



Valley Regional Hospital

Health MATTERS

Fall 09

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...Safely

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Pictured: Kristin Grace, VRH
phlebotomist, and John Lambert



Bringing Quality Care to You

With the addition of Michael Ritondo, MD, FACOG, Valley Regional Primary Care Physicians (VRPCP) now offers obstetric and gynecological (OB/GYN) services to women in the Newport community.

While Dr. Ritondo will continue seeing patients in Claremont, VRPCP patients will have access to OB/GYN services on Mondays from 9 a.m. to noon.

John West, MD, and Roberta Thomas, APRN, provide daily family medicine services at VRPCP.

"This is a nice complement to the services provided by Dr. West and Ms. Thomas," says Claire Bowen, president and chief executive officer of Valley Regional Hospital. "VRPCP is doing so well in Newport, and we will continue to explore opportunities to bring medical specialties to the greater Newport community whenever possible."

To schedule an OB/GYN or family medicine appointment, please call Valley Regional Primary Care Physicians at (603) 863-6400.



Michael Ritondo, MD, FACOG



John West, MD



Roberta Thomas, APRN

Have a Happy (and Healthy) Halloween!



Halloween should be filled with trick or treating—not cuts and scrapes or emergency department visits. Ensure you and your loved ones have a happy Halloween by following a few simple safety tips recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- Because masks can limit eyesight, use nontoxic face paint instead.
- Do not allow children to carve jack-o-lanterns or get too close to lit candles.
- Examine all candy before your child eats any and throw away any treats that are unwrapped, spoiled, or suspicious.

- Stay on well-lit sidewalks or paths.
- Make sure costumes are bright and reflective.
- Remind older children who are going out without an adult to carry a flashlight and never go inside someone's house. An adult should be present for children under the age of 10.

Need a pediatrician for your child?

Log onto www.VRH.org for a list of pediatricians on the medical staff at Valley Regional Hospital.

In Their Honor

For 14 years, Connecticut Valley Home Care & Hospice, a program of Valley Regional Hospital, has helped celebrate the lives of loved ones lost during its annual Nondenominational Remembrance Day Celebration.

If you have lost a friend or family member, join us at St. Mary's Church on Central Street in Claremont on **Sunday, November 8, 2009, at 2 p.m.** During the event, you can light a candle in memory of your loved ones.

The Remembrance Day Celebration is a collaboration between Sullivan County Hospice and Connecticut Valley Home Care & Hospice. Refreshments will be served immediately following the event.

Women Helping Women

Valley Regional Hospital is set to install a new hydrotherapy tub for laboring moms-to-be in The Birthing Center.



Mariann Hosley takes delivery of the new hydrotherapy tub.

Immersion in water during labor

provides a host of benefits for the mother, including:

- Immersion in water often helps lower a mother's blood pressure.
- Immersion alleviates stress-related hormones, allowing the mother to produce more pain-reducing endorphins.
- Immersion allows the perineum to become more relaxed, reducing the incidence and severity of tearing.
- The buoyancy of water allows mothers to easily reposition themselves during labor as the need arises. Buoyancy also promotes more efficient contractions and better circulation, causing less pain for the mother and providing more oxygen for the baby.
- The intimate setting of water reduces a mother's anxiety about labor.



Karen Gessner, registered nurse in The Birthing Center, unwraps the tub before plant operations personnel begin the installation process.

Offering Strength and Support

Valley Regional Hospital strives to provide compassionate and understanding care to sexual assault survivors through our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program.

The SANE Program at VRH provides survivors of sexual assault with specially trained, female nurse examiners who are experts in forensic evidence collection for court use, should a survivor choose to report the crime. These SANE nurses offer comfort and security while examining survivors to determine the extent of physical injury and necessary treatment.

Our SANE Program partners with the Turning Points Network (TPN), Sullivan County's only sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking crisis center. When a sexual assault survivor arrives at VRH, we immediately notify TPN, which then assigns an advocate to assist and support the survivor. The survivor also has the right to decline speaking to the advocate,

and those wishes are always respected.

The care, patience, and respect SANE nurses bring to their work—in tandem with advocacy from TPN—can have a lasting positive effect on a survivor of sexual assault.

"[My SANE nurse] was amazing...she was able to do the exam without making me feel worse," says a sexual assault survivor. "She explained everything she was doing and didn't try to rush me. And I'll always be grateful to TPN for being with me at the hospital. They helped me through the most traumatic night of my life."

For more information, visit www.VRH.org, select "Medical Services A-1" under the "Medical Services" heading, choose "Emergency Medicine," and then "SANE Program."

Congratulations, Janet Carroll!

Congratulations to Janet Carroll, who successfully passed her International Association of Nursing Forensic SANE-A (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) examination.

"The SANE-A certification is an earned credential that recognizes the highest standards of forensic nursing for sexual assault nurse examiners have been achieved," says Lynn Lagasse, RN, nurse manager for Valley Regional Hospital's emergency department. "Janet brings a wealth of professional knowledge to VRH and our SANE Program."

New TPN Board Member

Claire Bowen, president and CEO of Valley Regional Hospital, was recently elected to a three-year term on the Board of Directors for Turning Points Network.

Expanding to Meet Your Needs



In July 2008, Valley Regional Hospital began the largest construction and renovation project in the hospital's 115-year history.

To meet the growing needs of the community, the project will upgrade 54,000 square feet of the hospital to improve patient services. In total, the project will take two years to complete and cost \$22.5 million.

Providing Patient-Centered Care

A major enhancement of the renovation project will ensure all patients have private accommodations during their stay at VRH.

"In both our intensive care and medical/surgical units, private rooms and private bathrooms were cited by patients in patient satisfaction surveys as very important," says Claire Bowen, president and CEO of VRH. "Patients and family members also will see more family-centered amenities available, such as a family lounge and kitchen facility."

Along with enhancing patient comfort, private rooms benefit patients in a variety of ways, which includes

decreasing the transmission of infections as well as reducing medical errors.

"Having private rooms cuts down on the spread of germs from patient to patient," says Heather Rousseau, infection prevention director at VRH. "We expect to see a drop in our already-low infection rate once these rooms become available to our patients. Patients also can be assured their medical information remains confidential and their loved ones can actively participate in the healing process."

Emergency Department Upgrades

Once the renovation project is complete, the emergency department (ED) will expand its size by 50 percent and be relocated to the southside of the hospital campus.

"By relocating the ED in close proximity to our radiology, laboratory, and surgery units, we can better serve our patients," says Charles Sawyer, MD,

emergency department medical director at VRH. "From the minute a patient enters the door, we will have improved, efficient access to all the resources we need to correctly diagnose and treat his or her illness or injury."

The renovated ED will include two triage rooms, six standard treatment rooms, a pediatric treatment room, two trauma rooms, two observation rooms, and a psychiatric support room as well as a decontamination facility in case of a chemical or biological disaster.

Ease in Finding Your Way

The hospital also will feature a new main entrance on the southside of the campus, next to the expanded emergency department. A redesigned registration and admitting area will provide greater efficiencies for staff and ease of use for patients.

"In the past, navigating our hospital facilities was often times confusing with three different entrances," says

Bowen. "Upon completion of the construction and renovations, all patients, regardless of their medical needs, will utilize the main foyer of the new building. We've created a construction plan with an eye to the future and a foundation firmly rooted in the voices of our patients. It's an exciting time for Claremont, and VRH is thrilled to provide a first-rate healthcare facility and employer right in our own community."

To learn more about the construction and renovation project at VRH, visit www.VRH.org, and click on "Read More" under the "Construction Update" tab.



Committed to Your **Rapid Recovery**

Sometimes making a complete recovery can be a difficult journey with unexpected medical challenges. That's why Valley Regional Hospital's rapid response team is there for you when you need them the most.

The rapid response team includes a critical care nurse, respiratory therapist, patient's nurse, and, when appropriate, the emergency department physician.

"We strive to meet your every medical need, whether it's day or night," says

Rakesh Veerareddy, MD, hospitalist at VRH. "The rapid response team will work with your physician or surgeon to ensure you receive timely care."

If at any time during a patient's stay they begin to feel an unanticipated decline or need immediate assistance, the patient and his or her loved ones can call the nurse and request the provider or the rapid response team to immediately reassess health and treatment options.

Providing Appropriate Levels of Care

At Valley Regional Hospital, the medical/surgical unit is here to meet your medical needs. From registered and licensed nurses to physical and occupational therapists, case managers, and social workers, VRH strives to ensure you have the best care possible.

"Our interdisciplinary team works together to help you get back to your life," says Rakesh Veerareddy, MD, hospitalist at VRH. "By offering the proper level of care, we can make the recovery process as efficient as possible."

The different levels of care offered at VRH include:

Acute Care

Acute care focuses on overnight stays for treatment due to an acute illness.

Treatment Room Care

This type of outpatient care is based on a treatment, such as a blood transfusion, which might take a short period of time. The patient usually returns home the same day.

Swing Bed Care

Also referred to as a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), swing bed care is short-term care that assists patients transitioning from acute inpatient care to their homes, another nursing care facility, or a rehabilitative center. Patients may receive physical, occupational, or speech therapy based on their needs, and nurses also help educate patients and their loved ones, giving them the skills they will need for a safe recovery.

Observation Status

This type of outpatient care allows physicians to perform medical tests on patients while determining if patients require more extensive inpatient services, or if they should be discharged with follow-up outpatient care. Patients should bring any medications they are taking when undergoing this type of care.

Telemetry Monitoring

Telemetry monitoring is provided when patients' hearts need to be monitored. Telemetry monitoring uses a portable cardiac monitor, about the size of a calculator, that allows the patient freedom of movement while allowing the healthcare professional to monitor the heart. This service is available in all areas of the medical/surgical unit.

Emergency or Primary? That Is the Question.

When it comes to the health of yourself and your family, any medical condition may seem like it requires immediate care. With overcrowding common in many emergency rooms, however, it's important to know what problems should be seen immediately and which can be treated by your primary care provider.

“It often can be difficult to tell the difference between a true emergency and a less severe medical situation,” says Charles Sawyer, MD, medical director of the Pierce Emergency Center at Valley Regional Hospital. “However, certain conditions warrant immediate attention from a physician as they can indicate a life-threatening problem.”

If you experience any of the following symptoms identified by

the American College of Emergency Physicians, seek emergency care:

- chest or upper abdominal pain
- confusion or changes in mental state
- coughing or vomiting blood
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- fainting or loss of consciousness
- persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- sudden and particularly severe pain
- suicidal thoughts or feelings

- trouble speaking
- uncontrolled bleeding

At VRH, the Pierce Emergency Center is staffed and prepared to handle a wide range of emergency conditions. From cuts to complex illnesses, physicians and staff are dedicated to quality care in a timely manner.

For more information about emergency services at VRH, visit www.VRH.org.

Our Hospitalist: At Your Service

As technological advances enhance healthcare services at Valley Regional Hospital, physician roles at the hospital change as well. With the addition of our first hospitalist, VRH is working every day to improve hospital care.



Rakesh Veerareddy, MD

Our hospitalist, Rakesh Veerareddy, MD, board certified in internal medicine, joined VRH in 2007. In this role, Dr. Veerareddy exclusively cares for the hospitalized adult patients of select primary care providers that made the choice of utilizing the hospitalist for hospital care.

Focused on You

With an office located at the hospital, Dr. Veerareddy can visit patients on the hospitalist service throughout the day, providing continuous care and attention for patients.

“I spend more one-on-one time with patients and their families than a primary care physician would be able to since he or she also has

patients outside the hospital,” Dr. Veerareddy says. “I also collaborate with each patient’s PCP, surgeon, specialist, and nurse to ensure he or she receives full-time attention and care.”

Dr. Veerareddy’s expertise lies in caring for hospitalized patients and any complications that may arise. Other benefits include a hospitalist’s familiarity with policies and procedures at VRH and added time to track and follow up on test results, which can speed overall patient care.

For more information about Dr. Veerareddy or how a hospitalist interacts with your primary care physician, call (603) 542-7771 or visit www.VRH.org.

Cookbook Fundraiser



Get cooking with Connecticut Valley Home Care's new cookbook. Funds raised from cookbook sales will benefit our community health clinics and the Adult Medical Day Out Program and will provide aromatherapy and other items not usually covered by insurance to our hospice clients.

This padded, three-ring binder-style book will withstand years of wear and tear, and with approximately 400 recipes,

dinner will never be dull again. In addition to its endless recipes, your cookbook will include tabbed dividers and 16 pages of helpful cooking tips.

Reserve your cookbook now at a reduced price of \$15.50, or grab a copy when they arrive in November for only \$16.50.

Call CVHC at (603) 543-6800 to preorder your cookbook or to find out where to purchase one after they arrive.

A Helping Hand

In today's troubled economy, many people are finding it more difficult to pay for medical care. If you find yourself in need, you're not alone. Help is available.

To make health care more affordable and accessible to Upper Valley residents, Valley Regional Hospital offers confidential financial assistance and referral services to those who qualify.

If payment of your healthcare expenses could create a financial hardship, our patient accounts

staff will help you apply for financial assistance.

We also will assess your potential eligibility for health insurance coverage through federal or state programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and Healthy Kids, and help you apply if appropriate.

For more information about financial assistance for health care at VRH, call (603) 543-5694 or (603) 543-5693.



Golfers Help Light the Way



Dave Lantz, Kevin Scarlett, Dave Annis, and Mary Campe celebrate a successful long putt by Lantz.

Valley Regional Hospital's 18th Annual Golf Classic at Newport Country Club was a great success. With 30 participating teams, the tournament raised \$18,000 for a new helipad lighting system.

"This year's Golf Classic supported a critical need the hospital has 365 nights of the year," says Claire Bowen, VRH president and CEO, who also participated in the Golf Classic. "We never know when a med-evac helicopter will be needed, so permanently erected

lights for nighttime arrivals are a tremendous gift."

Participants enjoyed a fun-filled day and walked away from the tournament knowing they helped save lives for years to come.

The Ladies Union Aid Society at VRH will supplement the Golf Classic's earnings with an additional \$9,700 for the new lighting system.

To view photos of this year's winners, visit www.VRH.org and click on "VRH Golf Classic" under the "Get Involved" tab.



This is a
recyclable product.

This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

CVHC Community Flu Shot Clinics

For more information, please call (603) 543-6800.

Claremont Senior Center—Claremont

Thursday, Oct. 15, 9–11 a.m.

Sullivan Nutrition Program—Charlestown

Friday, Oct. 16, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Sugar River Mills—Claremont

Monday, Oct. 19, 10 a.m.–noon

Bannon Pharmacy—Claremont

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 3:30–5:30 p.m.

Earl Bourdon Center—Claremont

Thursday, Oct. 22, 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Old Cornish Town Hall—Cornish

Thursday, Oct. 22, 1–3:30 p.m.

**Valley Regional Hospital Conference Room
#1—Claremont**

Monday, Oct. 26, 4–6 p.m.

Newport Senior Center—Newport

Monday, Nov. 2, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Claremont Senior Center—Claremont

Thursday, Nov. 19, 9–11 a.m.

