Dear Community Health Family,

As we look ahead to 2023, we marvel at our tenacity, endurance and optimism. Many families are gathering for the first time in two years by making plans to travel, as well as return to the community events and celebrations that warm our spirits in these winter months.

Community Health understands the power of family and community as we continue to connect with the many organizations that provide support and care when you are most in need. In 2023, we will be partnering with over 25 community organizations by supporting everything from road races and walks for health and wellness awareness to programs for homelessness, domestic violence and child abuse prevention. Watch for the popular Come Alive Outside Winter Passports to enjoy the outdoors with your family. In January, an Alzheimer’s support group will gather at our Allen Pond location, welcoming caregivers and families to a safe supportive place for conversation and exchange of ideas. Join us.

Please join us to honor the dedication and kindness of one of our most celebrated providers. Dr. Hans Peter Diercksen is retiring. We are so grateful for his years of service to Community Health and to the community.

Celebrate with us by being safe and acknowledging the limitations you might have during winter parties and gatherings. Get your vaccines. Cook up healthy meals. Be good to you. We are always here to support you and your entire family.

Warm regards

Mike Gardner
Community Health CEO

Creek Road, Clarendon, VT
ALZHEIMER’S SUPPORT GROUP

Community Health’s Alzheimer’s Support Group will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month at Community Health in Rutland.

Mark the Date –
The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 4pm at Community Health Allen Pond, 71 Allen Street, Rutland, Suite 403. Future meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month.

Claudia Courcelle, Director of Care Management at Community Health, and her team of care managers have organized a Rutland County Alzheimer’s support group aimed at helping families and caregivers. Three Community Health care managers – Kelsey Bathalon, BSN, RN, Margaret Thompson, LPN, and Russ Webber, LPN – will manage the support group meetings.

In the next three years, Vermont is projected to see a 30% increase in people over the age of 65 who are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. Rutland County has the highest number of people 85+ years old.

Ask your Community Health provider for information about the Alzheimer’s support group. For more information call our Patient Access Center toll free at 888-898-8707 or locally at 802-779-9169.

The Vermont Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association provides educational materials and training for support groups like the one at Community Health. Learn about these other resources:

Alzheimer’s Helpline 800-272-3900 – A unique resource for caregivers, family members and anyone who needs information about Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, 24/7

Caregivers Forum A discussion board for caregivers.

Community Resource Finder Support groups & resources.

CARE MANAGEMENT

It had been close to three years since Craig Chambers had been outside the confines of his Castleton apartment. Watching him emerge from his home after the years of isolation was not just heartwarming. It was a relief. “We worked closely with Craig,” said Laurel Burns, RN and Community Health Care Manager. “We developed a team with community partners, guided by H. Peter Diercks, MD, Craig’s Community Health primary care provider.” The Care Management team developed a plan to connect with his social worker along with his medical and behavioral health providers. Because of Chambers’ limitations and health issues, it was complicated. But persistence and a focused care management team produced results – a ramp and a motorized wheelchair.

Chambers’ story is one of many challenges that Community Health’s 33 Care Managers encounter every day. Care Managers, available at all Community Health locations including primary care, pediatrics, behavioral health and skilled nursing facilities, link the continuum of care to wellness, health management and address social barriers like transportation, safe housing, education, language and literacy skills that complicate those with medical complexity even more.

Care Managers fill in those gaps of care by providing resources, services and care coordination through working closely in the community with the Community Health practice site teams and providers.

With Baby Boomers coming of age, there will need to be innovative approaches to care such as technology in home care, communal living, telemedicine, remote work and home visits by providers. And that is where care management comes in. “Our team will continue to serve as a primary resource for our very complicated patient population that continues to grow,” said Claudia Courcelle, Community Health Director of Care Management. “We will work collaboratively with our community stakeholders and our Accountable Care Organization (ACO), OneCare Vermont, to provide the highest level of care to our patients and support the needs of their families to serve in their health promotion.”

Ask your Community Health provider if Care Management would help you address your health challenges.

Two Pediatric Care Managers Certified as Lactation Counselors

Community Health understands that every new mom faces challenges with breastfeeding.

Two of community health’s pediatric care managers, Melissa McLeod, RN, CCM, CLC and Megan Smits, RN, CCM, CLC, are certified lactation counselors (CLC) who are available to support families who are thinking about breastfeeding or have questions or problems with breastfeeding.

Our counselors have received training and competency verification in breastfeeding and human lactation support, including assessing the latching and feeding process, providing corrective interventions, counseling mothers, understanding and applying knowledge of milk production including in special circumstances and other commonly encountered situations.

“We also can support families in obtaining breast pumps, accessing WIC support, weight checks,” said McLeod. CLCs work as part of the health care team, ensuring appropriate referrals and recommendations and provide education, counseling and clinical management.

McLeod and Smits are available by appointment at Community Health Pediatrics or at any of our practices. Ask your primary care provider or call Community Health Pediatrics for more information at 802-775-9121.

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Kayla Champine, MS, LCMHC, NCC, is a licensed pediatric social worker at Community Behavioral Health Allen Pond. She joins Behavioral Health from Rutland Mental Health where she was a school-based clinician at Rutland City Middle School. There she worked with children during the pandemic by helping them adjust through the chaotic transitions between remote learning and returning to the classroom. “Covid has taken such a toll on mental health,” she said. Champine specializes in treating trauma, family conflict and anxiety.

“My family is my passion,” she said, spending weekend time with her husband, young daughter and Tucker, a black lab/Saint Bernard. Born in Middlebury, Vermont, Champine grew up in Connecticut, but moved back to Vermont where she earned a Master’s Degree in clinical psychology from College of St. Joseph. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in psychology from University of Hartford. Surrounded by family in Vermont, Champine looks forward to the winter holidays.

Abigail “Abbie” Farrell, MSW, joins Community Health Behavioral Health as a therapist splitting her time between Allen Pond and North Main Street, Rutland practices. She earned a Master of Social Work from University at Albany and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Keene State College with a minor in additions. As part of the Master’s Degree program, Farrell interned at Community Health Behavioral Health’s MAT (Medicated Assisted Treatment) and addiction programs. She is in the process of obtaining licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW) certification.

A Vermont native and graduate of the Rutland public schools, Farrell returned to Community Health after graduation because of the organization’s overall mission and philosophy of looking at the person as a whole. Farrell said she’s always wanted a dog, and hopes to get one soon.

S. Eli Brannon, MSN, AGACNP-BC, board-certified nurse practitioner, has joined Community Health’s Nursing Home Service Line at The Pines at Rutland Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation.

A graduate of Walden University’s Master of Science in Nursing program, Eli sub-specialized in adult acute care and has worked most recently as an RN at Rutland Regional Medical Center’s Emergency Department. Eli earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, as well as a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Castleton University.

Growing up in Vermont, Eli likes to cook and enjoys the outdoors, camping and kayaking with his husband, Tyler and rescue pup, Casserole. Eli appreciates Community Health’s workplace values and community interaction. A Rutland resident, he “likes being part of the community and making a difference.”

Eli, whose professional focus is on the medical management of the adult and geriatric populations, states, “I hope to provide patients with exceptional, compassionate care by making them feel comfortable and included in the care that I provide.”

Kathleen Huestis, MD, joins Community Health Castleton as a primary care provider for children and adults of all ages. Raised in the mid-Hudson Valley, Dr. Huestis practiced most recently at the Saratoga Hospital Medical Group in Wilton, NY. She earned her Doctor of Medicine at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and a Bachelor of Science in biology at Cornell University. In addition to primary care, she has had experience with hospital, nursing home and emergency department care, as well as women’s health and geriatrics.

Dr. Huestis’ philosophy of care focuses on listening to patients and developing a therapeutic relationship. “I want them to understand I care about their health and want to do what is best for them and help them do what they want to do for their health,” she said. “I like the name Community Health. It shows me where the priorities are with a mission statement that includes accountability, service, integrity, respect, teamwork and excellence.”

Dr. Huestis enjoys hiking and downhill skiing, and spending time with her husband and two young children. She enjoys choir singing and sings with the Skidmore College Choir. She also enjoys learning new languages and is currently studying Spanish, Mandarin and French.

Maria Durkee, MS, RDN, CD, is a registered dietitian based out of the Castleton practice. She previously worked as a freelance dietitian at hospitals and for organizations in the Vermont/New York region. A Granville and Hartford, NY native and lifelong patient at Community Health Mettowee, Durkee provides clinicians and patients throughout the Community Health network with expertise in nutrition education and assessment.

Durkee holds a Master’s in applied nutrition and a Bachelor’s Degree in nutrition science from Russell Sage College. After college she returned to her roots. “I always wanted to work back at home, as there are not many dietitians here. It’s something that’s needed in the area,” she said.

Durkee loves sports including swimming, soccer, running, hiking in the Adirondacks and in Vermont when she’s not cooking, baking or gardening. She’s working on training her German shepherd, Lina. “I believe that nutrition plays a crucial role within our overall health and wellbeing,” she said. “My goal is to provide individualized nutrition education and counseling to help my community achieve and maintain their best health.”

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Adelaide Salley, LICSW, joins Community Health’s Behavioral Health team as a therapist at Community Health Shorewell and virtually via telehealth. She specializes in treatment of trauma for all age groups. After four years in private practice, she returns to Community Health excited to get back to the team environment and to colleagues. Salley earned a Master’s Degree from the University of Chicago’s School of Social Service Administration, a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from Drew University and a Certificate in Traumatic Studies from the Trauma Resource Institute. Her philosophy of care is “patient centered, keeping therapeutic relationships central to how we bring about change in real time, working with people to build and learn trust and safety with others and themselves.”

She and her husband have a black lab named Oryx and enjoy traveling (especially to Iceland) and the Vermont lifestyle of hiking and camping. “I can’t really think of living anywhere else,” she said.

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She and her husband have a black lab named Oryx and enjoy traveling (especially to Iceland) and the Vermont lifestyle of hiking and camping. “I can’t really think of living anywhere else,” she said.
Set aside time to relax. Take time here are some simple ways to remain positive & healthy during the winter.

- If you feel lonely, isolated or under pressure, reach out for support and even helping their peers use our app!
- We see the benefit of that in making people comfortable with technology.
- The adult passports are designed to connect adults with nature to increase time spent outdoors, physical activity, and decrease stress and anxiety. Even small amounts of time in nature improve mental and physical well-being, so check the Come Alive Outside website and get your winter passport!

**Adult Passports**

Come Alive Outside Adult Passports are moving to Mobile App! This winter, Come Alive Outside, with support from Community Health, The Bowne Health Trust and Killington Resorts, will roll out a mobile app to track your outdoor and nature-related activities. Paper passports will still be available as well while supplies last.

“With the mobile app technology, we are able to see trends in real time, so we can adjust our programs and keep people engaged and motivated,” said Arwen Turner, executive director of Come Alive Outside.

The Outdoor Passport app is Come Alive Outside’s second mobile application for its programs. App technology was first introduced to CAO’s Mile A Day program. Turner said that many adults who were not comfortable using technology started using the Mile A Day app. “Once they are comfortable with it, we see they are starting to use other apps and even helping their peers use our app! We see the benefit of that in making people comfortable with technology.”

Why is diabetes awareness important to the community?

In Rutland County, 15% of the population has a diabetes diagnosis. In Vermont’s population, 8.8% is diagnosed with diabetes, and an additional 33.6% have a diagnosis of prediabetes. We must identify those patients who are at higher risk of developing diabetes.

Why emphasize education and self-management?

Early identification, intervention and ongoing education are essential. There are four critical times for diabetes self-management education and support services including:

1. At diagnosis
2. Annually and/or when not meeting treatment targets
3. When complicating factors develop, such as financial or emotional distress, a new disease diagnosis or medication issues
4. When transitions in life occur such as recent hospitalization, new physician, new insurance, moving, or experiencing age-related issues

Does self-management work?

Yes! Research has shown that diabetes self-management education can improve A1C levels, lower the risk of complications and improve health outcomes.

Can you describe the diabetes education program?

This year, the Community Health Diabetes Education Program is focused on prediabetes. The goal is to identify those who are at risk of developing diabetes, or those who are already diagnosed with prediabetes. Once patients are identified, they are encouraged to be seen for prediabetes education. This might be education that is provided by one of our diabetes educators or by encouraging patients to participate in a CDC-recognized National Diabetes Prevention Program lifestyle change program offered by My Healthy Vermont.

During an initial education at diagnosis, we look for clues that will influence each individual’s decision-making that may include lifestyle, cultural or religious beliefs, support system, physical limitations, ability to afford prescribed medications, food or housing insecurity, as well as literacy and numeracy.

Education sessions cover monitoring of blood glucose, the importance of staying active, healthy eating, coping skills for living with diabetes, medications, reducing risk factors (quitting smoking, the importance of daily foot checks, prevention of cardiovascular disease) and learning how to solve problems such as recognizing and appropriately treating high and low blood sugar levels. The reality is that over 90% of diabetes care is self-care provided by the patient with diabetes.

Who are the Community Health diabetes educators?

We offer education to patients at several of our practices. Through education, these diabetes educators help empower patients to better manage their diabetes.

Schedule flu shots for you and your family
Sign up for Come Alive Outside’s Winter Passport
Try a new fruit or vegetable winter snack
Call a housebound friend or family member
Attend the Alzheimer’s Support Group on Jan 10th

**MEET MICHIELE REDMOND**

**Community Health’s New DIABETES EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

Beginning in January 2023, Michele Redmond, RN, CDCES, becomes Community Health’s full-time Diabetes Educator and Quality Coordinator. She will be working closely with Care Management by improving and expanding the programs that support diabetes education and self-management. We recently spoke with her about the program.

**Brandon:** Robin Myers, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, CDCES

**Mettowee:** Colleen Bates, MA & Diana Johnson, RN, CDCES

**Rutland:** Maria Bilinski, RN, CCM

**Castleton:** Michele Redmond, BSN, RN, DCES

**Shorewell:** Jean Pringle, LPN, Diabetes Community Care Coordinator

**Rutland:** Claudia Courcelle, BSN, RN, MSA, CCM
Snacks to Brighten a Winter’s Day
By Registered Dietitian Maria Durkee, MS, RDN, CD

I try to always think about how I can add more fruit or veggies into my day. I love to make my own trail mix with a variety of nuts, seeds, dried fruit and some dark chocolate pieces.

I make smoothies with berries (fresh or frozen), a pinch of a banana (fresh or frozen) oats (just regular dry old fashioned), seeds (chia or flax), spinach, zucchini (raw and cubed), nut butter (of choice) and milk (of choice). The spinach and zucchini are not detectable when mixed with all the other flavors. Some avocado pieces can be added to add a creaminess.

“Health is a lifestyle with many components, and I hope to make an impact on others’ lives through the way they nourish their bodies.”

Other snacks I like to have:
- Frozen grapes (put grapes in the freezer, this makes them taste sweeter, like candy!)
- Apple slices with nut butter
- Veggies sticks with hummus or guacamole
- Banana with melted dark chocolate, peanut butter and chopped nuts
- Celery sticks with nut butter and raisins on top

To be more adventuresome, I would recommend Joy Bauer, MS, RDN, CDN cookbook “From Junk Food to Joy Food, All the Foods You Love to Eat Only Better.”

WE’RE HERE TO HELP YOU

Need Medical Insurance?
CALL YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OFFICE
We have certified application counselors at each of our health centers. We can help you review the options and assist you with submitting an application through Vermont Health Connect.

Have Questions About Sliding Scales?
- MEDICAL – Call your local Community Health office
- DENTAL – Email communitydental@chcrr.org

KNOW THESE HELPLINES:
- 911 for Life Threatening Situations
- 988 for Suicide or Mental Health Crisis
- 800-272-3900 Alzheimer’s Helpline