology nurses, two health unit coordinators and a secretary. Two Oncologists/Hematologists from Dartmouth-Hitchcock offer twelve regular clinics a month at Weeks for the diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of cancer as well as disorders of the blood. Weeks is also very fortunate to have a strong partnership with the Norris Cotton Cancer Center which is one

of the leading research and treatment centers in the country."

The Oncology Department provides chemotherapy in a comfortable and caring environment. With two large infusion suites and six recliner chairs in each suite, the department treats over 150 patients a month.

According to Grubby, there have been many improvements in chemotherapy and anti-nausea medications. Also pre-

Oncology...

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medications are much more effective today. "Chemo is not easy, but is often not as bad as people think it will be," notes Grubby. "There have been advancements in cancer treatments and there are always new discoveries and protocols that will continue to transform care."



John Peterson, MD and Greg Ripple, MD

One of the technical strengths of Weeks' cancer program is the availability of on-site PET/CT scanning. Procedures are performed to detect cancer; determine whether cancer has spread; assess the effectiveness of cancer treatment; and to identify re-staging of existing cancer. The images are sent to Dartmouth-Hitchcock and the results are available within 24 to 48 hours.

"I find it inspirational to spend two days a week in the Weeks oncology department," says Dr. John Peterson, a Dartmouth-Hitchcock Oncologist. "It's a wonderful environment with an extremely professional and caring staff that truly cares about each and every patient. Because Weeks is a small hospital, the care is much more responsive and personalized. Many of my patients are older and very sick, and this quality care close to their home makes it so much easier. When you're chronically ill, it matters."

New Weeks Pediatrician Treats Infants Through Adolescents

From birth through adolescence, children have different medical and psychological needs than adults. Pediatricians are specially trained in the development and diseases of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. They often provide a variety of services to families, including diagnosing illnesses and prescribing treatment; monitoring a child's physical, mental and social development; and counseling adolescents and families on a range of emotional and social issues. Because Pediatricians are dealing with young patients, and at times the parents as well, they must also be compassionate caregivers. A good pediatric relationship is important because it can span from the baby years through young adults.

Fortunately for parents living in the North Country, Dr. Jayne Tarkleson, a board-certified Pediatrician, has recently joined the Weeks medical team at the hospital's Whitefield Physician Office. Dr. Tarkleson grew-up in Colebrook where her dad was a Veterinarian and from a very young age she knew she wanted to be a Pediatrician. "I always loved working with children and in high school I job shadowed Dr. Lakey, a Pediatrician at Littleton Regional Hospital, which cemented my career goal," says Dr. Tarkleson. After graduating from the University of New England and completing her Residency in Pediatrics at Michigan State University, she decided to return to the North Country and joined



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the Weeks staff in August 2012. "You don't realize what a special area this is until you go away," says Dr. Tarkleson, who lives in Jefferson with her husband, James, and 2 ½ year old son Gavin.

It is a simple fact that kids are going to get sick, no matter how hard parents try to prevent it. Dr. Tarkleson provides care and treatment for a wide range of infections and viruses, and is specially trained to handle common illnesses often found in children and teens, such as asthma, common cold, croup,

whopping cough, ear infections, impetigo, fever, head injuries, sore throats, stomach pains and vomiting... and a list of childhood ailments that is endless. She also provides well-child check-ups and immunizations.

Dr. Tarkleson sees children and teenagers with behavioral health issues, especially prevalent is Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This disorder includes a combination of problems, such as difficulty sustaining attention, hyperactivity, and impulse behavior. It can cause a child to struggle with low self-esteem, troubled relationships, and poor performance in school. Treatment typically involves medications and behavioral interventions. Dr. Tarkleson says that the hospital is fortunate to have a good psychiatric support system, including a telepsychology system through Dartmouth-Hitchcock. Using this Internet-based system, a child and the parents can be remotely seen by a Dartmouth child psychiatrist for evaluation and recommended treatment.

She also turns to the specialists at Dartmouth-Hitchcock for second opinions and for patients needing specialized treatment. "The doctors at Dartmouth have been extremely helpful and we're at an advantage because so many have multiple subspecialties," notes Dr. Tarkleson.

The Whitefield office offers 24/7 pediatric care and she is backed-up by Dr. John Ford and Christopher Laurent, FNP-BC. Dr. Tarkleson also works one day a week at The Indian Stream Health Center in Colebrook. She is taking new patients at Weeks Whitefield office and is also available to meet with parents prior to the birth of their baby. Dr. Tarkleson can be reached at 837-9005.

Student Health Tips for Parents

By Dr. Jayne Tarkleson

Backpack Safety

Today, backpacks are a necessity for students who are not only carrying textbooks and other necessary classroom supplies, but also electronic devices.

Some signs that a backpack is too heavy is when your child:

- struggles to get the pack on or off
- leans forward in order to carry the backpack
- complains of back pain

A backpack that is too heavy or worn on just one shoulder can have potentially serious health effects for kids and teens. Parents can help kids re-pack for better weight and balance, and also show them the safest way to wear their pack to avoid health problems. The American Occupational Therapy Association recommend that kids carry packs of no more than 10 to 15 percent of their body weight, and less is always better. Different ages need different size backpacks. Be sure to choose one that is the right size, well-padded and has enough storage to meet your child's needs. Load heaviest items at the back of the pack, so they are closest to the child's back. Adjust the straps for a better fit. The bottom of their backpack should rest in the curve of their lower back and no more than 2-3 inches below their waistline. Kids and teens should always wear both straps of their backpack, so the load is spread evenly across the back. If your child uses a single strap backpack, it should be as small and light as possible. For security reasons, I recommend not putting your child's name on their backpack.

Maintain a Well-Balanced Diet

It's important that your child get a well-balanced diet every day. With a balanced diet your child's immune system will work at top performance and aid in fighting off germs and viruses because they are exposed to so much more now that they are back to school. In addition, a well balanced diet is critical for healthy development and important for brain health. Children have longer attention spans and retain more information when they are healthy.

Get Plenty of Sleep

It is important that your child is getting a good nights sleep to help aid in their overall health. Just like a well-balanced diet, the body needs plenty of rest to be at peak performance both physically and mentally. Children who are sleep deprived are most likely to perform poorly at tasks and to suffer frequent illnesses.

Proper Hand Washing

It is critical that your child understand the importance of proper hand washing before eating and after using the bathroom. Hand washing is the best way to prevent germs from spreading and to keep your child from getting sick. When your child comes into contact with germs, they can become infected by simply touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Good hand washing is the first line of defense against spreading many illnesses.

Weeks Medical Center and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center Enter Agreement for Radiology and Pathology

The administration at Weeks Medical Center recently signed an agreement with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon for the provision of radiology and pathology services.

Weeks Medical Center is transmitting radiology images to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center for interpretation by their radiologists. This ensures timely around the clock diagnosis and, in some cases, faster treatment for patients. This agreement includes Androscoggin Valley Hospital and Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital and was done as part of the Coos Hospital Collaboration. All three hospitals will also share the services of a Dartmouth Radiologist on-site to perform procedures and oversee the radiology services.

There are also new benefits such as better and faster treatment for trauma patients. When a trauma patient is admitted to the Emergency Department at Weeks, the staff often does a CT scan which is now instantaneously sent to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. If the trauma

patient is sent to Lebanon, the hospital already has the analyzed images for faster, better treatment. Additionally, with the new service, the Weeks surgeons will be able to perform minor procedural biopsies, like a breast biopsy, so patients don't have to travel the distance to Lebanon.

While more of a behind the scenes service, pathology is a critical service that assists doctors in diagnosing and treating illness. Clinical pathologists test tissue and blood fluid taken from patients for abnormalities and infection, such as cancer, HIV and food poisoning. The pathology department at Weeks also recently turned to Dartmouth for the processing of tissue specimens, diagnosis, and reporting for many of the same reasons as the radiology department.

"We are fortunate to be able to offer our patients the outstanding services of the pathology department at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, says Irene

Nadeau of the Histology Department. "They are able to offer our medical staff the same 24-hour turnaround and quality analysis as our former in-house service. This has been a seamless transition with absolutely no disruption of service to our patients." Dr. Charles Brown, a Dartmouth Pathologist, comes to Weeks one day a week to meet with providers; offer educational opportunities; and to answer questions about regulations.

"We are pleased to be able to coordinate with Dartmouth-Hitchcock to streamline our processes in order to deliver the highest quality, fastest diagnostics using the latest technology and techniques which ultimately improve clinical outcomes," says Scott Howe, CEO. "We also have the benefit of Dartmouth-Hitchcock employing some of the best Radiologists and Pathologists in New England which is a real plus for a small community hospital."

Be sure to visit the Weeks website for the latest Events and more! www.weeksmedical.org

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
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