

Health Beat

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The vaccine that makes people smile

Dr. Kevin Young, a primary care physician in Central New Hampshire, shares his experience with the COVID-19 vaccine.

Well-known primary care physician, Kevin Young, has given countless vaccinations over the decades as he cared for those in our community. But the COVID-19 vaccine is the first one that he has witnessed making people smile when they receive it.

"It is not that getting a shot is that much fun," says Dr. Young. "It's that people who get the shot suddenly feel they don't have to worry so much."

Typical comments he hears include: *"In two weeks, I won't worry when I hug my grandchildren"* and *"I won't worry so much when I am in a group at work."*

Dr. Young reports that most people who get the shot feel it is the best health insurance they have ever had—and the most affordable!

Older people and those with higher risk health conditions get a

"In two weeks, I won't worry when I hug my grandchildren."

life-saving benefit from the vaccine. But people of all ages are at risk of becoming gravely ill and dying from COVID-19, including those under 30 years of age. While these deaths are less frequent, Dr. Young says that this group has different reasons for getting the vaccine.

He typically hears younger people comment: *"I don't want to spread it to my friend at work," "I won't have to quarantine for days when I've been exposed,"* and *"I don't want to be a long-hauler."*

The long-hauler syndrome refers to chronic fatigue, joint and muscle pain, and "brain fog" problems that occur in at least 10% of people who have had COVID. It can still be a problem one year after the infection due to immune system problems. Even people with milder cases of COVID have reported suffering from this syndrome.

The safety of vaccines is always a concern, but Dr. Young says that the decision is easy when we compare



PHOTO: Dr. Kevin Young, primary care physician.

the side effects of the vaccine to the very real possibility of becoming severely ill from COVID.

"People who get the vaccine should not worry if they get a sore arm or if they get viral symptoms like minor fever, body aches, and headache," says Dr. Young. These are common and should only last a day.

The goal is to reach herd immunity when 75% to 90% of those living in a community have been vaccinated and are resistant to the virus,

"The goal is to reach herd immunity."

leaving it nowhere to go and ending the pandemic. While not every individual will be immune, and sporadic infections may occur, the group as a whole has protection, and there will not be major outbreaks.

"The best way to be part of that herd immunity is to get the vaccine," says Dr. Young.

So take care of yourself, and your family, and your community. Get a shot! Then you can smile! ♦

REHABFIT

Exercise Your Brain.

THE MEDICAL fitness experts at Speare's RehabFIT work with a wide range of people from athletes to beginner exercisers to combat the aging process, increase strength and muscle mass, lose weight, and improve overall health and wellness. In this story, they look at the brain.

The great Henry Ford once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty." The truth is most people get to a particular stage in life where "learning" is no longer a priority. As we mature in our chosen career paths or prioritize our families' well-being, learning a new skill becomes a childhood memory. However, if we are consistently educating ourselves throughout our lives, it provides lasting health benefits that indicate a better quality of life as we age.

As a person gets older, the brain starts to change. These

changes can occur quickly when not regularly engaging the brain in new and engrossing material. Typical age-related changes include decreased communication between nerve cells, reduced blood flow in the brain, inflammation, and certain parts of the brain can shrink, especially those important to learning. These changes negatively affect overall mental function, even in seemingly healthy older adults.

Typically, as we age, learning becomes increasingly difficult. However, when we strengthen the engagement of our brains, this increases the density of white matter. As the white matter or Myelin increases, the rate of learning is amplified. This occurs due to more neural pathways that are created and electric pulses that can travel faster, which can improve cognitive changes as we age. **By instituting learning regularly, you improve your ability to plan and organize, make thoughtful decisions, and remember coherently.** Recent studies have shown that regular physical activity and maintaining healthy blood pressure levels may also aid in preventing Dementia as you get older.

Take the first step.

As children, we were relentless in the urge to learn and experience. You can use this same approach, but you have the wisdom of adulthood to guide your curiosity. The initial step is to put yourself out there in order to learn a new skill set. Great learners allow themselves to be vulnerable in the beginning stages. Remember that learning can be difficult, and not to give up or lose your passion when it becomes challenging.

Our brains are craving the ability to learn, and when we learn, we fight monotony. The same can be said when we exercise our bodies. If you always go for walks, perhaps you can try another physical activity like playing in a pickleball game. Exercising both body and mind will improve your overall quality of life.

So, while you exercise your brain, let RehabFit work on the rest of you! Call **(603) 238-2225** or stop by RehabFit at Boulder Point in Plymouth for a tour or more information. No referral needed. ♦

SLEEP is the best MEDICINE



» Dr. George Neal is a certified sleep medicine physician and neurologist with more than two decades of experience. He says he first became interested in sleep medicine because of the science of it and in recognition of the importance of sleep in terms of general health.

Sleep is essential for a person's health and wellbeing. But many people struggle to fall asleep, stay asleep, and wake refreshed. A lack of restful sleep is a serious condition that can lead to other health problems.

Speare Memorial Hospital wants those we serve to achieve better sleep.

Under the guidance of our new sleep program medical director, Dr. George Neal, Speare's accredited sleep lab is now open.

Dr. Neal says that people don't think a lack of sleep is a medical problem, but it is. Better sleep improves everything from your heart and neurological function to your eating habits.

"Sleep is an important part of your overall health and quality of life," says Dr. Neal. "Successful management of sleep disorders

often reduces the risk of multiple adverse health consequences, and may have substantial benefits related to existing medical disorders, alertness, mood, and the way a person feels in the daytime."

Sleep apnea – a serious but treatable disorder – affects approximately 20 million Americans. It has been linked to increased risks of high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, congestive heart failure, and pulmonary hypertension.

"Sleep doctors commonly evaluate and treat patients with sleep apnea because of the potential wide-ranging health consequences if untreated," says Dr. Neal.

Take the first step and schedule a consultation with Dr. Neal, call (603) 481-8724.

SKIN CANCER:

Watch for signs of the most common cancer in the USA!

Remember that one blistering sunburn you had as a child or adolescent? Did you know that one incident doubles your chances of developing melanoma later in life?

For those in Central New Hampshire, outdoor recreation is a large part of a healthy lifestyle, but we must think of our skin health while we play.

"Being sun smart and checking your skin once a month for suspicious moles is one of the best ways to keep your skin healthy," says Dr. E. James Hanowell of Plymouth General Surgery.

Learning the following **ABCDEs** can alert you when an existing mole changes, which can signal skin cancer.



Asymmetry:

One half is unlike the other



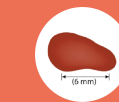
Border:

Irregular borders



Color:

Multiple colors or change in color



Diameter:

Larger than 1/4 inch



Evolving:

Change in size, shape, or color



"While skin cancer can be life-threatening, when it is caught early, it is highly treatable," says Dr. Hanowell.

Are you concerned about a new or changing mole or growth? Contact Plymouth General Surgery to schedule a screening today: **(603) 536-5670.**



Can't wait to see your doctor?
Trust our medical team when you need urgent health care!

As the only urgent care within 25 miles of Plymouth, the medical staff at MedCheck treats a wide range of injuries, illnesses, and other conditions for those who live in or are visiting the area. Preventative care and various procedures and tests are also provided, including on-site X-ray and COVID-19 testing. Telehealth appointments are available.

MedCheck is an urgent care center for health issues that are not life-threatening. This includes broken bones, sprains, cuts, burns, bites, sore throat, flu, fever, nausea, diarrhea, bronchitis, eye and ear infections, headaches, allergies, aches, and pains, and more. For added comfort, the emergency medicine team at Speare Memorial Hospital is prepared for any situation and is only two miles down the road.

MedCheck is located at Hatch Plaza, 389 Tenney Mountain Road in Plymouth. **No appointment necessary – just walk on in!**



Occupational health services:
now offered at
MedCheck



Employee Physicals



Department of Transportation (DOT) Physicals



Tuberculosis (PPD) Testing



Chain of Custody Drug Screening

- Non DOT & DOT Random
- Pre-Hire
- Post-Accident
- Reasonable Suspicion/Cause
- Return to Duty



Workers Compensation – Initial Assessment and Follow-Up



Breath Alcohol Testing

- Post-Accident
- Random
- Reasonable Suspicion/Cause
- Pre-Hire



Vaccinations and Immunizations

- Hepatitis B
- Influenza
- Tdap
- MMR
- Tetanus

Monday-Friday: 8am - 8pm
Saturday & Sunday: 9am - 5pm

MedCheckNH.com

Hatch Plaza
389 Tenney Mountain Highway
Plymouth, NH

603.481.8787

FIGHTING BACK:

Speare's lesser-known infection preventionists winning war against COVID-19!

Speare has all manner of superhero among its staff, but when thinking of frontline healthcare workers, many people imagine nurses or medical providers. Often overlooked are the team of people in the thick of things every day – those in the environmental services (EVS) department, more commonly known as housekeeping.

"They are unsung infection preventionists at Speare," says Jerica Vallie, director of EVS at Speare. "They are focused on keeping everything clean and strictly following CDC guidelines. This can be a very hard job, and I am in awe of their commitment to providing a safe environment for our patients, medical staff, and employees at Speare."

The coronavirus has made a tough job even more demanding. The EVS department has been successful in meeting each challenge the pandemic has interjected into their daily routine.

To start, they converted Speare's hospital-wide cleaning process to be in accordance with new federal guidelines. This meant adding required steps to successfully disinfect against the coronavirus.

"By increasing the frequency of cleaning and utilizing disinfection techniques that have proven to be effective in protecting staff and patients, we have been able to keep Speare a safe place for all," says Jerica.

She points out that the EVS team of infection preventionists has also kept themselves protected from coronavirus. Even though they work shoulder to shoulder with clinicians on the front line, not one EVS staff member has had COVID-19, adding further evidence to the importance of following the proper CDC disinfection guidelines.

They have implemented appropriate PPE use and participate in ongoing training to help ensure that everyone inside our facilities remains safe.

"The pandemic has proven that housekeepers are cleaners and infection preventionists," says Jerica. ♦



Plymouth & Concord: Partners in specialized orthopedic care



There are abundant gifts when living in rural New Hampshire. Different recreational opportunities accompany each season.

The enjoyment of all that a rural life offers can be cut short when you have suffered from an orthopedic injury or condition. Your mobility may be impacted, and you might find yourself driving to a more urban area for specialized care, adding more stress.

As a critical access hospital, Speare Memorial Hospital seeks to find ways to provide services that people in our surrounding communities need most. Specialized orthopedics is one such need.

Speare's Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine and Concord Orthopaedics have formed a partnership so that those in Central New Hampshire no longer have to travel for specialty orthopedic treatment or surgery.

With the convenience of Speare Medical Imaging Center next door, physicians from Concord Orthopaedics now see patients at the offices of Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, and they perform surgery at Speare Memorial Hospital. Same-day appointments are available.

"Our patients are the focus of all we do," says Dr. Victor Gennaro of Plymouth Ortho-

Board-certified with advanced orthopedic training, the physicians and their specialties now available to you at Speare are:



Dr. Victor Gennaro
General



Dr. Sean Burns
Total Joints



Dr. Lance Klingler
Hand



Dr. Ryan Duffy
Trauma



Dr. Anton Kurtz
Pediatrics



Dr. Clifford Levy
Spine



Dr. Christian Vorys
Sports Medicine

pedics & Sports Medicine. "This partnership offers them local access to specialty care, further enhancing the quality of orthopedic care we provide throughout the region."

"I chose to partner with Speare because of their focus on the patient experience," says Dr. Burns, of Concord Orthopaedics. "It feels like

northern New Hampshire's boutique hospital." He adds that he appreciates the opportunity to take care of patients close to their homes. "Not having to drive a distance for medical care is a huge plus," he says. ♦

Centrally located and closer than you might think, make your appointment today:

603.536.1565

Anterior Hip Replacement:

Now performed at Speare

In an effort to provide people who need hip replacement surgery with a less invasive option that results in a quicker recovery, anterior hip replacement surgery has become more common in recent years. But it takes specialized training and equipment to do the surgery successfully – and Speare has both.

Dr. Sean Burns, who specializes in anterior hip surgery at Concord Orthopaedics, performs anterior hip surgery at Speare Memorial Hospital.

"Hip replacement is literally the most successful orthopedic procedure that we perform," says Dr. Burns. "Although patients do great long-term with both anterior and posterior approach hip replacements, many feel that the anterior approach is an easier early recovery."

Unlike a traditional hip replacement where the muscles are cut, the anterior hip replacement allows the surgeon to work between the muscles keeping them intact. By keeping the muscles intact,

patients experience a shorter recovery, less pain, and a shorter hospital stay.

Dr. Burns says that many patients go home the same day as their surgery, and others go home the day after.

"Patients rarely use a cane or walker for more than a few days or weeks," he says. "Having a hip replacement (for the right patient) is like trading the old clunker for a new electric car!"

Cyndi's story

Weight loss surgery or medical weight management

It's a well-worn tale. Cyndi Spiers struggled with her weight for most of her adult life. She tried countless fad diets, pills, and shakes, but each time she lost weight, she would gain it back and more. She joined gyms and signed up for classes that just further intimidated and discouraged her until she gave up. Meanwhile, her weight continued to climb, sometimes causing her debilitating knee, back, and neck problems.

"Getting out of bed some mornings could take about 20 minutes of position shifts until I was able to get onto my feet," says Cyndi.

Things began to change in January 2020 when she had her annual exam. Cyndi was stunned when she stepped onto the scale and saw that her weight had climbed to its highest ever, 284.6 lbs. At 5'5", her body mass index (BMI) was 47. Cyndi's doctor reviewed her lab work, and they talked about the challenges Cyndi had been having with pain and reduced mobility.

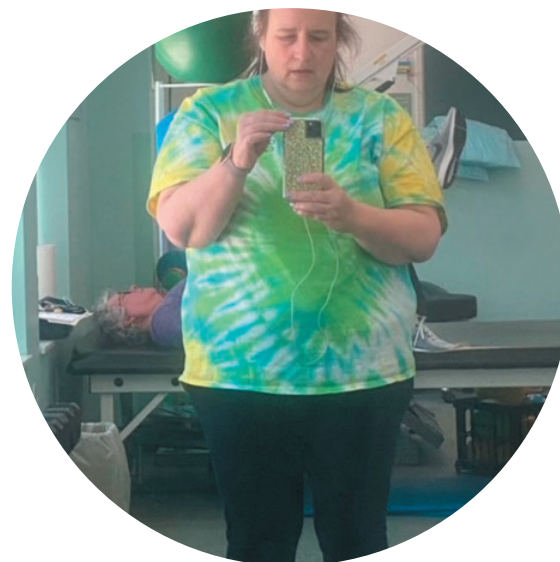
"It all boiled down to the fact that just about all of my health issues were a result of being overweight," says Cyndi. As luck would have it, Speare's Weight Loss Surgery Center (WLSC) had an info session that night. Cyndi recalls sitting in her car in tears, waiting for the session to start.

"I almost went home a couple of times, but I am so thankful that I somehow found the strength to stay and attend that meeting," says Cyndi. "Everyone there was really nice and welcoming."

She listened intently as Dr. Koren and Dr. Chastanet spoke about the program. Both have advanced fellowship training and decades of experience in weight loss surgery.

"After the presentation, Dr. Chastanet introduced himself, and we chatted. He answered all of my questions, and I really felt like he was interested and cared about helping me. He spoke "to" me instead of talking "down" to me. I had an almost instant sense of confidence and trust in him."

The next day Cyndi completed the paperwork and started the WLSC program. As the weeks passed, she met regularly with registered dietitian Janette Gaumer. Cyndi set and achieved incremental goals; she made lifestyle



and behavioral changes, she participated in group meetings, and she joined RehabFit – Speare's medical fitness program.

"RehabFit is awesome! I have *always hated* every gym or exercise program I have signed up for," says Cyndi. "RehabFit is a great place to work out with people who are there for the "right reasons", and it is staffed by professionals who care about your health goals."

Cyndi was doing great and her gastric sleeve surgery, which would significantly reduce the amount of food she was able to eat, was scheduled for July 27th. But Cyndi started to get nervous. By then she had lost 65 lbs and wondered if she even needed the surgery, especially since she was doing so well with Speare's medical weight loss program.



● **Cyndi Spiers lost 86 lbs** with the support of Speare's medical weight management team.

PHOTO: Cyndi Spiers before (p.9) and after (p.10) 86 lbs weight loss

"I flip-flopped so many times, but as the date neared, I knew that I wasn't ready for the surgery," says Cyndi. "The clinicians at the WLSC continued to support me with their medical weight management program, and here I am seven months later, much healthier and 86 lbs lighter."

At 198 lbs, Cyndi no longer struggles with knee and back pain, and her lab work continues to show improvements, as she becomes a much healthier person since a year ago.

"I have my life back. I feel better both physically and emotionally, and I look better. I have gone from wearing a size 22w pant down to a 14. I am no longer self-conscious about my size... it isn't even a thought that enters my mind anymore," she says. "I have become an optimistic per-

"I have my life back. I feel better both physically and emotionally."

son. I guess it's true that you can't be happy about anything if you hate yourself," she says.

Cyndi's goal is to lose another 45 lbs, describing herself as a work in progress.

"I would recommend this program to ANYONE looking for help with their weight challenges," says Cyndi. "The team genuinely cares about you and will support your journey to better health no matter which road you choose to take." ♦



“Thought you’d enjoy knowing that this time, you have two McLean daughters at Speare”

• BILL MCLEAN

The Two McLean Sisters

MEGAN IS having her second baby with you today, and her sister, Anna, a third-year medical student doing her OB/GYN rotation with Dr. Blue, will be assisting in the delivery. *How fun is that!* emailed proud grandfather Bill McLean.

It was only two years ago that Meg McLean gave birth to her daughter Marley at Speare Memorial Hospital, one day after a larger hospital would not accept her insurance. And Meg wouldn’t have had it any other way.

“I feel so fortunate to live close to this small, personal, family-friendly hospital,” says Meg. “Because of its size, I feel that I have gotten to know the doctors, nurses, and staff better than I would have in a larger hospital, and they have gotten to know me well too. **Since going to Speare for the birth of my first daughter, my family and I now go to Speare for all of our healthcare needs.**”

Meg says that becoming a Plymouth OB/GYN patient gave her the privilege of getting to know those who might help her give birth this second time. She had confidence that all of them would do a fantastic job, but her heart was set on Dr. Lauren Blue, who had delivered Marley.

“It is clear to me how much Dr. Blue truly cares for her patients,” says Meg, “and when you combine that with what an amazing doctor she is, you really couldn’t ask for more!”

Meg had not planned to give birth at Speare with her first child, but something even more serendipi-

tous was at play with the birth of her second child, Penelope.

Anna McLean, Meg’s sister, happened to be training for medical school under Dr. Blue the night that Meg went into labor.

Penelope was born close to midnight on February 24, 2021.

Meg says she remembers most that the room was filled with the smiling faces of those who ensured that Penelope arrived safely into the world.

“I am so grateful for how special Penelope’s birth experience was,” says Meg. “My husband Alex was involved as much as possible, and having my sister participate was a unique and memorable experience.”

The McLean family looks forward to when Penelope is older, and they can share the story of how her Auntie Anna helped bring her into the world.

“Being a part of a woman’s labor and then sharing in the birth experience is indescribable,” says Anna. “I had a mix of fluctuating feelings. I was trying to learn as much as possible as a student while also managing my own worries about what could go wrong that could threaten the health of my sister and her baby. Fortunately, everything went well, and before I could really process how I felt, my new niece arrived!”

Looking back, Meg appreciates that from the moment she arrived at Speare, everyone was respectful of her birth plan, including important things like her

desire to have skin-to-skin time once Penelope was born. And she loved how personal the birthing suite is at Speare.

“I felt very comfortable there with both of my daughters’ births; the nurses did a great job of caring for my babies and me while also giving me the quiet time and space to bond with my babies after delivery,” she says. “Speare gives a level of care that can’t always be found in a larger hospital.”

Perhaps Grandfather Bill says it best, “My wife and I love that Megan’s experience at Speare is very similar to our experience when Anna and Megan were born. That doesn’t exist in many places anymore.” ♦



PHOTO (L-R): Penelope, Megan, and Anna McLean; Dr. Lauren Blue.



“I had no idea how close
Speare Memorial Hospital
was to my home!”

**SPEARE IS HERE FOR QUALITY LOCAL
HEALTHCARE YOU CAN DEPEND ON**

These have been uncertain times for those living in the Lakes region. Over the past several months, many residents have worried about where they can find dependable healthcare now. *Speare is here.*

We hear it all the time: “I had no idea how close Speare Memorial Hospital was to my home!”

When faced with the prospect of driving to the city, fighting traffic, and struggling to find a parking spot, many prefer the convenient ride to Plymouth for health appointments. And for good reason.

Our highly skilled team provides services to meet all your healthcare needs and our friendly physician practices consistently earn exceptionally high patient satisfaction scores. From primary care and orthopedics to infusion therapy and our modern birthing suite – *Speare is here.* Central New Hampshire residents and visitors have depended on the medical expertise, state-of-the-art equipment, and personal attention found at Speare Memorial Hospital for more than 100 years.

For outstanding local healthcare, you can depend on today and tomorrow – Speare is here. Learn more about Speare Memorial Hospital by visiting [SpeareHospital.com](https://www.spearehospital.com) ♦

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| 🌲 Acid Reflux & Heartburn Center | 🌲 Inpatient Care | 🌲 Pediatrics |
| 🌲 Cardiopulmonary | 🌲 Laboratory | 🌲 Primary Care |
| 🌲 Diagnostic Imaging & Radiology | 🌲 Mental Health Services | 🌲 Rehabilitation Services |
| 🌲 Emergency Department | 🌲 Nutrition Counselling | 🌲 Weight Loss Surgery Center |
| 🌲 General Surgery | 🌲 Oncology/Hematology | 🌲 Women's Health/Obstetrics |
| | 🌲 Ophthalmology | 🌲 Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine |
| | 🌲 Orthopedics | |

MedCheck **Urgent Care** • Plymouth **Orthopedics & Sports Medicine** & Concord Orthopaedics • Plymouth **Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine** • Plymouth **General Surgery** • Plymouth **OB/GYN** • Speare **Medical Imaging** Center • Speare **Primary Care** • White Mountain **Eye Care & Optical**

DEAR SPEARE

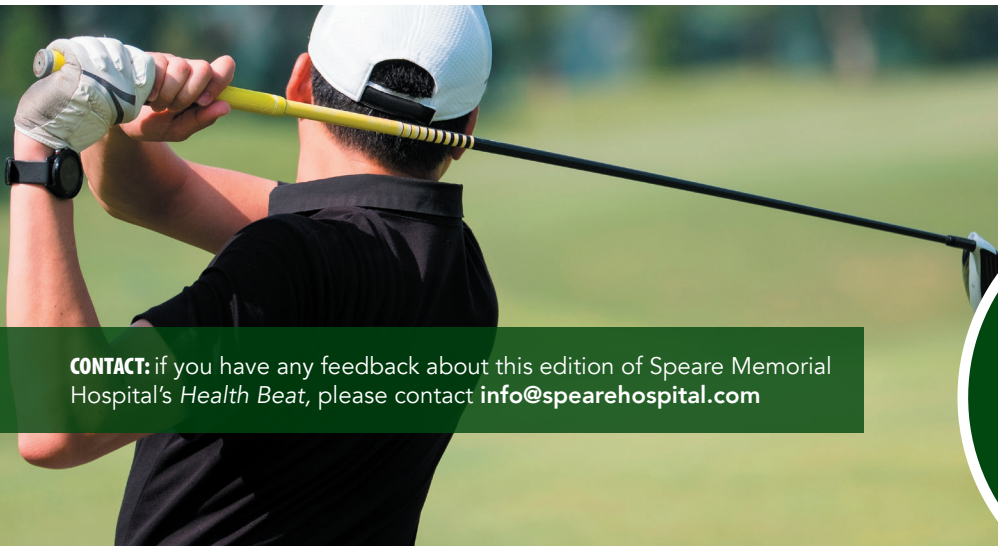
I am pleased to enclose a check in the amount of \$1,000 to Speare Memorial Hospital. I have been very pleased with the care that I have received and am grateful that Speare has been here for me.

Your staff consistently exhibits pride and care in all that it does, especially the staff in the **Radiology/Mammogram** section. *They simply could not be more caring.*

Sincerely,
Cindy H.



PHOTO (L-R): Linda Nestor, Dir. of Imaging, Cardiopulmonary & Sleep Lab Services; Juanita Wade, Radiology Technologist RT(R); Mary Sampson, RT(R)(M)(CT)



CONTACT: if you have any feedback about this edition of Speare Memorial Hospital's *Health Beat*, please contact info@spearehospital.com



GOLF CLASSIC **OWL'S NEST RESORT, THORNTON**
Speare's Annual Golf Classic will be held on September 15th to benefit the School Dental Health Program, providing free or low-cost dental services to more than 1,500 local children each year! Register at spearehospital.com/golf or contact **Cheryl Callnan** at (603) 238-2211 for more information.

Virtual Healthy Aging Series

Speare Memorial Hospital (SMH), Mid-State Health Center (MSHC), and Pemi-Baker Community Health (PBCH) are collaborating to provide the **Healthy Aging Series**: a mix of webinars, podcasts, and PowerPoint presentations designed to educate and assist seniors, caregivers, children of aging parents, and our community about topics related to healthy aging.

Each month a new presentation will be available from an expert at SMH, MSHC, or PBCH. Beginning in July, upcoming topics include:

- » After the Vaccine, What to do Now?
- » Stay Fit Indoors or Out
- » Home Funerals & Green Burials
- » Nutrition for the Aging Person
- » Advanced Directives: Why You Should Fill Out These Forms
- » Communicating with Your Aging Parent

Visit virtualhealthseries.com for more info and to sign up! **The series is free.**

