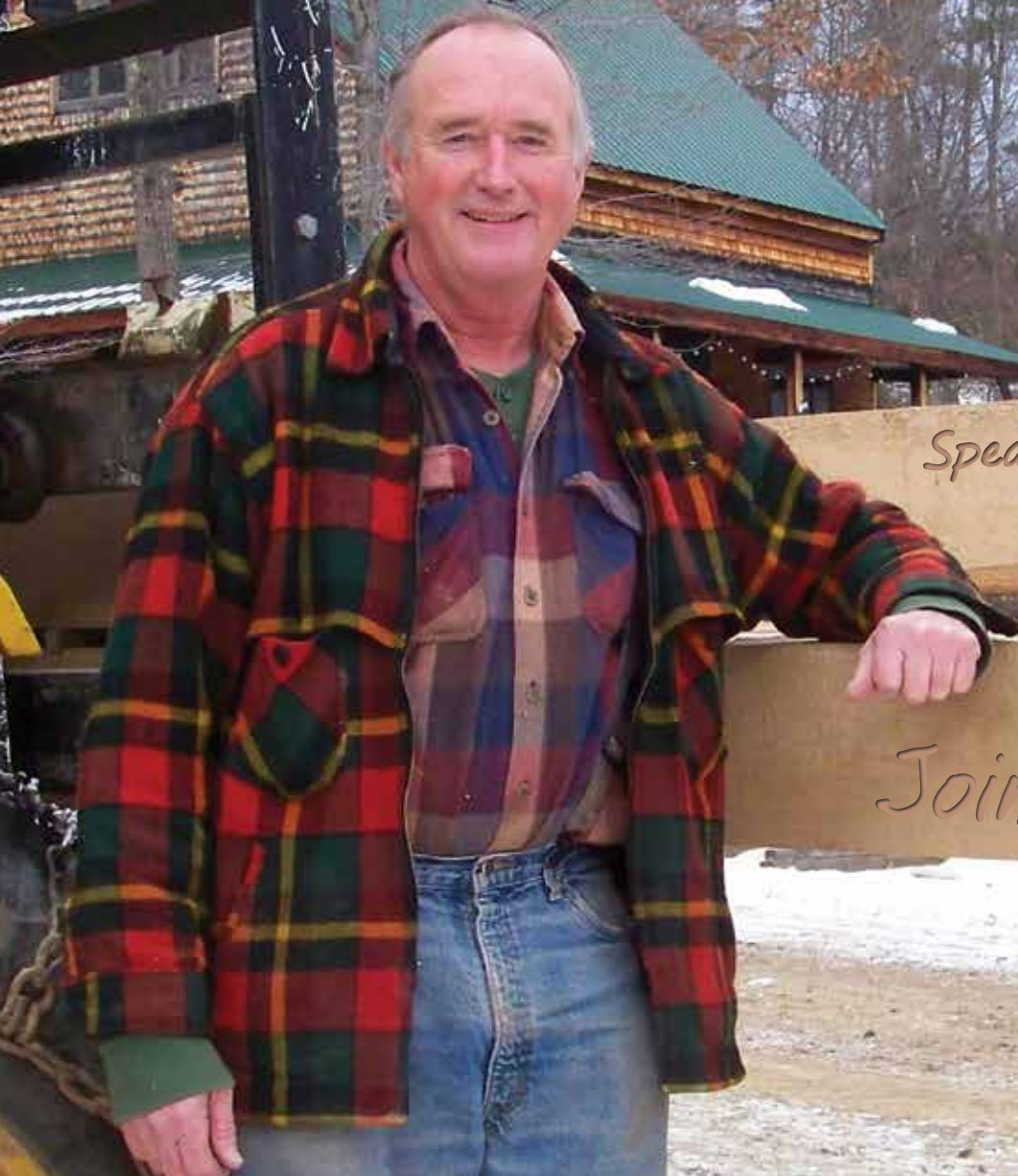


# Health Beat

Spring 2012 | The Newsletter of Speare Memorial Hospital



Speare Memorial Hospital  
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New Total  
Joint Program

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*A Critical Access Hospital*

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More than you expect

# A Quality Foundation

By Michelle McEwen, FACHE, President & CEO



In our fall issue I was pleased to announce Speare Memorial Hospital had been named on one of the Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) in the country, scoring best among critical access hospitals on the iVantage Health Analytics' Hospital Strength Index™. We were also ranked as a:

- *HealthStrong™: Top 20 Critical Access Hospital*
- *HealthStrong™: Best in Strength*

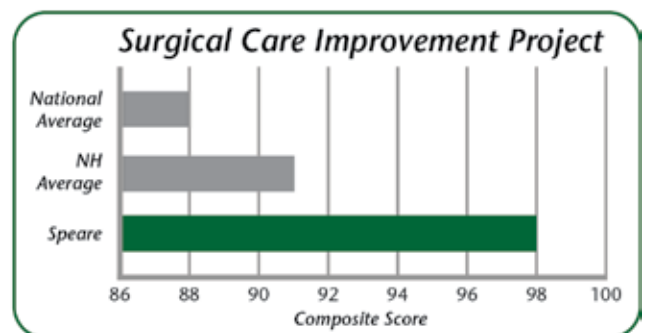
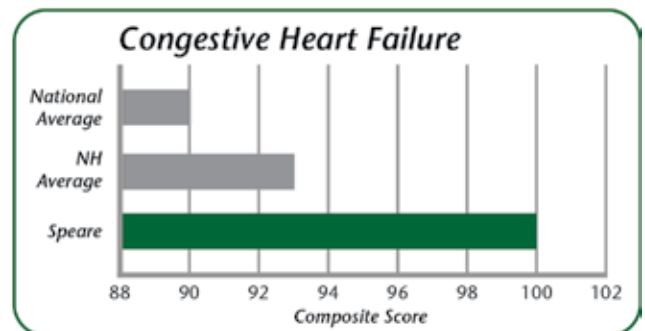
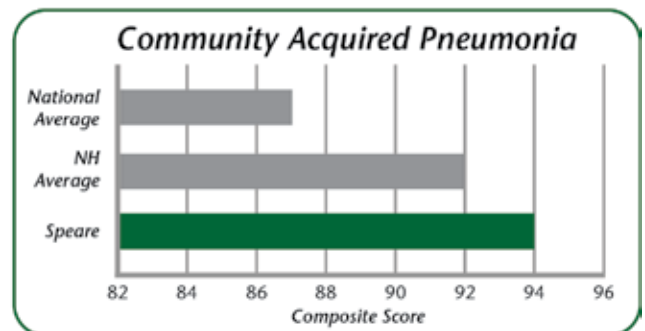
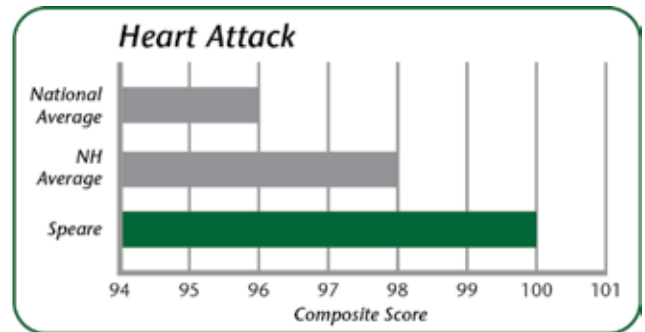
In this first-ever comprehensive rating of CAHs, the results recognize the Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals that are the safety net to communities across America – measuring us across 56 different performance metrics, including quality, outcomes, patient perspective, affordability and efficiency. More information can be found at [www.HospitalStrengthIndex.com](http://www.HospitalStrengthIndex.com).

As John Morrow, executive vice president of iVantage Health Analytics, says, “Rural hospitals play such a critical role in providing needed care to communities across America, yet the challenges are completely different while being as complex as urban hospitals. The need for benchmarks and a framework for success are equally important as hospitals brace for the impact of health reform.”

Quality and patient safety are the foundational benchmarks for hospital performance and care at any level. Using evidence based clinical practices to ensure the right care to the right patient at the right time, every time, is the basis of Speare quality and patient safety initiatives. To that end, Speare tracks and reports its performance relative to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Core Measures. The results are available publicly at [www.NHQualityCare.org](http://www.NHQualityCare.org). Based on the 12 month period ending June 2011, Speare Memorial's scores are as follows:

- *Acute Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack):* Speare's score is 100 as compared to the state average of 98, and the national average of 96.
- *Community Acquired Pneumonia:* Speare ranked eighth out of 26 hospitals with a score of 94. The state average is 92 and the national average is 87.
- *Congestive Heart Failure:* Speare was one of four hospitals to achieve 100. New Hampshire average is 93 and the national average equals 90.
- *Surgical Care Improvement Project:* Speare was one of three hospitals to achieve the high score of 98. The state average came in at 91 and the national average at 88.

This is a place of strength, and a foundation to build on as we welcome our new Director of Quality & Patient Safety Melissa Howard, RN, BSN, CPHQ. She brings a level of experience and a collaborative approach that promises to further our goal of being more than you expect, and your healthcare provider of choice.



# Speare Welcomes New Director of Quality & Patient Safety



Melissa Howard, RN, BSN, CPHQ, knows quality. Her professional life is centered around it, and as the total quality movement has evolved in healthcare, so has Howard's career. Today she brings that breadth and depth of experience to her new position as director of quality and patient safety at Speare Memorial Hospital.

Early on Howard worked as a nurse manager in an intermediate care and residential care facility. She became the clinical coordinator, infection control coordinator and director of quality at a skilled nursing facility in Laconia in the mid 1990's. It was her goal to move into the hospital setting, and she was able to make that leap in 1998 when she became a quality coordinator at Concord Hospital in the Quality Assurance Department.

"I enjoyed the challenge of moving to an acute care environment," notes Howard. "It is a different model, using different language and the standards were different." Over time she found her footing by developing strong, trusting relationships with service providers, directors, ancillary and medical staff.

As things changed in the department so too did Howard's role. She began taking on more responsibility and become an operations supervisor overseeing daily operations of a department of four nurses, a patient satisfaction coordinator, and data analyst. She provided peer review support and oversight to all medical staff specialties, supported outpatient departments, participated in LEAN initiatives and assisted in assuring the hospital was meeting regulations and standards set by the Joint Commission (for accreditation of healthcare organizations).

Says Howard, "We were working simultaneously on numerous initiatives, looking to improve efficiencies and move the patient care experience forward.

It was this grassroots approach to organizational quality and her extensive experience with multiple aspects of hospital quality and patient safety that made Melissa stand out says Speare's President and CEO Michelle McEwen, FACHE. "Melissa brings a very collaborative approach to our quality culture. She understands the importance of patient perceptions about their care experience and how we can use their feedback to further build on our quality foundation."

It was the hospital's quality foundation that attracted Howard to Speare. "I looked at the quality and patient satisfaction scores," she notes. "I knew Speare was a quality leader, and I hope to build on the work that has already been done to further Speare's reputation."

As she settles into her role she is taking on a new aspect of patient satisfaction with complaint investigation. "The patient and family perception of the care they receive is everything, and we need to talk about their experiences so we can best identify opportunities for improvement."

Howard continues, "It is important for all employees to understand how quality affects patient satisfaction and how they add value, which ultimately determines their decision to make Speare their healthcare provider of choice."

Not only is Howard new to her position, but two other key roles in Speare's Quality and Patient Safety Department recently welcomed new staff—Erin McCarthy as

the safety coordinator and Mary Ruppert as infection preventionist. Rounding out the department is Sue Lopes as the quality coordinator, who has been a great support to Howard as she transitions into her role. "The staff are all gifts," notes Howard. "We are working together to understand each others' role, their inter-connectivity across the quality continuum and assessing our needs going forward."

Howard earned her associate's in nursing (RN) at the New Hampshire Technical Institute, followed by a bachelor's in applied technology with an option in allied health services at Granite State College. She is also a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ). The CPHQ program certifies individuals who have acquired a body of knowledge and expertise by passing an accredited written examination demonstrating understanding of: organizational leadership, information management, performance improvement, patient safety, accreditation, case management, utilization management, infection prevention and risk management. She has a Greenbelt in Lean/Six Sigma training.

If you have a question about Speare Memorial Hospital's quality and/or patient safety, contact Melissa Howard directly at (603) 238-6481 or via email at [qmcomments@spearehospital.com](mailto:qmcomments@spearehospital.com)

# SMH Dietitians Share Small Steps for Success in Raising Heart Healthy Kids

The American Heart Association (AHA) is putting a call out to parents, asking them to take steps now to ensure that their children are not among the next generation of Americans with heart disease. According to the Association, a key factor that is putting our kids at risk is the rising rate of obesity among families. And parents, they say—not doctors or teachers—are in the best position to teach children good eating habits.

“The AHA recognizes that general advice to just ‘eat better’ isn’t enough,” notes Jean Baker, MS, registered dietitian at Spere Memorial Hospital. “Both parents and children need more specific direction on what behaviors to target and how to change them. The first strategy they suggest is to look at the family’s eating habits: how many times a week the family orders pizza, relies on fast food for dinner, or snacks in front of the television.”

Once a family has a clearer picture of their eating habits, step two is to identify potential problem areas and set goals to change behaviors. “For instance,” Baker says, “a family might decide to buy less

soda, drinking four bottles a week instead of eight.”

The next step is to assess how well the family is doing with the changes. Changing eating habits isn’t easy and parents should be prepared to work on ways to overcome potential challenges. One stumbling block for some busy families is that they consider their less-than-healthy meal choices as temporary—“just until basketball season is over.”

“But busy families will always be busy,” insists Baker, “and those who wait for a break in their routine to get a better handle on their eating habits end up making no changes at all.” The AHA urges parents to ‘think small.’ If fast food is on the menu several times a week, consider ordering out only on Fridays, and plan ahead so ingredients for simple meals are on hand the rest of the week.

Remember, making changes in what your family eats is a family affair—everyone can benefit from cutting back on excess calories from sugar and fat. The AHA wants parents to take a more active



Registered Dietitian Janette Gaumer discusses food taste and texture with kindergarteners at Thornton Elementary School.

role in demonstrating the importance of making good food choices.

Want more help? Every week, Spere Memorial Hospital’s registered dietitians post *Kids Eat Right* tips on the Hospital’s Facebook page. They also offer education and support to help you make the right choices in order to reach your personal goals for health and wellness. Call (603) 2380-6472 to learn more or visit online at [www.spearehospital.com](http://www.spearehospital.com)

## Save the Date. Mark Your Calendar. Sign Up!

### Eating Well in the Heart of New Hampshire

In a 1-hour session, get the tools you need to make diet and lifestyle changes to lower your risk of heart disease.

- Meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 5 pm in the Spere Hospital cafeteria annex
- FREE: registration is required
- Call Jean Baker, RD, at (603) 238-6472 for more information

### MORE Wine, Women & Wisdom

Friday, April 13 at 5 p.m.

Last year’s very popular women’s health event is back with a second installment! Sponsored by Millennium Integrated Marketing and Patty Stewart and Associates.

- Common Man Inn in Plymouth
- Opening reception, fashion show, presentations by Dr. Lori Stack and Dr. Mandy Gennaro
- FREE, but registration is required: [info@sparehospital.com](mailto:info@sparehospital.com) or (603) 238-6468

Grab your girlfriends for a fun night out!

### Annual Golf Classic

Thursday, June 7

Benefits the Dental Health Program offering preventative dental service to infants through adults.

- Owl’s Nest Golf Club in Campton
- Morning and afternoon flights
- Sponsorship opportunities available
- Register today by calling Sue Durgy at (603) 238-2211 or [sdurgy@sparehospital.com](mailto:sdurgy@sparehospital.com)



# SMH Introduces New Total Joint Program

Speare Memorial Hospital is pleased to announce its new Total Joint Program: a comprehensive, clinically integrated care program—close to home—that focuses on restoring patients' quality of life.

"Providing a care experience that is more than our patients expect is what we want to achieve for each person electing to have a total hip or total knee replacement at Speare," explains Kris Hering, Speare Memorial Hospital's Chief Nursing Officer. "This is why we are excited to introduce our Total Joint Program that is specifically tailored to each individual patient's needs and lifestyle to promote optimal recovery outcomes."

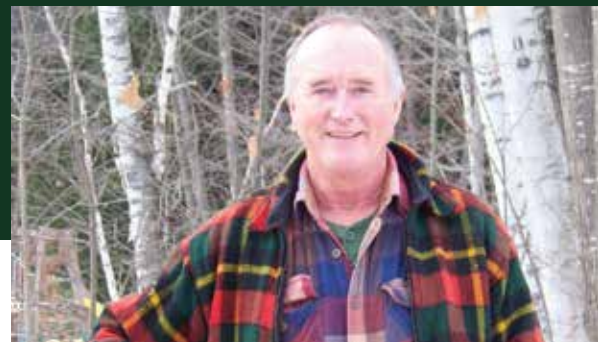
In creating the program, professionals from across the clinical continuum of care came together to identify ways to make the process—the decision to have surgery, preparation for the actual procedure, post operative recovery and rehabilitation—evidence-based, streamlined, and patient-centered. Over the last few months, Plymouth Orthopedics and Sports Medicines' Dr. Victor Gennaro and Virginia Mike, PA-C, have partnered with Speare nurses, social workers, case managers, financial counselors, and Choice Physical Therapy's physical and occupational therapists, to identify process improvements that enhance patients' understanding, their overall care experience, and ultimately, their recovery. The result is the Total Joint Program featuring:

- **Patient Information Guides:** comprehensive guides for knee and hip replacement given to patients once the decision to have surgery has been made. Guides explain and organize the whole continuum of care from pre-op testing to post-operative appointments after discharge from the hospital. Guides

include: education on procedure, medications to take or not take, what to bring to the hospital, how to use assistive devices, overview of postoperative exercises and discharge instructions.

- **The Coach:** all total joint replacement patients will be asked to select someone as their 'coach' along the continuum of care. This coach will play an important role in the preparation, healing and recovery of the patient. Patients often feel overwhelmed with information and having an extra set of eyes and ears to help them understand the instructions from the healthcare team is invaluable.
- **Face-to-Face Interview:** prior to surgery the patient and coach meet with a specially trained perioperative nurse, anesthesia provider, physical/occupational therapist, and financial counselor if requested, to ensure optimal preparation for surgery. Patient and coach tour the in-patient rehabilitation gym and nursing unit to meet members of the healthcare team who will be caring for them in the hospital.
- **Clinical Liaison:** healthcare professional the patient and/or coach can call to ask questions and clarify information at all points of the process. This liaison will serve as the 'life line' ensuring ongoing support for the patient and coach.

For more information about Speare's Total Joint Program, or to schedule an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon, call Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Clinic at (603) 536-1565.



## Steve's Story

One year and two hip replacements later (one on each side), Steve Sharps, 62, of Holderness says, "I never expected to be where I am today. This fall I went hunting at our camp up in Pittsburgh, climbed Crystal Mountain twice, and went canoeing. I feel great."

Not so this time last year following a fall off a wood pile. Having worked in the woods since he was five years old, and doing business as Sharps Lumber since 1977 logging and selling lumber, the only time he had been in the hospital was when he broke his leg following a logging accident.

Having had a good experience at Speare Memorial Hospital before, he went to see Dr. Victor Gennaro, orthopedic surgeon, at Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Clinic. X-rays revealed Steve had arthritis in both hips, and Dr. Gennaro informed him he needed to replace his left hip immediately and the right hip sooner rather than later.

"I was a bit gun shy about having surgery," Steve reflects from the comfort of his living room in the house he and his son built. It is both showroom and tribute to his livelihood. But after the fall Steve says, "It hurt to do everything." He let a few weeks go by and realized he just needed to get it done and had the first surgery on December 14, 2010.

"Dr. Gennaro told me like it is, explained what he was going to do and got it done. He checked on me each day, and if I had questions was willing to take my calls after I went home." After a two night stay at Speare, Steve was released and used crutches for about a week, a cane for two more weeks, and was walking without any assistive devices 17 days after surgery.

"I even went snowmobiling last February between surgeries," he brags. In March he had his other hip replaced. "It all seems like a long time ago," Steve notes. "Now I can do anything. I feel like me again."



# Giving Matters

By Susan Durgy, MBA, CFRE

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Staff of Spere Memorial Hospital, please accept our enthusiastic thanks for the generous support of the following individuals, families, businesses and foundations. Between October 14, 2011 and February 13, 2012, \$185,895.75 was given to support the programs and services of Spere Memorial. Each gift touches the lives of our patients and their families. For your kind support, we are truly grateful!

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# "I Made it to the Top"

By Cindy Moon, patient

Choice Physical Therapy at Boulder Point & RehabFIT



RehabFIT Exercise Specialist Kendra Gilpatric (l) celebrates Cindy Moon's success, along with Dr. Mandy Gennaro and (r) Kelly Legacy, clinical director of Choice Physical Therapy at Boulder Point.

I have periodically been going to Choice Physical Therapy for six years for treatment of a connective tissue disorder. Kelly Legacy was my physical therapist. She evaluated and treated me for some time, and then recommended that I revisit the original diagnosis with my new PCP, Dr. Mary Catherine Gennaro. My symptoms were different from those I had experienced for several years, and connective tissue disorders are hard to diagnose. Dr. Gennaro did some testing and sent me to a rheumatologist at Dartmouth and the two doctors started me on a new course of treatment. More advanced testing had finally determined what was wrong.

Kelly helped me due to her strong ability to understand what was going on physically with patients, and my Dartmouth doctor was impressed with her observations, treatment and documentation. For the first time, I felt truly confident about my health care.

I continued to see Kelly for physical therapy (PT). Each time you enter a new course of PT, you have to set goals. Every time that I wrote my "goals" I would think that they should be called "wishes" because in the case of a chronic illness, your goals might be reached, but it's a matter of time before you have to begin again. So, I wrote my wishes and hoped that somehow they would come true.

I wanted to join the gym at RehabFIT (rather than just go for PT) and use the equipment. I also wanted to visit my husband's childhood home in England and climb the steep hill at Sycamore Gap, near Hadrian's Wall. Now this was pushing it, and I knew it, but after all . . . in my mind it was mostly just a wish.

I learned through watching the others at RehabFIT that the members don't just wish for someone else to make something happen. They work towards and achieve their goals, and they work very hard to do that! They have excellent help in doing so, with occupational and physical therapists, and a fitness team that helps with assessment of individual needs, and monitoring members through interaction, support and computerized supervision. Each member has a "key" that records every exercise session. At the end of a workout, you can view overall statistics for heart rate, distance achieved, calorie count, and a comparison to your other sessions. It is highly motivating to have your own personal progress charted as you either work to improve, or simply maintain your level.

Kelly and Dr. Gennaro proposed a plan for me to become a trial patient. I would go from physical therapy to the equipment with supervision for each exercise session. If I experienced difficulty, I would return to PT. Kendra Gilpatric, exercise specialist, would supervise me, and the computer would record data from my key so that Kelly could advise Kendra with any concerns. For three months Kendra supervised whenever I used the gym equipment. She was extremely

supportive, knowledgeable and attentive. I can't express how good I felt when I was able to go on the treadmill and the other equipment. I lost 15 pounds in three months and I was stronger and had so much more energy!

The best thing is... I became empowered. I was no longer wishing. I had goals and I reached them. The day that Kendra handed me my own "key" to use without supervision was as wonderful as the day I made it to the top of the crag in England. I had met my goals, and I did it because a place like RehabFIT exists. The staff exemplifies their belief that "wellness does mean fitness", and that no matter what your issue, "exercise is medicine" . . . the very best medicine. Each employee treats patients with understanding and care. Thank you RehabFIT . . . I don't have to wish anymore. I have new goals to reach. . .

Talk with your doctor about your wish—weight loss, health issues, stress management, etc.—all you need is a referral to join. Call (603) 238-2225 or email: [rehabfit@sparehospital.com](mailto:rehabfit@sparehospital.com)



## *Nine Nurses Attain National Certification in Emergency Nursing*

Speare Memorial Hospital Emergency Department Nurses—Luc Corriveau, RN, CEN; Annie Cote, RN, CEN; Christine Crane, RN, CEN; Jeanne Erickson RN, CEN; Diane Mattson, RN CEN; Katee Foley, RN, CEN; and Monica Haley, RN, CEN—have successfully completed the examination for national certification in emergency nursing, administered by the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing.

Nurse Co-directors of Critical Care Services at Speare Debra Thompson, RN, CEN; and Donna Toohey, RN, CEN, CPEN, CFRN; are proud to work with professional certified nurses in the Emergency Department, insuring safe, quality care that is close to home. “Our goal is to mentor and educate all of our nurses and recommend they are certified within three years of hire.”



Nurse Co-directors of Critical Care Services Debra Thompson (l) and Donna Toohey (r) stand with three of their newly certified ED Nurses Monica Haley, Sharon Hillger and Katee Foley.

Certification in emergency nursing (CEN) is a nationally recognized credential that represents nurses’ commitment to excellence in the profession of emergency nursing, and providing the highest quality of care to their patients. Completing the voluntary certification process is a symbol of emergency nurses’ dedication to their profession and their patients.

Emergency nursing incorporates a wide spectrum of patient care that

requires extensive knowledge and highly specialized nursing skills. It also requires the ability to care for patients with a wide variety of ages, illnesses, and injuries. The certification exam evaluates a nurse’s knowledge and ability in areas such as patient care management; orthopedic emergencies and wound management; neurological, cardiovascular, substance abuse/toxicological and environmental emergencies, and shock/multi-system trauma emergencies.