

T.H.E

BRIGHTLOOK



A publication for NVRH employees, volunteers, Corporators, & Board Members

Spring 2026

NVRH Stories

Senator Peter Welch pays a visit

Welch visits NVRH to celebrate new funding for NEK pharmacies



Senator Peter Welch arrives at NVRH with Northern Counties Healthcare CEO Chris Towne.

On February 18, Senator **Peter Welch** joined NEK health care providers and community leaders at NVRH to celebrate new federal funding that will help build new pharmacies in Caledonia County.

CEO **Shawn Tester** joined retiring Executive Director of the NEK Council of Aging **Meg Burmeister** along with new Executive Director **Darryl Washington**; Northern Counties Health Care CEO **Chris Towne**; and **Barb Byrne**, Clinical Care Coordinator at NVRH Corner Medical.

Senator Welch recently secured \$1.4 million funding through the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) process for NVRH to address the recent loss of pharmacies throughout the NEK. The shuttering of the downtown Walgreens store in St. Johnsbury left the town with only one remaining pharmacy and the more recent closure of Walgreens in Hardwick has created a

“pharmacy desert.” The closest pharmacy to Hardwick is in Morrisville, about 25 minutes away.

“We have staff who are driving to the pharmacy on a regular basis to pick up prescriptions for patients,” says Towne. “If they don't, it means that they go without the prescriptions.”

Many people, Byrne says, especially low-income seniors, prioritize paying for essentials like food and utilities and cut corners when it comes to prescriptions. Having a pharmacy close to home and building a relationship with pharmacy staff is especially important. “Our patients need affordability and accessibility when it comes to their medications,” she says.

Tester explained that the closure of the pharmacies in St. Johnsbury and then Hardwick had a major impact on community health.

“These funds are going to help solve this problem for our communities and I'm so excited and grateful about that.”

Pharmacies and pharmacists are critical components of in-person delivery of care and advice to people at a moment when they're very vulnerable, Welch explained. “That's why this congressionally directed spending, in response to the leadership of Shawn and Chris, is so important.”

“We're not going to give up on the people here,” he said. “We're not going to give up on doing all we can to make certain that access to a pharmacy is right here in the Kingdom, so that folks here who are working hard and need some medical care can get the care they need.”



Barbara Byrne, Shawn Tester, and Senator Welch.



Advocating for Responsible Health Information Management on Capitol Hill

NVRH's Charmaine Vinton joins other Health Information Management professionals in DC



Left: Charmaine Vinton at Senator Bernie Sanders' office. Right: AHIMA advocates gather in front of the Capitol.

In March, NVRH Director of Health Information Management **Charmaine Vinton** had the chance to travel to Washington D.C. to participate in Advocacy Day with the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). Advocacy Day brought together health information professionals from across the country, all united by a shared goal: elevating the voice of the profession and advocating for policies that strengthen health information management.

Charmaine shared her account of her time on Capitol Hill.

“We began with a deep dive into the 2026 Advocacy Agenda, gaining valuable insights from federal policymakers and industry experts on the current state of health data and what to expect on Capitol Hill. Key topics included:

- The MATCH IT Act: Promoting accurate patient identification to improve data quality and enhance patient safety.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Exploring workforce implications and emphasizing the need for ethical, high-quality data to support responsible AI use in healthcare.

On Day 2, AHIMA advocates headed to Capitol Hill. My state delegation had a full schedule, meeting with House and Senate staffers to provide education on issues impacting both patients and healthcare providers.

We shared real-world examples of how patient matching errors and gaps in privacy standards affect daily workflows and, more importantly, patient outcomes. These conversations reinforced the importance of our role in ensuring accurate, secure, and accessible health information.

Navigating the congressional office buildings, walking through underground tunnels and hearing the constant buzz of activity, was an exciting experience. At one point, I even found myself in a freight elevator, but thankfully still made it to the right tunnel!

I returned from Washington with not only a deeper understanding of the legislative process, but also a renewed sense of purpose. This experience reinforced that the work we do is vital to the healthcare system—and that our voices truly matter.”

A breakthrough for lower back pain

NVRH is the first Vermont hospital to use new procedure to deliver long-term pain relief



Standing Left to Right: Amanda Spencer, Professional Education, Boston Scientific; Dian Roy, RN, Operating Room; Linda Martellucci, (RT)(R)(M); Tracy Robillard, RN, Clinical Leader, Pain Management; Ryan Harte, Territory Manager, Boston Scientific; Bert Fichman, MD, Pain Management; Peter Tomczyk, RN, Director of Perioperative Services. Kneeling in front: Leah Theeman, CRNA t

Exciting news from NVRH Pain Management! Dr. **Bert Fichman** and members of the Pain Management team recently completed the first Intracept nerve ablation procedure ever performed in Vermont. Nerve ablation is a minimally invasive procedure designed to provide long-term relief for vertebrogenic chronic lower back pain by disrupting pain signals to the brain using radiofrequency energy. The outpatient procedure takes about an hour; most patients start to feel better within a couple of weeks and experience significant, lasting pain relief, with benefits lasting for over five years.

Helping Physical Therapy Patients Get Work Ready

Work Hardening program at Dan Wyand, P.T. & Associates helps patients get back on the job



Patients in the Work Hardening program practice pushing weighted sleds, climbing ladders, and lifting boxes.

When someone gets hurt on the job and goes to physical therapy, how do they and their employer know when they're ready to return to work and meet the demands of their jobs safely and comfortably? Dan Wyand, P.T. & Associates is proud to partner with Workability Rehab to provide a Work Hardening program and Functional Capacity Evaluations to the NEK! **Mark Coleman**, OTR/L provides Occupational Therapy services, while **Michael Matteis**, PT, DPT & **Ryan Farley**, ATC, CEAS-1 provide Physical Therapy & Athletic Training services. Patients focus on exercises that rebuild strength, endurance, and functional skills that allow them to perform specific work tasks, from lifting heavy objects to standing for long periods of time or climbing stairs or ladders.

This team approach allows for a multi-disciplinary collaboration at a single location, offering convenience and ease of communication between care providers. The Work Hardening program aims to create a supportive environment that encourages patients on their road to recovery and help them make a safe, confident return back to work!



Patients or providers can contact the Lyndonville clinic at 802-745-1105. To participate in the Work Hardening service, a referral must be submitted by the provider and the patient must have an active Worker's Compensation claim for billing. For FCE (Functional Capacity Evaluations), patient/providers can contact Workability directly at (802) 383-8116.

Mark Coleman, OTR/L, Michael Matteis, PT, DPT, and Ryan Farley, ATC at the gym at Dan Wyand, P.T. & Associates in Lyndonville

Employee News

Meet Jon Hendrickson, NVRH's new Director of Quality & Patient Safety



We're happy to welcome **Jon Hendrickson**, MSN, RN, CEN, CNML to NVRH as our new Director of Quality & Patient Safety. Jon has a Master of Science in Nursing (Leadership & Management) from Chamberlain University and he is currently pursuing a DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice) degree at Capella University.

What drew you to your field?

I entered the medical field at 18 after joining the service. I was a Hospital Corpsman serving with the Marine Corps. I am a Desert Storm/Shield Veteran. Including those years, I have been in medical or nursing for 39 years, with most of my career spent in emergency and critical care settings. What drew me to healthcare was the

opportunity to make a meaningful difference in people's lives during some of their most vulnerable moments. Over the years, I discovered a passion for leadership and quality improvement. I love working with teams to identify opportunities to improve systems, strengthen patient safety, and create environments where both patients and staff can thrive. Quality and patient safety work allows us to look at the bigger picture and build processes that support excellent care every day.

Did you relocate to come here?

I live in Lyndonville. I moved to Vermont 2 years ago while maintaining my residence and business in Fryeburg, Maine. My husband and I own an inn, restaurant, and wedding venue in Fryeburg. We bought in Vermont 2 years ago to start building our retirement life.

What are you hoping to accomplish at NVRH?

I'm looking forward to partnering with the talented staff at NVRH to strengthen our quality and patient safety programs. My goal is to help build systems that support transparency, learning, and continuous improvement while ensuring we provide the safest, highest-quality care possible for our patients and community.

Other interests or hobbies?

I am the 2026 President of the American Nurses Association-Vermont. I like the legislative involvement and advocating for nurses to ensure that we have a voice and say in care delivered. I also have a hobby farm of forty-two animals.

Welcome, Jon—we're happy you're here!

NVRH staff attend "Peer to Boss" training

New leaders learn skills to become more effective managers



Leaders from across the hospital came together in March to participate in Peer Today, Boss Tomorrow, a dynamic training facilitated by Strategic HR Business Advisor **Susan Loynd** (left). This engaging program is designed to support NVRH leaders navigating one of the most meaningful and sometimes challenging career transitions: moving from peer to supervisor.

The training blended relatable scenarios, thoughtful discussion, and real-world tools. From mastering the art of listening to modeling the behaviors they hope to inspire, hospital leaders embraced the opportunity to grow, reflect, and strengthen the foundation of our workplace culture.

Throughout the sessions, participants explored practical strategies for strengthening their leadership presence, including:

- Understanding how workplace relationships evolve when stepping into a supervisory role
- Setting healthy, professional boundaries that build trust and clarity
- Communicating effectively with diverse personalities and work styles
- Leading by example to foster accountability, positivity, and teamwork
- Balancing empathy with expectations as they guide and support their teams

"It was a great experience," said Director of Diagnostic Imaging **Gretchen Renaud**. "There were several valuable takeaways, both for personal growth and for sharing with your team and future leaders."

The training was filled with meaningful conversation, shared experiences, and plenty of “aha” moments—highlighting the dedication NVRH leaders have to personal development and to creating a supportive, consistent, and high-performing environment for all.



Hot off the presses! On March 1, our Director of Medical Staff services **Sarah Emery** published *The Phoenix Queen*, the first novel in The Crow and Anchor Series, a 25-chapter paranormal romance/historical fantasy blend that weaves New England gothic atmosphere with Tudor intrigue. Blending history, paranormal lore, and romance, the novel draws on her lifelong obsession with the Tudor dynasty and her love of New England’s uncanny corners. Learn more at www.sarahemeryauthor.com or follow her on Instagram at [SarahEmeryWrites](https://www.instagram.com/SarahEmeryWrites).

Skills to Spare! Supply Chain Specialist **Nicole Kittredge** was recently named to the Vermont State Women’s Bowling Hall of Fame! Nicole has been bowling at Gold Crown Lanes since she was a child—her mother and grandmother both belonged to bowling leagues there. “I can remember when scores were kept by hand using overhead projectors, paper and pencil,” she says. Nicole’s first national tournament was in 2007 and since then has participated in multiple Open and Women’s National Championships.

These days Nicole bowls 3 nights a week in the winter leagues and once a week in the summer leagues and competes in state and national tournaments throughout the year. Since 2023 she’s been a volunteer Director representing Northeastern Vermont Bowling for the US Bowling Congress and her love for the sport knows no end!

Thinking about picking up bowling? The sport boasts a wide variety of health and wellness benefits. Talk to Nicole!



What our patients are saying...

Read just a few of the wonderful comments we receive every month from NVRH patients!

St. Johnsbury Pediatrics

“Dr Maggie is excellent! Thankful to have her a part of my children's medical care. My concerns are always validated and she is thorough in her work. I always leave with confidence about my children's health after seeing Maggie!

Northern Physical Therapy

“PT was great. Jen was incredible at explaining everything and telling me what I should and should not be doing.”

Ear, Nose & Throat

“My experience was really amazing today! Everyone was super helpful, explained everything thoroughly and was just so nice.”

Volunteers

“The volunteer that met me in the lobby and offered me a ride in the chair to go to X-ray was very nice. I had a knee replaced in January so the ride to x-ray and back was very much appreciated.”

“I loved the volunteer that stayed with me during the process. I was so nervous, but she was very sweet, kind and comforting and her presence was greatly appreciated. The additional tests were quick, and answers were provided very quickly.”

Laboratory

“The tech that drew my labs was very kind & efficient!! Quick & easy!”

OB/GYN

“Dr. Wetherald explained the procedure appropriately, no surprises, clear and concise. Supportive staff. All questions answered. 5 stars.”

Respiratory Therapy

“Eric in RT was very personable. He made me feel at ease. Excellent explaining step by step. I would highly recommend him to anyone.”

On the Calendar

- Advanced Directives Week - April 12 - 17
- Advanced Directives Day – Planning Ahead for Healthcare Decisions: A focus event from Living & Dying Well in the NEK - April 15
- National Nurses Week - May 6 - 12
- Living and Dying Well in the NEK Resource and Education Fair - May 7 at NVRH.
- National Hospital Week - May 10 - 16

NVRH in the News

- VermontBiz – [1.4 M in federal funding to help build pharmacies in Caledonia County](#).
- Yankee Magazine – [The 25 Best Small Towns in New England](#)
- The North Star Monthly – [NEK hospitals are losing millions delivering babies - but they're not backing down from the importance of rural maternity care](#)
- AHA Video – [This is Who We Are: Rural Hospitals Are Lifelines for Communities](#)
- Vermont Public – [Regulators aren't done asking hospitals to cut](#)
- WCAX – [Liaison appointed by state to consolidate health care spending](#).
- VTDigger – [VT targeted in federal investigation of Medicaid, waste, fraud, abuse.](#)
- Rutland Herald – [New VT coalition forms to push for universal health care](#)
- Healthy Choices newsletter — in your mailbox, or [online](#)

Save the Date for NVRH's 18th Annual Gala!

Join us on Friday, August 14, 2026 for a wonderful summer evening in support of your community hospital!

Enjoy an evening filled with bluegrass music, delicious maple-themed fare, refreshing libations, and great company as we come together to celebrate and support the mission of NVRH.

Mark your calendars—more details and invitations to follow!



Meet our Philanthropy Team!

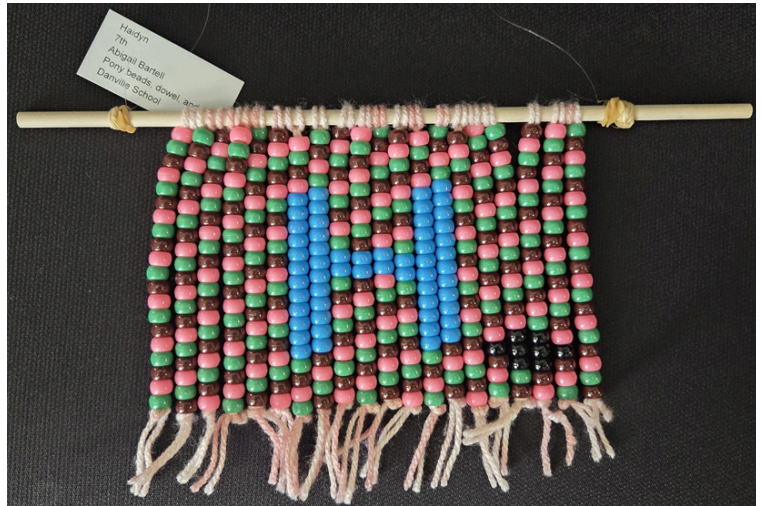


Director of Philanthropy **Kate Olney** (right), who brings extensive experience in healthcare fundraising, and Associate Director **Jenn Layn**, who has dedicated over 15 years to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, are leading efforts to advance philanthropic support for the hospital.

Together they work closely with donors, community partners, and staff to inspire meaningful giving that strengthens NVRH's mission. Gifts and grants play a vital role in expanding access to care, investing in life-saving technology, supporting our healthcare workforce, and enhancing the overall well-being of our community.

Their shared commitment helps ensure that high-quality, compassionate care remains close to home for generations to come.

Currently on Exhibit at the Gray Gallery



The Charles M. and Hanna H. Gray Gallery is hosting a biannual exhibit of classroom artwork from local elementary and middle school students. The artwork was created by students from classes at Barnet School (**Beverly McCarthy**), Burke Town School (**Carol Mason**), Concord School (**Kristen Huntington**), Danville School (**Abigail Bartell**), Lunenburg School (**Jennifer Parker**), Lyndon Town School (**Julie Clements & Jenn Parker**), Peacham Elementary (**Jayne Donahue**), Riverside School (**Abby Johnson**), Sutton School (**Katy Laverdiere**) and St. Johnsbury School (**Evan Jewell & Cassidy Olden**).



The show features a wide variety of student work, from whimsical sculptures to collage, oil pastels, watercolor and tempera paint, masks, beadwork, and more. For patients, staff, and visitors passing through, the array of artworks serves as a welcome antidote to the grey weather outside, filling the hallway gallery with brilliant colors and patterns.

"The students are feeling very proud about having some of their artwork on display at NVRH," says Peacham Elementary School teacher **Jayne Donahue**.

"Having 166 pieces of artwork from many local elementary and middle schools come together on the walls of the gallery is incredibly inspiring," says Gray Gallery curator **Jenn Layn**. "The creativity, color, and variety of mediums bring a wonderful sense of joy and energy to our hallways. Staff, patients, and visitors continually comment on the talent of these young artists and how much the exhibit brightens their day."

The exhibit will be on display at the Gray Gallery located on the hospital's main floor from March 10 to May 4, 2026. To learn more, visit the gallery [webpage](#) or contact Jenn Layn at j.layn@nvrh.org or 802-748-7313.

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Brightlook is a quarterly newsletter, and comes out in March, June, September, and December. Looking to submit a story or a recognition, or have a piece of employee news to share? Contact Sarah Lydon at S.lydon@nvrh.org.



Choosing Health
Northeastern Vermont
Regional Hospital