

# Insights

*your health and your hospital*



## Welcoming NMC's New Orthopaedic Surgeon: Dr. Andrew Myrtue

NMC is pleased to welcome Dr. Andrew Myrtue to the Northwestern Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Center, starting in March. Dr. Myrtue earned his medical degree from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and performed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

Dr. Myrtue is retiring from the military after a 30-year career in the US Air Force. Most recently he served as a general orthopaedic surgeon in a military community hospital setting in Omaha, Nebraska. His practice there focused on joint replacement, arthroscopy, sports medicine, hand surgery, and the treatment of fractures.

"I am looking forward to the second chapter of my medical career by transitioning from serving our military community here at Offutt Air Force Base to serving the families of northwestern Vermont," says Dr. Myrtue.

He and his family lived in New England when he was in residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire. He said he loved New England and, when searching for employment after the military, he was intrigued by an opening here at NMC. "After visiting the hospital and the community," he said, "I was sold!"

Dr. Myrtue is passionate about the personal side of providing care to patients. "Despite new technology, new surgical

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**Exceptional Care**  
*{we do that here}*

NMC publishes Insights on a bimonthly basis to help our neighbors have a better understanding of their primary care hospital. If you have questions or comments about this publication, please email [insights@nmcinc.org](mailto:insights@nmcinc.org) or call our Community Relations Office at 524-1280.

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## NMC Raises Minimum Wage to \$14 hour

This year, NMC moved to a \$14 per hour minimum wage out of recognition of the high performance standards carried for all employees. This pro-active increase was recommended by NMC's Leadership Team and approved by the Board of Directors after careful consideration of the following:

- Employee needs for a livable wages,
- The positive impact on patient care brought about by strong staff recruitment and retention,
- Organizational financial health.

NMC's vision is to be "nationally recognized for excellence and value in healthcare, as we partner to improve the wellness of our community and become a destination of choice for patients, staff, and medical staff."

By strengthening our ability to recruit and retain top talent in front-line positions of Patient Care Attending, Patient Access, Environmental Services, Restaurant & Catering, Phlebotomy, Switchboard, etc., NMC is better positioned to achieve "excellence and value" in all we do.

This increase will help prevent quality employees from leaving NMC to take jobs in other industries simply to make ends meet. Reducing turnover means less time and money spent on overtime coverage, recruitment costs, and training new staff. Those savings fund the increase and even more importantly, bring greater continuity to our staff which makes exceptional care easier to provide.

This move to a \$14 minimum for 2020 is part of an overall wage plan that makes the most of NMC's investment in its people. NMC's Leadership Team will not receive raises this year. Organizational performance has not met expectations and those dollars are needed elsewhere in the organization.

Raises for management have been put on hold as NMC watches the finances of the first part of the fiscal to evaluate if raises to this dedicated team are possible. Our staff received 2020 raises effective in January. Staff who were earning less than \$14 per hour were increased to \$14. Those earning above \$14 received merit raises based on their annual performance review level.

Meanwhile, NMC continues to carefully monitor market trends and wage scales and practices to ensure our nurses and our entire staff are competitively and properly compensated for their dedicated service.

"I believe this approach to raises and the new \$14 minimum provides the most appropriate balance between investing in our people and working within NMC's financial means. I am proud of the care this organization delivers and the dedication of our staff and pleased we are able to move forward in this strategic direction," said CEO Jill Berry Bowen, RN.



## NMC to Undergo CEO Transition

In early February, NMC's Board of Directors announced Hospital Chief Executive Officer Jill Berry Bowen, RN plans to transition from her role in 2020 to explore opportunities for the next phase of her career.

"Jill has led NMC through a time of tremendous change and growth, helping position the hospital for a new era of healthcare focused on wellness and prevention, outpatient services and population health," said Janet McCarthy, President of the Board. "The Board is grateful for Jill's vision and remarkable leadership and appreciates her continued support as we look to identify her successor."

Bowen provided outstanding leadership since joining NMC in December 2009 and has helped position NMC for continued growth and success. She has led a number of initiatives that helped upgrade and better align the hospital with the healthcare industry's trend toward population health and value-based care. In particular, NMC is grateful for her efforts in recruiting many new primary care and specialist physicians, transitioning the hospital to all private rooms, centralizing outpatient services at the front of the facility, and developing plans for a \$7.6 million emergency department renovation that will improve care access and patient safety.

NMC will soon begin a national search for NMC's next Chief Executive Officer.

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techniques, breakthroughs in treatment, there will never be a substitute for the personal connection between provider and patient, and I will always make that a priority in my practice," he said.

In his spare time, Dr Myrtue spends time with his wife and two daughters. Now that his children have gotten older, he finds himself with more free time to enjoy mountain biking, snowboarding, playing ice hockey, and playing guitar.

**To make an appointment with Dr. Myrtue, call 802-524-1232.**



**BFA Athletic Director Dan Marlow presents a check for more than \$11,000 to the Jim Bashaw Cancer and Catastrophic Illness fund, accepted by NMC's Denise Smith at a BFA Basketball game on January 28. The funds were raised during the BFA-MVU Powderpuff football game held last fall, an annual tradition that supports the Bashaw Fund in a big way. NMC is deeply appreciative of the work these local students put in on the fundraiser!**



## Promising Results from Child Overweight and Obesity Study in Northwestern Vermont



**Colchester, VT**— Results from a follow-up measurement study of height and weight of young schoolchildren in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties show that rates of overweight and obesity have remained the same as of October 2019 compared to fall 2017. Monitoring rates of childhood overweight and obesity is one way to measure progress of community health improvement efforts like **RiseVT**, the lead primary prevention program of **OneCare Vermont**.

“Based on the results of this study, we are optimistic that strong public health efforts like those implemented by RiseVT and local partners are beginning to yield improvements in community health,” says Dr. Jennifer Laurent, obesity researcher and Associate Professor, UVM Department of Nursing and Research & Evaluation Advisor for RiseVT.

This fall 2019 study was conducted by RiseVT-Franklin and Grand Isle staff, based at Northwestern Medical Center in St. Albans, measuring 1,719 students in grades 1, 3, and 5 in schools in the region. This data collection effort was unique in that height and weight were collected by trained study staff using highly calibrated equipment, compared to more traditional measures of height and weight, which use self-reported data and likely underreport rates of overweight and obesity. In keeping with RiseVT's values, this study was designed to protect children's privacy and prevent potential weight shaming. RiseVT used pediatric growth charts and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\* to define underweight, healthy weight, overweight, and obese.

“We are excited to see that rates of childhood overweight and obesity have remained the same in the schools in our region,” says Jill Berry Bowen, CEO of Northwestern Medical Center and Chair of the RiseVT Board of Directors. “RiseVT will continue to partner to strengthen school wellness policies, encourage movement wherever kids are in their day, and promote access to nutritious food for children and families. Thank you to the teachers, school nurses, school administrators, and families for allowing us to do the measurement study.”

RiseVT started in Franklin & Grand Isle Counties with a commitment from Northwestern Medical Center to invest in preventive health for the community served by the hospital. In 2018 OneCare Vermont took the RiseVT model on as its primary prevention program with the goal to bring RiseVT to every region of Vermont. RiseVT uses proven evidence-based models to transform communities, working with municipalities, schools, and worksites to make environments where Vermonters spend their days more conducive to healthy lifestyles.

“As a physician, I know there is no better way to prevent future chronic diseases than to instill healthy lifestyle practices at a young age,” says Dr. Elisabeth Fontaine, Medical Director of Lifestyle Medicine & RiseVT at Northwestern Medical Center. “Measuring growth in children can help identify early opportunities for programs and prevention.”

Measuring height and weight is just one way RiseVT is tracking the impact of RiseVT in Vermont communities. Learn more about RiseVT's comprehensive evaluation approach at [risevt.org/our-evaluation-methods/](http://risevt.org/our-evaluation-methods/).

*\*The CDC defines childhood overweight as BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile. CDC defines childhood obesity as BMI at or above 95th.*



# INSIGHTS TO HEALTH

Your guide to local healthy programs, classes, and more!



## Weekly Classes

### Tai Chi Classes

**March 9 – May 11**  
**5 pm – 6 pm**

**Led by:** Pat Cervini, PT, Certified Instructor  
**Location:** NMC Wellness Room, Conference Center  
**Cost:** \$100 for the 10-week series

A low-impact, slow movement exercise also known as 'Meditation in Motion' with known benefits of muscle strengthening, flexibility and balance.

### Core Power Classes

**March 9 – May 11**  
**Noon – 1 pm**

**Location:** Cobblestone Health Commons, Rehab Gym  
**Cost:** \$6 per class, Drop-ins Welcome

Strengthen your core for greater stability and overall fitness. All levels welcome for this engaging workout that can be learned and easily transferred to a home workout!

### Rooted in Strength

**April 7 – June 11**  
**Tuesday and Thursdays**  
**5:30 pm – 6:15 pm**

**Location:** Cobblestone  
**Cost:** \$6 per class, Drop-ins Welcome

Not ready to start a strength training program? In this small class setting, a certified health care professional will progress you safely through essential strength training maneuvers. Every class offered at NMC comes with an option of services including: Comprehensive Health Risk Assessment (HRA), injury identification and prevention screening, Biometric testing and a nutritional consultation with a Registered Dietician (RD).

*Show Up!*



*Free Admission!*

### Explore the Trails

**Saturday, March 7**  
**10 am – Noon**

**Led by:** Kurt Valenta, Exordium Adventures  
**Location:** Sheldon Community Forrest

Take to the trails to search for creatures, plants and birds as they emerge from the cold.

### Full Moon Hike

**Monday, March 9**  
**6-8 pm**

**Location:** Hard'Ack Hill, St. Albans

Explore St. Albans hidden gem, Hard'ack Hill. Snacks provided following hike. Must pre-register. Visit the St. Albans Recreation Department website for more info, and to register.



### Monthly Birding Walk

**Saturday, March 21**  
**8:00- 10:00am**

**Led by:** Ken Copenhaver & Julie Filiberti  
**Location:** (MNWR) Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton, on the Jeep Trail

Enjoy a morning of bird watching at this monthly walk appropriate for all levels.

### Urban Wilds Walk

**Wednesday, March 25**  
**12:00- 1:00pm**

**Led by:** Bird Diva, Bridget Butler  
**Location:** Woodbridge Town Square Pavilion, Enosburg Falls

Enjoy a midday walk outside during your lunch break exploring the urban wilds and their feathered inhabitants.