

Insights

your health and your hospital



Get Out and Play! RiseVT Challenges the Community to Active Play

Studies show that play is an important part of a child's healthy development but playful physical activity is good for everyone. RiseVT is encouraging the community to play more with a campaign focusing on multi-generational activities at home, at school, and at work, all around Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

Participants will be able to follow along with RiseVT on social media channels and learn about community events that get whole families involved in play. Anyone who gets "playful" during the campaign can use the #RiseVTActivePlay hashtag on their own social media posts showing off the fun. Tagging RiseVT offers a chance at winning prizes on top of feeling good!

"RiseVT selected active play as our first campaign because we have a higher percentage of individuals in Franklin and Grand Isle counties that have identified that they are not physically active during leisure," said RiseVT project manager Denise Smith.

"We know that movement and interaction improves not only physical wellbeing but also emotional health. Being more connected now than ever before to technology, we are seeing increasing rates of childhood obesity in our community, and by creating an active play campaign, we believe that this will improve the lives of children and adults," she said.

Stay tuned for more information about Active Play and how you can get involved. Visit www.risevt.com for details.



Supporting wellness
{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 or call our Community Relations Office at 524-1280.

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Private rooms in the new Progressive Care Unit feature technological advances for caregivers, and home-like, comfortable touches for patients and their families.

New Inpatient Unit Now Fully Open With All Private Rooms

On February 1, NMC opened the second half of its new Progressive Care Unit, providing private rooms to all patients in state-of-the-art space with a homelike feel and the comforts of home.

The February milestone marked the opening of the former Medical-Surgical wing which had been closed for renovations.

The first portion of the new Progressive Care Unit opened for patient care in April 2017. This new addition was built on the end of the existing Medical-Surgical wing, with a corridor connecting the main hospital building with the addition, bypassing the space under renovation.

Those renovations finished at the start of this year, and the full unit opened with 34 private rooms in newly designed space that offers technological advances and brings the providers closer to the bedside. The rooms have nursing stations directly outside, allowing nurses to be easily accessible to patients, while still maintaining privacy.

The rooms also have wall-mounted computer terminals so that information can be quickly and easily accessed while care-givers speak to patients and family.

The color-coded areas of the new unit make it easier for families to find their way to patient rooms, and small touches like the lack of threshold between the room and the bathroom make access easier and more comfortable.

The Progressive Care Unit was part of a large building project for NMC that included the addition of a new Medical Clinics building as well as the two-story Medical Office Building.

With these expansions completed, the construction work will focus on finishing touches to bring the interior and exterior of the campus to full completion, including a final paving of the roadways scheduled for the spring.

Important Notice: Services/Practices Moved to New Medical Office Building

Northwestern Urgent Care and other practices

Several NMC practices relocated to the two-story Medical Office Building in November. Just a reminder to be aware of these relocations when you access services for:

- Northwestern Primary Care
- Northwestern Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation Center
- The Outpatient Lab for bloodwork and blood draws
- Northwestern Urgent Care

Medical Records Access

To make it easier for patients to request the release of medical information, a Release of Information Specialist is now located in the Medical Office Building lobby.

This NMC staff member will assist patients wishing to access their medical records, or get help enrolling in the web-based Patient Portal for electronic access to medical records. Previously, the release of information requests were handled in NMC's Conference Center. "This is a more centrally located space, making this service more accessible to the

public," said Fred O'Neill, NMC's Patient Access Manager. The Release of Information Specialist will staff a window facing the main lobby space of the Medical Office Building, adjacent to registration and the volunteer-staffed information desk.

The specialist will be available from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each weekday and records requested in advance can be picked up until 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. **For more information about access to medical records, or NMC's Patient Portals, call 802-524-1060.**

“I liked working with the NMC staff at the pool. The therapists guide you through the exercises gently. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of medical staff that we have here in St. Albans.”

— Mary Groff, pictured between NMC aquatic therapists Jennifer Banacos, PT (left) and Katie Guerino, PT (right).



Aquatic Therapy: Taking the Pressure Off

By Sarah Parsons West

At 75, Mary Groff leads an active life, serving others while maintaining her own health. Mary has been a volunteer at Northwestern Medical Center for the past nine years; following a 35-year career within the organization. She spent 20 years on her feet as an x-ray technician; worked as an OR Tech; and as supervisor for the Central Sterile Supplies. “Injuries take their toll on the body later in life,” Mary says, summing up years of back pain and joint issues.

In the spring of 2009, Mary injured her back while completing a household chore. “The back pain was severe, any motion was limited and painful,” she explains. Enduring the pain for many months, Mary turned to Orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Michael Barnum, who fused the ruptured discs in April 2010.

“Dr. Barnum got me into surgery quickly, just 12 days after a discussion about my pain becoming too unbearable,” Mary says.

She remains grateful that he understood her need for action. “There was so much pain leading up to the surgery – and there was such relief afterwards,” she says. “I think it was very successful.”

With many injuries, pain can slowly return over time, as was Mary’s case. Having undergone various types of physical therapy and (Cortisone) injections to manage her pain, Dr. Simon Shapiro recommended Mary for aquatic therapy in January 2017.

Aquatic therapy is a skilled practice where the properties of water assist the patient in meeting their rehab goals. NMC has offered aquatic therapy at Branon’s Pools in St. Albans for numerous years, providing patients an effective alternative or accompaniment to gym-type physical exercises.

The smaller rehabilitation pool at Branon’s Pools is reserved for NMC’s physical therapists, to help improve and restore mobility in patients of all ages. The water temperature is kept around 90-degrees Fahrenheit, with the air temperature in the pool hall around 80-degrees year-round.

NMC patients receive an added benefit of our walking program which allows them access to utilize the pool in addition to their regularly scheduled appointments. This gives patients the opportunity to perform their exercises more frequently.

Working with approximately ten patients a day, certified aquatic therapist Katie Guerino says the warm water is therapeutic for many reasons. “It is more comfortable to move in the water, and the body can easily relax due to the warm temperatures.”

“With regular physical therapy at a gym, the exercises seem to hurt the back more and cause fatigue afterwards,” Mary says. “The aqua therapy is not like that. After the sessions, my body is never lame or sore.”

“The natural resistance of the water also helps strengthen the muscles without strain,” Katie explains. “The buoyancy helps take pressure off the joints and muscles, allowing for better range of motion.”

Mary says she’s noticed improvements in many parts of her body. “My shoulder pain is gone, and it wasn’t even why I came to the pool.”

“Witnessing the instant relief that many patients encounter when they begin aquatic therapy is very rewarding,” says Jennifer Banacos, another physical therapist who worked with Mary at the pool. Jennifer appreciates seeing the patient’s ability to transition their movements outside of the water, once again.

“I liked working with the NMC staff at the pool,” says Mary. “The therapists guide you through the exercises gently. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of medical staff that we have here in St. Albans.”

Mary took advantage of the walking program throughout her course of physical therapy so that she could do her exercises three days per week.

By July, Mary had completed her prescribed aquatic therapy, yet decided the benefits of her routine were too numerous to stop. “I really started to see changes in my body by doing therapy three days a week,” she says. “I didn’t want to give that up.”

Upon completion of formal physical therapy, NMC patients receive a coupon for a discount at Branon’s pools. Mary used this when she began as pool member, and then chose to purchase a nine-month membership.

“The coupon that NMC patients receive helps encourage patients to utilize the therapeutic pool after their therapy is complete,” says Katie.

The progression that a patient makes in the water is usually transformational. “I’ve seen real improvement in my overall well-being and body core,” Mary admits. “I’d recommend this type of therapy to everybody, it really helps recover your balance and stamina.”

“Mary has come full circle,” says Katie. “Even after her prescribed therapy ended, Mary has made it a part of her life routine. This is an ideal example of what we’d like to see for all of our patients.”

For more information about aquatic therapy, contact NMC’s Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation at: (802) 524-1064.

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INSIGHTS TO HEALTH

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



Diabetes and You

Tuesdays, Feb. 13 to March 13 10:00 am to 12:00 p.m.
Tuesdays, April 10 to May 8 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 Location: NMC Cobblestone Building, Suite 202
Thursdays, March 8 to April 5 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 Location: Richford Rural Health Center, 4th Floor CR

Join us at this self-management educational series for people with diabetes and their families, proven to help people improve control of this disease. Learn how to keep diabetes from controlling your life and improve your blood sugar control to feel better and delay or prevent complications.

Pre-registration required: Call 524-1031.

Fee: NMC will bill your insurance for the course fee. Scholarships available. No one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay.

Breastfeeding and You

Tuesday, March 13 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
 Location: NMC, Family Birth Center Conference Room
Thursday, April 5 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
 Location: Vermont Department of Health, St. Albans District Office, Federal Street

This breastfeeding prep class helps you, family members, and other moms-to-be to plan for breastfeeding your newborn in the first month of life.

Pre-registration required: Call 524-7971.

Heart Healthy Meal Planning

Wednesday, March 21 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.

This meal planning class discusses barriers to eating healthy, "smart shopping", reading food labels, and serving sizes of different foods and their nutritional values.

Location: Cobblestone Health Commons Cardiac Rehab Gym

Registration: Call 524-8849.

Tobacco Cessation Class

Thursdays, March 8 to March 29 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Join others for this 4-session series to help you successfully quit smoking.

Sessions include: understanding why you have an addiction and how to quit; mastering the first few days, mastering obstacles; and staying quit and enjoying it forever.

Location: Richford NOTCH

Pre-registration Required: Call 524-8480.



Featured Program

Ai Chi in the Pool to Treat Chronic Pain

Wednesday, March 7 5:30 to 6:30 pm

Join NMC aquatic physical therapists to learn about the benefits of aquatic exercise as a way to help manage chronic pain conditions. Plan to get wet and try low impact stretching exercises as well as the relaxing benefits of Ai Chi.

Ai Chi is a simple water exercise and relaxation program consisting of deep breathing and slow, broad movements of the arms, legs, and trunk. Ai Chi takes advantage of the waters properties to foster range of motion, challenge balance, and facilitate core strength and stability.

Attend this 60 minute session and earn a coupon for a discounted membership to Branon's Pools.

Location: Branon's Pool

Pre-registration required: Please call Faith DuBois at 524-1217 or email fdubois@nmcinc.org to sign up.

Aquatic Exercise for Arthritic Conditions

Wednesday, March 21 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Experience the benefits of exercising in warm water to decrease stress on your joints while making it more comfortable to move!

NMC aquatic physical therapists will lead you through a series of exercises to improve flexibility, strength, and balance.

Attend this 60 minute session and earn a coupon for a discounted membership to Branon's Pools.

Location: Branon's Pool

Pre-registration required: Call 524-1217.

Look Good Feel Better

Monday, April 2 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

For women with cancer who are experiencing appearance related side effects due to treatment. Join us to learn how to look good and feel better about the skin and hair changes that cancer treatment can cause. Free workshops/interactive demonstration led by trained, volunteer cosmetologists.

Featuring: Carol Lumbr, Beautician, Rail City Salon and Bonnie Rainville, Beautician, Elite Body Boutique

Location: Northwestern Medical Center Grand Isle Room

Pre-registration Required: Call 524-8479.

Mindfulness Tools for Health and Wellness

April 12 to May 31 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

NMC is proud to once again offer this stress management program presented by Roz Grossman, MA. Open to anyone who could use help dealing with stress in their life, this class can help you strengthen your ability to cope with the difficulties of chronic illness, learn mind and body mindfulness practices to reduce stress and anxiety and support your own healing journey. The eight-week series includes two and a half hour sessions (with the exception of the first night, which will be 5:30-8:30 p.m.). A healthy snack will be provided each night. Includes a six-hour retreat day and take-home materials including CDs for home practice.

Location: NMC Conference Center

Pre-registration required: Call 524-1217.

Fee: \$25 (total for the series, scholarships available.)