



Dartmouth
Health

New London Hospital

Newsletter

Spring 2023

Patient Experience



A message from the CEO

The patient experience is comprised of many experiences and touchpoints. It includes the quality of communication between the patient and their providers, the responsiveness of our staff to patient needs, patient comfort and institutional cleanliness, the availability and quality of information and resources, and the overall sense of safety and trust that patients feel while in our care. In this issue, we explore what patient experience means to us at New London Hospital (NLH).

To begin, our mission, vision and values are at the core of what we do in each moment, every day:

OUR MISSION

To continually improve the well-being of individuals in our region by providing high-quality healthcare to our communities.

OUR VISION

We will be the regional leader in delivering excellence in community health, patient experience and quality outcomes as part of a world-class health system.

OUR VALUES

EXCELLENCE



We deliver high-quality, customer-focused care to all we serve.

COMPASSION



We provide person-centered care and treat patients and family members with respect, sensitivity and empathy.

ACCOUNTABILITY



Each of us is responsible for our actions. We are committed to delivering value through responsible stewardship of our financial and human resources.

COLLABORATION



We value the contributions of all patients, staff, families and community partners as catalysts for health improvement in our region.

With the goal of constantly improving and being transparent in the process, these principles are the foundation for creating a positive patient experience which can also directly improve patient outcomes. If a patient is well-informed, respected and comfortable, we know they are more likely to comply with their treatment plans and follow through with recommended care.

We also know how fortunate we are to have an engaged community willing to share their experiences with us—whether positive or negative. This feedback is vital to our success and is encouraged and welcomed at NLH. Every patient can share their experience by taking a post-visit survey or contacting our patient advocate at patient.advocacy@newlondonhospital.org. For those who would like to play a more active role, please read about our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) in this issue. This is a wonderful opportunity, especially for families in our region, to help shape many of our policies and patient resources.

On a final note, we are pleased to share that we are seeing an improvement in our staffing levels, including in Primary Care, after the challenges of the past couple years. Our employee retention rate is also improving as we continue to invest in our employees' futures, ensuring we can continue to provide the highest quality care to our community.

I wish you all a warm and healthy spring and thank you for your continued support of NLH.

Tom Manion, MPA, FACHE, CMPE

President and CEO

New London Hospital

Harnessing the patient voice: Patient & Family Advisory Council

In early 2022, the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) launched with 14 members. Guided by New London Hospital's (NLH) vision, mission and values, PFAC is dedicated to improving the well-being of individuals in our community by infusing the voice of our patients and their families throughout the entire healthcare setting.

PFAC is a diverse group of current or recent patients—or their family members—representing our patient community. The council is a resource for NLH staff, departments and leadership by providing constructive feedback to enhance the patient experience.

“By having patients actively review policy, practice and care, we can help ensure increased patient satisfaction.”

“Historically, healthcare has relied on feedback collected through patient satisfaction surveys or patient advocacy channels that exist within hospitals—after the patient has already received care and left the facility,” explains Bentley Gallo, Patient Experience Manager at NLH. “By developing and sustaining the PFAC, NLH and Newport Health Center are creating a pathway to engage our patients proactively for feedback about the work we do now, as well as about planned projects and improvements. By having patients actively review policy, practice and care, we can help ensure increased patient satisfaction, rating scores for our providers and continued financial success.”

Another area in which PFAC can prove helpful is with language used in healthcare. Often, terms and phrases might seem simple to healthcare professionals, but PFAC advisors can help identify those that are confusing or problematic—and convey what information is most meaningful to our patients.

“In our PFAC meetings with department heads and other personnel, the committee has provided input to make the patient experience even better—which has been openly received, and, where appropriate, implemented,” shares PFAC Members Nancy and Peter Keenan. “This has confirmed our trust in the ongoing implementation of NLH’s mission to provide the best possible patient care and experience, while simultaneously carrying out the hospital’s commitment to the community.”

NLH hopes the work of the PFAC will help improve communication transparency on an organizational level and provide patients a better understanding of how the care model operates.

PFAC is always seeking interested patients and family members of both NLH and Newport Health Center to join us. We are committed to creating space for unique and diverse perspectives to accurately represent patients during these meetings. We are also seeking parents of children receiving care within our organization who are willing to provide feedback on pediatric care.

If you're interested in joining PFAC in our mission to drive improvements to patient experience, contact Bentley Gallo at patient.advocacy@newlondonhospital.org or 603-526-5467.



David Schneider, activities coordinator, NLH

Activities from the heart

On the inpatient units at hospitals, including New London Hospital (NLH), it's common for patients to endure extended stays. The reasons and challenges vary, but the staff's goal is to make sure the patient receives the best care available—which includes ensuring that patients and their families have positive experiences. This is where NLH Activities Coordinator David Schneider shines.

In 2009, David was working on a construction site on Long Island and found himself wanting to do more for others. At a crossroad, he decided to go back to college and enrolled at Molloy University, where he followed his passion by pursuing a degree in music therapy. Soon after, David made his way to New Hampshire, securing part-time opportunities in recovery centers and hospitals. In June of 2022, he became the activities coordinator at NLH.

David is responsible for creating and organizing recreational and therapeutic activities, with the goal of providing an uplifting experience that can assist with a patient's physical and emotional healing. He implements a variety of activities and programs such as games, arts and crafts, music and simple strolls outdoors.

"Every patient is unique and what I am able to do for them is obviously dependent on their condition, but my goal is to find that zone where they can



David with Dana and his mom

benefit from some simple, enjoyable activities,” explains David. “I’m considered the fun guy around here, and I take great pride in spreading joy during some often very challenging times for our patients—whether they are here for one day or 200.”

While David’s day is never routine, there are some daily consistencies around lunch time, when he takes a stroll to the cafeteria with Marianne, a long-term patient of more than 200 days. What follows is an hour-long session of cribbage, during which Marianne enjoys some cards, conversation and relief. Later in the afternoon, David grabs his guitar and heads to Dana’s room, where Dana and his mother are preparing for their afternoon music session. Dana is a paraplegic, and even though he struggles vocally, David is able to help Dana sing

along to some of his favorite music. David even made a songbook— just for Dana—which includes his most loved tunes.

“What David brings to our patients is invaluable,” says Nicole Wakeman, nurse manager of Inpatient Services. “He provides stability and engagement, which especially for our longer term patients is so critical for their mental health.”

It’s been more than 10 years since David changed the direction of his life, which has had countless positive ripple effects. The staff and patients of NLH appreciate David’s meaningful contributions and how he enhances the patient experience—every day.

Recent Additions



Katherine Bidlack recently joined NLH as the development program coordinator. Kate previously served as the associate director of Regional Engagement and Volunteer Management at Dartmouth College, where she skillfully combined project development with vigorous event planning, strategic execution and volunteer engagement. NLH is excited to work with Kate as she will manage and organize all aspects of development events, including comprehensive database management and reporting. She and her family reside in New London.



We are pleased to welcome **Mitch Miller, MD**, to our practices at NLH. Dr. Miller has spent his most recent years in Vermont, where he worked in private practice and for the Southern State Correctional Facility as medical director. "I'm excited to work here at NLH, as it fits with my philosophy of care: encouraging a partnership with patients for better health," says Mitch.



Nicole Morris, APRN, joined the NLH Express Care team in December. Nicole spent 3 years at the Urgent Care at Valley Regional Hospital. She received her master's in Science and Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner at Maryville University in St. Louis, MO. Nicole and her husband have lived in the region for almost 5 years. "The staff I work with is incredible and supportive. It is a pleasure to provide care for this community," says Nicole.

Volunteers: a welcome return

Volunteers are vital to New London Hospital's (NLH) ongoing success. After a challenging three years without them as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, NLH is pleased to welcome volunteers back into the hospital with our current volunteer openings.

We have many rewarding opportunities available at flexible times based on your schedule, in these, and other areas:

- Front Desk
- Gift Shop
- Hospitality Cart for Inpatients
- Emergency Department
- Recycling

As a Front Desk volunteer, some of the tasks include greeting and directing patients, responding to patient inquiries and sharing a friendly smile.

"Greeting and assisting patients as a Front Desk volunteer was one of the most rewarding endeavors I have experienced," says Terri Bingham. "It was special to be a valuable part of our community hospital."

To apply online, please visit our [Volunteer Services page at newlondonhospital.org](#). For more information about volunteering, contact [Volunteer and Guest Services at 603-526-5133](#) or nancy.collins@newlondonhospital.org.

Patient Experience

at Newport Health Center

On the morning of January 26, Doris woke up with debilitating back pain. Her daughter, Tammy, immediately called Newport Health Center (NHC), hoping to see her primary care provider. Scheduling Assistant Pam Thorp shared that her provider was, unfortunately, unavailable—but Pam was able to get Doris in that same day to see Dr. Kricko, who joined the NHC team in the fall of 2022.

Tammy brought Doris to NHC, where she received exceptional care that began at registration. “It speaks volumes about the professionalism of the staff here,”

Tammy shares. Acknowledging that Doris was not easy to communicate with during this appointment due to her pain, she appreciated that Dr. Kricko, “Saw her as a person, not a patient.” He utilized the resources at NHC to assist her, including X-rays and other tests, and then developed a treatment plan to help Doris begin a road to recovery.

Tammy remarks that Dr. Kricko was, “Gentle, and provided compassion and humor,” to her mother in her time of need. She reflects that the entire team at NHC places the patient experience above all else.

What Patient Experience means to us

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“**The Care Management team** at NLH is unique because we live in this community and truly want to see our patients succeed. Our social worker has made it a priority to build strong relationships with area agencies that provide support for our patients struggling with substance use disorder. This collaboration has resulted in multiple patients transitioning directly from the emergency room to a recovery facility, thereby avoiding a lengthy and costly hospital admission.”

Stephanie Jennison, BSN, RN, CCM,
director, Care Management & Utilization Management

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“From blood draws to providing test results, the NLH and Newport Health Center **laboratory** team treats each patient with dignity, compassion and respect. We recently installed a new automatic handicapped accessible door at the NLH outpatient drawing lab—in direct response to the needs of our community.”

Jacob LaBrecque
BS, MLT(ASCP)cm,
Laboratory director

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“We strive to provide comfort for our patients. Infusion has introduced chairside scheduling. A clinical secretary team member goes to the Infusion Suite with a laptop to schedule the patient’s next treatment(s). This builds a relationship with the staff while the patient sits comfortably - instead of standing at the scheduling window afterward.”

Danielle Stone, practice manager, Specialty Services & Express Care

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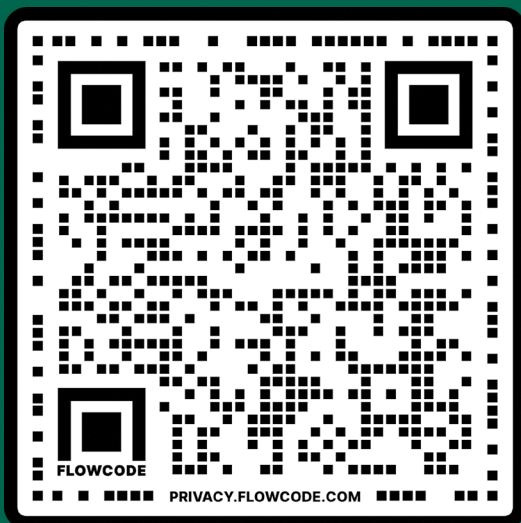
“We know **primary care** openings have been a challenge, so we have implemented a ‘fast pass’ protocol: if a provider has a cancellation, a message goes out to patients on a wait list to access an earlier appointment.”

Matthew Whitcomb, M.Ed, MBA,
director, Ambulatory Services

New London Hospital

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