

Health Beat

Summer 2015 | The Newsletter of Speare Memorial Hospital



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SPEARE
Memorial Hospital
A Critical Access Hospital



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excellent care every day.



Healthcare Excellence Exemplified Right Here at Speare

By Michelle McEwen, FACHE, President & CEO

It is with great pride —

and on behalf of all our physicians, nurses, clinicians and staff that call Speare #MyHospital*—I share that Speare Memorial Hospital has once again been named one of the **Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation.**

This designation comes from the National Rural Health Association as a result of Speare's ranking among the Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals from iVantage Health Analytics. The ranking is based on 62 publicly reported performance metrics including quality, outcomes, patient perspectives, affordability, population risk and efficiency. Speare scored a 98.1 out of a possible 100 on the Hospital Strength Index™, which also earned us the designation as a **HealthStrong Hospital™ for 2015.**

The Hospital Strength Index™ is a broad performance-based scorecard that provides a comprehensive framework on which to compare hospital performance across the country. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Index, and **Speare**

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The intent of the Health Beat newsletter is to provide useful health-related news in a timely, accurate manner. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. Such advice should be obtained directly from a qualified health care provider.

On the cover: Scenes from the 2015 Speare Golf Classic. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Memorial Hospital is one of only 16 hospitals nationally—and the only one in New Hampshire—to make the Top 100 list each of the five years.

I think an important point to make is we are not working for rankings, but to deliver the best care possible to you, our patients, based on evidence-based medicine and national standards of care. These rankings are a result of Speare meeting and/or exceeding those standards and patient satisfaction expectations. It is a collective effort, and relies on everyone, our medical staff, nurses and clinicians, as well as our support services staff throughout the Hospital, to provide a patient experience we can all be proud of.

Our patient care is personal, it is what sets us apart. We value the voice of the patient not only individually as a part of the clinical care team, but collectively in shaping the Speare experience overall. Out-of-state patients often tell us how surprised and appreciative they are of the personal attention they received while in our care, how comforting that is when dealing with an unexpected health issue away from home.

Healthcare is, has been, and will continue to be, in a rapidly changing and transitional time. Responding to those changes is the challenge, and requires Speare to continually evaluate our systems as we seek out, participate in and educate ourselves on evolving best practice standards, while maintaining quality of care and patient satisfaction. At the same time, working with our healthcare partners, we also have to be aware of and



respond to changes in our population's health needs.

Looking at central New Hampshire's demographics and population health we have a higher percentage of older adults and patients who need help managing chronic conditions. Responding to that is why we introduced Cardiac Rehabilitation nearly 10 years ago, we have a Sleep Lab as sleep, or lack thereof, can impact other conditions such as obesity, heart health and stress. We introduced a Pulmonary Rehab program to help patients better cope and manage their COPD, and a year ago we opened the Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine Center. We have learned patients will follow-up on care recommendations when it is in their own backyard and right here at Speare, so they don't have to travel.

Continuing to evaluate and respond to both changes in the healthcare industry overall and the specific needs of you, our patients, will ensure we can provide excellent healthcare to our community every day.

*Visit www.spearehospital.com to view our Hospital Week #MyHospital video.



A New “Lens” on Life

Dr. Richards looks back at his career as retirement comes into focus

By Michele Hutchins, Director of Community Relations

Dr. John Richards was only two working days into his retirement when we sat down to talk about his 37 year career as an ophthalmologist—35 of which were spent serving the eye care needs of the greater Plymouth area. He didn't quite yet have a feel for what it means to be retired, but he was very clear on how much he loved being an ophthalmologist.

“I loved the general happiness of the field and that I could treat all age groups,” reflects Dr. Richards. “I loved working with my hands and the surgical side of the practice. I loved, and still do, the miracle of eye sight. The eye is one incredibly fascinating organ.”

When asked how he got interested in being an “eye doctor”, Dr. Richards says it goes back to when he was an orderly working in a hospital before he was in medical school. “I grew up at a time in medicine when physicians would invite you in because you showed interest, and there was just something about the eye that I found so intriguing.”

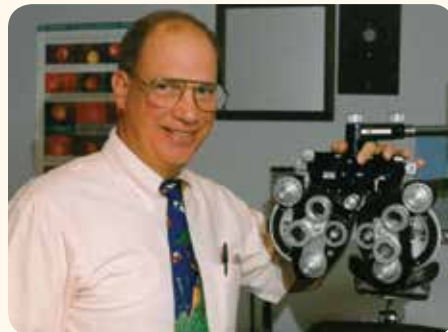
Like so many things, eye care has gone through a significant technological evolution over the years. By way of example Dr. Richards explains, “I was fortunate enough to experience the performing of cataract surgery four entirely different ways. Today's procedure is phacoemulsification (or ultrasound to gradually suck out the cataract) and inserting an implant. The procedure is similar to removing the pulp of an orange leaving the orange peel intact.”

“It is a totally different procedure from what was done originally,” he continues. “The original technique involved removing the entire cataract by opening up half the circumference of the cornea. Comparatively, today's cataract surgery is less invasive, safer, quicker, and considered to be one of the most successful operations done on the body.”

Another example of advancement in eye care over the years is the use of lasers to

treat scar tissue after cataract surgery, glaucoma and retinal diseases including bleeding, diabetic complications and wet macular degeneration. Dr. Richards says he purchased and employed three different lasers to treat patients with these conditions in his own practice. And it is only recently that the treatment for macular degeneration has evolved further to include injectable medications inside the eye to help restore vision for those specific patients.

“What has stayed the same over the years is the patient,” Dr. Richards notes. “Patients still have the same anxiety about eye conditions and health, and our role as their specialist is to reassure and get them through a particular problem and with dignity. People like to know that their doctor feels empathetic as they are going through a procedure and recovery.”



To that end Dr. Richards always worked to develop a rapport with his patients, calling them evenings or weekends following surgery just to check in; gave out his home number, so if patients had a problem after hours they could call. He even made house calls if needed, saying, “I've made hundreds of house calls over the years, some patients even came to my house, it is how it should be.”

But times and medicine do change, and Dr. Richards felt it was time for him to retire. “I haven't skied in 15+ years, haven't fished in three and only played one round of golf last year,” he notes. The passing of his friend and colleague Dr. Lloyd earlier this year also had a big influence on his



decision to retire, “It made me stop and think.” So as he adjusts to having more time in his day to “enjoy the daily life of New Hampshire and all it has to offer,” he looks forward to hiking those 4,000 footers, getting out in his canoe, fishing, and biking, golfing and playing tennis.

But don't think for a minute he won't be staying on top of the latest ophthalmic advancements. Dr. Richards says he looks forward to the future developments in ophthalmology including the conquering of macular degeneration with oral medications; use of stem cells to rebuild the retina in the future; and advancements in the treatment of cataracts and glaucoma.

Long-term, Dr. Richards says, “The biggest challenge for my field is being able to have patients have useable vision into their nineties and beyond. In 1980 I saw one patient a month in their 90s. Now it is two to three a day.”

For patients' immediate eye care needs, however, Dr. Richards wants to reassure his patients that the hospital is recruiting two full-time ophthalmologists to establish themselves at White Mountain Eye Care & Optical. “Until then,” he says, “the community will be well-served by two locums (see page 7), or temporary, doctors who are very qualified. Patients should feel comfortable seeing them and be assured they will provide the same range of services currently offered—big city eye care close to home.”

Need to make an appointment at White Mountain Eye Care & Optical? Please call (603) 536-1284.



Sunshine and Smiles Abound at Annual Golf Classic

A brilliant blue sky and bright sun provided a spectacular backdrop for Speare Memorial Hospital’s 17th Annual Golf Classic that took place on June 11, supporting the Dental Health Program. Nearly 200 golfers teed up for the event held at Owl’s Nest Resort & Golf Club in Campton, helping to raise over \$29,500 for the program this year.

“The golf tournament was a huge success,” enthused Julie DeGalan, coordinator of the Golf Classic and Speare’s director of development. “This event raises one fourth of the budget for the Dental Health Program, and is made possible by the many sponsors, donors, players and volunteers. We received so many positive comments about the tournament and are grateful to all who participated, especially our Golf Classic Sponsor Plymouth General Dentistry and Dr. Joan Kirschner.”

While everyone was all smiles on this day, the Dental Health Program Hygienist Ruth Doane reminded everyone that preserving smiles was the goal of the program. She shared an example, “I had a toddler this past year that I was seeing as part of our partnership with Plymouth Pediatrics. He had some pretty extensive decay and I referred him to Children’s Dentistry of the Lakes Region. I got a call from the mom who was worried about the need for general anesthesia in order to clean up the decay. I

had to reassure her it was standard procedure and with a patient that young, the best approach.”

“It reminded me,” Ruth continued, “that the relationship is with the whole family, not just the patient, and helping them get through a difficult situation. Mom called me after everything was done to say how pleased she was with the outcome. We identified a serious issue before it became acute and caused the child discomfort. Had we not had this program and the cooperative relationship with Plymouth Pediatrics, this situation may have had a very different outcome.”

The Dental Health Program works in collaboration with School Administrative Unit 48, the Ashland, Lin-Wood and Warren School Districts, Plymouth Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, Plymouth OB/GYN, and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. Services include free dental screenings and fluoride varnish applications. Dental cleanings and sealants are offered to school-age children on a sliding fee scale and to at-risk pregnant women. However, no one is denied service because of inability to pay. Children who are in pain from decay and infection are referred for restorative care. Case management and financial counseling/assistance are also provided.

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Giving Matters

By Julie DeGalan, Director of Development

The Board of Directors, medical providers and staff of Speare Memorial Hospital extend our heartfelt thanks to the following 140 individuals, families, foundations and businesses for their generous support. From January 1 through March 31, 2015, Speare received \$31,550 in donations that help us provide excellent healthcare for our community every day. Each gift touches the lives of our patients and their families and for that we are truly grateful.

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

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Celebrate Nature's Candy

Raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, oh my! Summer is here and so too are a bevy of fresh berries, whether you find them growing in your own backyard or at your local grocery store and farmers market.

"It's easy to make berries a part of your meals and snacks," notes Janette Gaumer, registered dietitian at Speare. "For breakfast, add blueberries to your cereal or enjoy strawberries with toast and peanut butter. At lunch or dinner, fresh berries bring color and sweetness to salads and salsas, not to mention being the perfect dessert either whole or as the base for homemade sorbet. At snack time you can mix berries in with yogurt or enjoy with a handful of nuts."



Berries provide a bounty of natural nutrients that fight infection, build the immune system and help keep you healthy, notes Gaumer. They may also help protect us from the effects of aging, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure and certain types of cancer.

- Berries are a great way to obtain the recommended 5 – 9 servings of colorful produce every day.
- Eight medium sized strawberries have only 30 calories and contain folate, vitamin C, fiber and potassium.
- One cup of blueberries provides 1/3 of the daily recommended amount of vitamin C, 4 grams of fiber and only 80 calories.
- Stock-up up on berries during the summer season and freeze them to enjoy berries all year round. And remember you can buy frozen berries all year long at your favorite grocery store.

Changing of the Guard at White Mountain Eye Care

As a result of Dr. Richards retiring, and Dr. Russo's decision to relocate closer to family, two ophthalmologists have joined White Mountain Eye Care to provide on-going care while ophthalmic specialists are recruited to permanently establish their practice with White Mountain Eye Care.

Dr. Harold Everett received his doctorate from the Medical College of Wisconsin and completed further training at the University of California, followed by his residency at Medical College of Wisconsin Affiliated Hospitals. Dr. Everett is Board Certified in Ophthalmology.

Dr. Thomas Leland has been in practice since 1979 in Charleston, S.C. He trained at the Storm Eye Institute at the Medical University of South Carolina. Dr. Leland is a Diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology and a Fellow in the International College of Surgeons.

Together, Dr. Everett and Dr. Leland will provide comprehensive eye care for patients and their families. Appointments can be made by calling White Mountain Eye Care & Optical at (603) 536-1284.





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RehabFIT Q&A

By Ron Reynolds, RehabFIT Member

Why did you choose Choice Physical Therapy/RehabFIT?

Unlike most fitness centers, RehabFIT has a medical component to their program. In February of 2014, I was diagnosed with cancer and after chemotherapy I needed to gain my strength and fitness back. RehabFIT was just the place.

Describe your therapist and staff?

I have found Kevin, Zack and Conner to be both knowledgeable and compassionate to my fitness needs. They always are there to answer questions as well as providing me with a challenging fitness program to meet my goals.

Describe your experience here at Choice Physical Therapy/RehabFIT:

My experience with RehabFIT has been amazing. After my chemotherapy I was weak and needed to be stronger for my upcoming surgery. So in June I joined RehabFIT. RehabFIT very carefully brought my strength and fitness levels

up. In July of 2014 I had surgery to complete my cancer treatment, and as a result lost 25 pounds, mostly muscle mass. By late August I was back at RehabFIT. And by the time winter came, and with the help of RehabFIT, I was in good enough physical shape to enjoy my favorite winter sports—skiing, skating, climbing and snowshoeing. Life is good—thanks to RehabFIT.

Are you pleased with the results and recovery?

Yes. I have come to realize that as I age, weight/resistance training along with balance and stretching exercise needs to be an important part of my lifestyle. Not only have I gotten stronger and fitter, but all those nagging aches and pains—like tennis elbow and lower back pain—are GONE.

Would you recommend Choice Physical Therapy/RehabFIT to a friend?

Yes. I have already recommended RehabFIT to many of my friends.

