

Community Health: *At a Glance*

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Gifford Medical Center

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Community Health: At a Glance

Gifford Medical Center has made improving community health by assuring access to affordable and high-quality health care its mission as a hospital. Improving community health through partnerships and community outreach is also a goal of Gifford's 2004-2006 Strategic Plan.

Gifford is accomplishing that mission and goal through clinics, support groups, ongoing programs, one-time events, financial assistance and more. Many of the offerings address disease prevention and management, others benefit elementary and high school students, some support other area non-profit groups and most are offered at a financial loss to the hospital. Altogether, Gifford employees give hundreds of hours each year to the communities the hospital serves and the hospital contributes millions of dollars to those same communities and their members.

What aims to be a complete list of Gifford's community health initiatives follows. Individuals who give much time to community work are also included. The initiatives or individuals are listed alphabetically. Each listing includes a brief description of the community health service and some of the resources Gifford dedicates to it.

Adopt-A-Grandparent

Students from Randolph Technical Career Center visit Menig Extended Care Facility residents once monthly. The visits are advantageous for the senior residents, but also for the high-school age students who enter a relationship with a different generation. Approximately 10 students from two classes participate annually. Menig Activities Director Terry MacDougal coordinates both the Adopt-A-Grandparent program with RTCC students and an intergenerational gathering with Robin's Nest preschoolers, who also visit the seniors. MacDougal spends one hour a month working with RTCC and a half-hour weekly coordinating the visit by Robin's Nest kids.

American Cancer Society Daffodil Days

Gifford employees purchase \$7 daffodil bunches each spring to benefit the American Cancer Society. Gifford Volunteer Services Coordinator Elaine Soule collects orders for the cancer society and notifies hospital employees when the daffodils are ready for pick up in the Garden Gate Gift Shop. Soule spends three to four hours annually on this project, which raises about \$150 annually for the American Cancer Society.

Art Gallery

Organized by Gifford Volunteer Services Coordinator Elaine Soule, the Gifford Art Gallery offers a free art show for patients, visitors and the public alike. The art displays rotate about every six weeks and are announced as free and open to the public in local and regional arts listings. The announcements are generated by the hospital's Marketing Department. Soule spends about five hours monthly organizing the exhibits and reception, for which Gifford provides punch and cookies.

Auxiliary

The Gifford Auxiliary is an independent organization providing an immeasurable service to Gifford and the public through the Thrift Shop. The Auxiliary is made up of 110 members and at the close of the 2006 fiscal year on March 31 had grossed \$162,796 through primarily Thrift Shop revenues. After expenses, the Auxiliary netted \$107,350, of which \$84,600 went to hospital projects, scholarships and donations and \$22,750 remained in balance. Gifford employees and the facility support the Auxiliary's work, providing technical assistance and oversight advice as well as meeting, dining and Thrift Shop space.

Backs In Action

Gifford physical therapist and a dietitian periodically offer eight-week Backs In Action classes for people with or at risk for osteoporosis and back pain sufferers. The hour-long classes offer help with posture, balance, back protection and walking as well as providing osteoporosis information. The free classes were funded by Gifford's Community Health Foundation in 2005 (\$2,000) and 2006 (\$1,200).

Barron Men's Screening Program

In 2004, Gifford Medical Center received a generous, anonymous donation in memory of Joyce Rolfe Barron, a former Rochester resident. Working with the Barron family, Gifford began offering free heart disease, prostate cancer, colon cancer and skin cancer health screenings for older men in the communities we serve. During 2005, three men's health screening clinics were held at Gifford's Bethel, Randolph, Chelsea and Rochester clinics. The clinics attracted 70 men. The Barron family, other donors who designated their gifts to men's health and the Gifford Foundation (\$15,000) gave \$27,688.50 between Sept. 2004 and June 2006, and \$7,023.85 was expended over the same time period.

Bereavement help

Gifford provides bereavement packets to individuals staying in Gifford's Garden Room at the end of life and to their families. The packets provide direction for last wishes and comfort in grief. They cost \$1,600 and take 100 hours in staff time to produce. The final version was created in 2006. Bereavement mailings are also planned to help family members after they have left the hospital and returned home. Eight hours Marketing Assistant Julie Nelson's time so far has gone toward the creation of these.

Bicycle safety

Gifford Medical Center provides bicycle helmets at our cost (\$8.50 each) to area children as a safe riding initiative. Forty-one helmets were sold between October 2005 to Aug. 1, 2006, with a primary care nurse spending 15 minutes with each child to fit the helmet. The hospital has also donated a dozen helmets to the Chelsea Spring Festival and a heavily attended spring bike safety fair held here at Gifford and involving primarily Randolph Elementary School children in 2006. Dr. Kevin McNamara, a podiatrist, also gave nine hours to leading bike safety courses in Barre Town, Chelsea and Washington village elementary schools in 2006. Dr. McNamara offers the courses annually to schools that apply.

Birthing classes

To fill a void in birthing classes available at the hospital, Gifford Care Manager and registered nurse Nancy Clark on June 21, 2006, began giving birthing classes to expectant mothers and their coaches Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. Five mothers-to-be and coaches took advantage of the first free five-week class. A second was scheduled to begin Aug. 16 with another five couples. Clark spends three hours weekly on the classes, when they are in session.

Breast care

Gifford Medical Center has been successful in winning a \$35,000 Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund grant annually since 2002. The goal of the grant is to increase awareness of the lifesaving benefits of early breast cancer detection. Through the grant, Gifford Breast Care Coordinator Jane Harness speaks at senior centers, churches, workplaces and even prisons about good breast health. Since April 2002, the hospital's Breast Health Program has reached more than 5,800 women with information about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, and referred 1,473 women for mammograms and over 1,200 women for clinical breast exams. Gifford additionally annually raises money for a Woman to Woman Fund here at Gifford to help women pay for mammograms. A hospital-organized 5-kilometer run, Making Your Steps Count, is the annual funding source for the Woman to Woman Fund. In fiscal year 2005, \$9,091.55 was expended from the fund. From October 2005 to June 2006, \$8,573.99 was spent.

Buy local

Gifford Chef Ed Striebe in 2006 began buying local. Striebe worked with about nine area farmers to buy locally grown produce – a more expensive endeavor for the hospital but an important way to support local farmers. The produce costs the hospital 30 percent more. In 2007, Gifford will also give the farmers a total of \$1,000 to buy seeds.

Childhood obesity

Gifford's Nutrition and Food Services dietitians in 2006 made fighting childhood obesity a goal. Through a \$4,500 grant from Gifford Medical Center, Dietitians Jennifer Stratton and Laurel Ross organized the Simple Nutrition Awareness Program, reaching 17 children facing obesity and lacking insurance. The free help for the children and their parents included an initial one-hour individual visit and a half-hour follow-up and four

group classes over the summer. The children were given advice on healthy eating and exercise. The grant covered Stratton and Ross' time, reading materials and handouts.

Children's tours

Area teachers contact Volunteer Services Coordinator Elaine Soule for tours of the hospital. Soule with the help of volunteers lead the school groups on tours of the hospital about seven times a year. Each tour takes two hours of Soule's time and ends with cookies and milk in the cafeteria, which is a \$25 expense (\$175 annually).

Complementary care

Massage therapist Elaine Russell and acupuncturist Joshua Singer spend more than 20 hours annually speaking at co-operative markets, women's groups and elsewhere about their techniques. The hospital has also donated gift certificates for massage and acupuncture services to the Bethel schools, Sharon Academy, the Green Mountain Human Resources Organization, a Woodstock event and a golf tournament in support of Vermont Technical College. And Russell and Singer are seeking grants to create a fund that would allow low-income Gifford patients to receive free complementary medicine for pain management. These services are currently not covered by most insurances and, consequently, are only available to those who are able to pay. Several hours of hospital employee time have been invested into writing the grants.

Conference rooms

Gifford Medical Center currently provides free conference room space to non-profit organizations that are not politically or religiously motivated. The conference rooms are continually in use, including by non-profits most days. Catering Coordinator Beverly Phillips receives multiple calls and e-mails daily for this service.

Diabetes education

Gifford Medical Center has offered support for diabetes sufferers for more than 20 years through the Diabetes Clinic, the hospital's Diabetes Nurse Educators and a diabetes education team. A Diabetes Support Group with 15 to 20 members also meets monthly to hear speakers and offer support to one another, and Gifford in 2005 began organizing a free Diabetes Fair in the fall. The 2005 fair, which took 48 hours of Diabetes Nurse Educator Sherry Barnard's time, attracted 50 people. The support group takes Barnard several hours monthly to organize. The hospital also provides meeting space and sends fliers to potential participants. Attendance is free of charge.

Dialing for Health

Eleven Gifford employees in May 2006 called 1,500 area women ages 40 to 65 each of whom hadn't received a recent annual physical, pap smear, mammogram and breast exam. The community outreach effort was paid for by Gifford's grant from the Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund. A similar event was held in August 2006.

Emergency Medical Technician training

Gifford Emergency Department Nurse Manager Maureen Heyder in 2006 began offering education to White River Valley Ambulance EMTs at their Bethel facility. Heyder began

with a two-hour discussion and slide show on new stroke protocols. Other similar discussions with Heyder and Emergency Department staff will be provided for free as needed.

Flu clinics

Annually prior to the winter flu season, Gifford Medical Center holds flu clinics at its outlying clinics and Randolph primary care office for those in need of a flu shot. Gifford purchases the shots and in 2005 asked clinic participants to donate \$10 each to be used toward Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The hospital collected \$4,863.75. Gifford employees spent nearly 100 hours planning for the clinics and providing the shots. The 2005 clinics cost the hospital a total \$18,594.37 for the shots, staff time and refreshments. Prior to the 2006 clinics, flu shot reminder cards were created and will be sent to high-risk patients.

Free care

The Gifford Affordable Care Program, the hospital's charitable care program, wrote off \$651,994 in charges for care to patients in 2005, or about 1.4 percent of the hospital's total gross revenue. The hospital also wrote off \$756,000 in bad debt and \$3,192,000 in costs that exceeded federal and state Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. Altogether, the hospital forewent \$4,380,000 in costs in 2005. The hospital has budgeted for and is expected to continue to provide similar levels of free and uncompensated care in 2006 and going forward. Through the Affordable Care Program, the hospital pays 20 to 100 percent of patients' medical bills based on patients' incomes and assets.

Gear-Up

Gifford's Gear-Up Committee promotes employee health and wellness through primarily encouraging exercise. Pharmacist Jane McConnell and Vice President of Patient Care Services Linda Minsinger each contribute several hours weekly toward Gear-Up activities, which spill over into the community. In May 2006, an event called Make Tracks was held to encourage community members' health through walking. Walking maps were distributed and prizes awarded.

Health Connections

Part of the Vermont Coalition of Clinics for the Uninsured, Gifford's Health Connections Case Manager Michele Packard assists the un- and underinsured with health referrals and helps them with needed services, including assistance with state health insurance applications, accessing medications through a prescription voucher program with Brooks Pharmacy, emergency dental needs, and accessing financial help through sources including Gifford's free care program, the state, Ladies First and Gifford's Woman to Woman fund. The dental program helps those entering Gifford's Emergency Department with tooth pain get an appointment with a dentist and helps pay for the dental service. The majority of the Health Connections program and services are grant funded, including 80 percent of Packard's salary. Gifford pays the remaining 20 percent. Gifford employee, Billing Assistant Cheryl McRae, spends time doing affordable care patient billing. Packard sees up to 500 applications a year for affordable care options at Gifford. Gifford

also provides Health Connections office space, phone service, a computer and technical help.

Healthier Living Workshops

Designed through the state of Vermont, Gifford has held one Healthier Living Workshop and committed to hold at least three others by the summer of 2007. The free workshops aimed at helping chronic disease sufferers manage their disease last two-and-a-half hours and continue for six weeks. Diabetes Nurse Educator Sherry Barnard spends two to eight hours a month coordinating the workshops. Gifford also provides meeting space and creates advertising for the workshops.

Infant CPR

Operating Room Registered Nurse Reba Hill and other instructors provide CPR classes to interested new mothers either at the Birthing Center following their babies' births or during their pregnancy. Promoted through the obstetrics/gynecological office, the service is free to new or expectant mothers. Hill or another instructor, who is also a Gifford nurse, spends about an hour with each new mom. About 50 mothers (and the occasional father) a year are taught infant CPR.

Interfaith Caregivers

A non-profit organization helping seniors live independently, Interfaith Caregivers includes an injury prevention program aimed at evaluating homes for fall risks and then eliminating those risks; and two different buddy systems, one that has volunteers bringing seniors to cultural events at Chandler Music Hall in Randolph and a second that helps seniors with home gardens. Gifford Medical Center provides Interfaith Caregivers Director Sandy Singer and volunteers with 10 hours a week of office space, phone and Internet access, fax and photocopying machines and technical help. The hospital in 2006 additionally provided the organization a \$10,000 Community Foundation Grant to support the Home Safe Home injury prevention program.

Interviewing skills

Gifford Human Resources Generalist Michelle Buckman visits Randolph Technical Career Center business students at their school to discuss interviewing techniques aimed at helping the students enter the workplace. The students also visit Buckman at Gifford for mock interviews. Buckman spends about 20 hours annually on this project and would like to expand it to include a Randolph Union High School class.

Job shadowing

The Robin's Nest Child Enrichment Center each year welcomes three to five Randolph Technical Career Center students interested in careers in child care in for job shadows. The students spend three days at the center, seeing the child-care center operate firsthand. A teenager through Easter Seals also spent the summer of 2006 at The Robin's Nest for a longer-term job shadow, or internship.

Joseph Pelletier

Gifford pediatrician Dr. Joseph Pelletier for the last two years has helped teach puberty/sex education to fifth and sixth grade boys at Randolph Elementary School. Dr. Pelletier spends one morning in April annually answering questions and talking about development to the students. He also participated in Family Reading Nights at the elementary school, talking two nights for two hours each about why reading is important for a child's development and why too much television can be detrimental.

Kenneth Borie

Gifford Family Physician Dr. Kenneth Borie speaks annually to interested area elementary schools on smoking prevention – a talk he's titled Tar Wars. Dr. Borie has given these talks for 10 years, but in 2006 did not find schools in need of the talk. He typically talks to two or three schools annually, spending a total of five hours on this community service. Dr. Borie is also a volunteer physician at the Peoples Health and Wellness Clinic in Barre, providing the low-income free care once every six weeks for two hours in the evening. He also serves on the board of the White River Craft Center, is president of Vermont State Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, teaches Civil War medicine to the Tunbridge school and was founder of Gifford's Chun Classic charity golf tournament.

Lactation support

Gifford Care Manager Nancy Clark offers free lactation support for mothers who choose breastfeeding. The support is offered to inpatients and outpatients, who are invited to see Clark for support Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, before, during and after delivering their baby. Clark spends 10 hours a week offering the free lactation support.

Lifeline

The Gifford Foundation in 2005 provided Randolph Rotary Lifeline \$4,000 to install Lifeline systems in needy community members' home. Lifeline gives seniors, those living with chronic disease and the disabled access to help through the push of a button on a necklace, bracelet and soon a watch. Gifford partners with the Rotary to provide this essential service that allows 157 of our community members to live independently. The Marketing Department in 2006 was helping Lifeline promote the service through Gifford's Web site and a press release.

Linda Minsinger

Linda Minsinger, Gifford's Vice President of Patient Care Services, donates about 100 hours of her time monthly to a host of area activities and boards to benefit the overall health of the community. She serves as Randolph Union High School board chairwoman, a commitment that takes about 15 to 20 hours a month of her time; she has been president of the Randolph Area Food Shelf for the last 10 years, dedicating 10 hours a month to feed the area's hungry; she is president of the Randolph Senior Citizen Center, dedicating 40 hours a month to the senior center; she spends up to 20 hours a month serving on multiple housing boards that benefit seniors and the disabled; she works with the White River Valley Ambulance Board of Directors about four hours a month; and spends another approximately four hours a month on a regional emergency preparedness

committee. At Gifford, about 5 percent of her time is spent writing grants, such as the Avon grant; she spends several hours a week on employee wellness through the Gear-Up Committee; assists with flu clinics; and spends another 80 hours a year giving about 300 vaccinations to Vermont Castings and DuBois & King employees, Joslin House residents and hospital employees.

Louis DiNicola

Gifford Medical Director and Pediatrician Dr. Louis DiNicola gives talks on child abuse and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome to family physicians and social workers statewide, volunteers at schools, attends care conferences at local schools, serves on the executive board of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and will soon be its vice president, and works with the state through an AAP task force to improve lead screening in children. His AAP activities take about two hours of his time monthly. He gives 20 hours annually to child abuse and SIDS talks, and in the summer of 2006 spent four hours speaking to the Central Vermont Community Action Council learning center for Head Start home visitors in Barre.

March of Dimes

A group of Gifford Medical Center employees led by team captain Professional Coder Tammy Hammond each year walks in support of the March of Dimes. In 2006, about 15 Gifford walkers did the 5-mile loop in Randolph Center, raising \$1,289 in sponsorships for March of Dimes. Gifford received a second place corporate team award for its fund-raising effort. Hammond also organized Blue Jeans for Babies, a March of Dimes program that collects money (\$5 a person) in exchange for the privilege of wearing jeans to work for a day. Gifford endorses Hammond's Blue Jeans for Babies work, which raised \$350 in 2006.

Mental health

Gifford Medical Center works with both the Clara Martin Center and Otter Creek Associates to ensure residents in the hospital's service area have mental health care available to them. Providing mental health care at the primary care clinics removes some of the stigma associated with seeking mental health counseling and avails more people to the service, Gifford Medical Director Dr. Louis DiNicola noted in a July 2006 *Valley Business Journal* article. Creating the arrangement with Otter Creek took about 100 hours of employee time and cost thousands in start-up costs, such as office space for the first year and furniture.

Occupational health

Bethel Health Center Family Nurse Practitioner Eileen Murphy has visited area businesses with Breast Care Coordinator Jane Harness and Laboratory Technician Susan Curtis to provide free health screenings and counseling. In fall of 2005, the trio visited both Stanley Tool in Pittsfield and CFM, the former Vermont Castings, in Bethel. Screenings include hypertension, diabetes, depression and obesity risk assessments. Currently, Murphy, Harness and Curtis work primarily with Vermont Law School, visiting the school once annually for six hours over two days. Dr. Robert Kiess, a Sharon primary care physician, provides flu shots to the law school. And Linda Minsinger, vice

president of patient care services, gives vaccinations annually to CFM and DuBois & King employees.

Parent to Parent of Vermont

Parent to Parent of Vermont is a non-profit organization providing support to families with children suffering from chronic illnesses and disabilities. That support includes referrals to dentists who take kids with special needs, emergency childcare and funding for families traveling to conferences. Grant-funded, Hilde Hyde provides that help 25 hours a week here at Gifford and also at a Bradford location. Gifford provides Hyde and Parent to Parent free office space, phone, technical support and conference room space.

Parenting classes

A new parents group held each Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon in one of Gifford's conference rooms offers new parents information on infant growth and development, sleep counseling, lactation support for breastfeeding moms, infant massage and exercise and much more. Organized by Gifford Care Manager Nancy Clark beginning in the summer of 2005, the support group is free to new parents and takes about three hours a week of Clark's time.

Prescription education

Hospital Pharmacist Jane McConnell visits older community members where they gather and live to speak about prescription drug safety and answer the many questions seniors have about medications. In the last year (2005-2006), McConnell has visited the Randolph Senior Center and the Red Lion Inn and Randolph House elderly housing complexes, spending about an hour to an hour-and-a-half at each location. McConnell will visit any facility or organization that calls for this type of talk.

Reach Out and Read

Families visiting Gifford's primary care offices for well-child visits are given children's books – nearly 900 annually. Volunteer Services Coordinator Elaine Soule spends about five hours monthly making sure the Randolph and outlying primary care clinics have books to give. Dr. Louis DiNicola is the medical advisor to the program. The books are purchased with a grant and up to \$2,000 a year from the Gifford Auxiliary.

Robert Kiess

Dr. Robert Kiess, a primary care physician at Gifford's Sharon Health Center, has spent about 50 hours doing educational talks at a host of locations, including the Woodstock Rotary; the White River Junction Rotary; senior centers in Strafford, South Royalton, Woodstock, Tunbridge/Sharon and Chelsea; and Woodstock Terrace Assisted Living.

Senior center

Gifford Licensed Nursing Assistant Becky Flint offers seniors help with their foot care, such as toenail trimming, twice monthly for two hours each at the Randolph Senior Citizen Center. Seniors are charged \$10 each, which the hospital and senior center split. The fee falls far short of Gifford's expense. Once monthly, two Gifford employees – often senior managers – volunteer a couple hours of their time to serve lunch to seniors at

the Randolph Senior Citizen Center. On July 28, 2006, Chef Ed Striebe brought Gifford's local and fine cuisine to the senior center. The hospital provided all the food and prepared the meal for the seniors. Striebe would like to provide this service two times a year. And Gifford Vice President of Patient Care Services Linda Minsinger serves as Randolph Senior Citizen Center president.

Smoking cessation

Smoking cessation and smoking prevention are goals of Gifford Medical Center through its Community Tobacco-free Coalition and Gifford Tobacco Cessation Program. Financed by state tobacco settlement money, Susan Delattre serves as coordinator of the coalition and she and Kim Hannon-Brobst co-coordinate the cessation program. The cessation program provides information and help on stopping smoking through classes and one-on-one coaching. The coalition's focuses are prevention, publicizing smoking cessation efforts and reducing second-hand smoke. Gifford supports Delattre and Hannon-Brobst's work with office space, computers and technology help, phones, postage and supervision under Vice President of Patient Care Services Linda Minsinger.

Sports medicine

The Sharon Health Center's sports medicine doctors, namely Drs. Rob Rinaldi, Hank Glass and Robert Kiess are active in the sports community. In 2006, they did an "Ask the Doctor" seminar and booth in Woodstock. That effort included Gifford's massage therapist and acupuncturist and took about 12 hours of employee time. Dr. Rinaldi alone volunteers more than 200 hours annually to Dartmouth College athletics and spends 40 hours a year visiting local schools, discussing sports medicine. The sports medicine team provided medical coverage for the Vermont 100 Mile Endurance Run, which involved more than 200 runners in July. Drs. Rinaldi, Glass and Kiess and Medical Assistant Tracy Jennings all donated considerable time (each working 11 to 24 hours straight to help injured runners). Their families also helped out, and the hospital donated medical supplies.

Travel immunizations

Gifford Quality Management, in the past through Infection Control Practitioner Denise Simpson, provides free advice to travelers on which immunizations they should receive, particularly before overseas trips. Simpson received eight to 10 phone calls from Gifford patients seeking such advice, which Simpson spent about an hour-and-a-half each researching on the Internet and detailing in a report to the patient's Gifford primary care physician.

Women's health

Dr. Ellamarie Russo-DeMara, Gifford associate medical director of obstetrics/gynecology, in the spring of 2005 wrote an article for the Prime Time Journal entitled "Alternatives to hormone replacement therapy," in May 2005 spoke about cardiovascular fitness to a walking group meeting at the Randolph Elementary School and in July 2005 discussed holistic medicine with the Daughters of the American Revolution at a meeting at Gifford. Dr. Russo-DeMara spent about four hours preparing

for and delivering each talk and invested 10 hours into researching, writing and editing the newspaper article.

Compiled in July 2006. Last updated Sept. 6, 2006. Using known building maintenance costs and average salaries for doctors and non-doctors, Gifford's Community Health efforts in 2006 totaled more than \$4.7 million, the majority of which was free and uncompensated care.

Portions of this plan will be out-of-date as of 2007 as employees and programs change. A complete update is planned in the summer of 2007. Call Robin Palmer at (802) 728-2284 or e-mail rpalmer@giffordmed.org to learn more.

