



NCH Leadership Corner

Tom Mee, RN, BSN, MBA, Chief Executive Officer

As the CEO of North Country Healthcare (NCH), I have the privilege of witnessing the incredible work you do every day to care for our patients and our communities. Your dedication inspires me and reinforces the importance of our Mission. But with that privilege comes a deep sense of responsibility - and at times, sleepless nights.

Lately, I've been reflecting on the challenges we face as a healthcare System, particularly those that threaten the health of the communities we serve and the well-being of our own team. From the growing strain on rural healthcare to the evolving demands of our profession, these issues are more than just statistics; they are real barriers to the compassionate, high-quality care we strive to provide.

In this month's newsletter, I want to share some of the concerns that keep me awake at night and, more importantly, how we can face them together. I believe that open dialogue and collective action are the keys to overcoming even the toughest challenges.

Several alarming trends in rural healthcare have raised concerns among policymakers, healthcare professionals, and rural communities. These trends impact access, quality, and outcomes for millions of people living in rural areas. To be clear, these trends are not unique to northern New Hampshire, but are representative of the challenges faced in rural medicine nationwide.

1. **Financial Challenges Unique to Rural Communities** - Rural hospitals operate on thin margins and struggle to remain viable due to declining patient volumes, high rates of uninsured or underinsured patients, and reduced federal funding. To the contrary, NCH has enjoyed increased demands for clinical services and hence, higher volumes. It is imperative that the same measures we took to increase access to patients remain strong, as our financial outlook changes in the face of volume reductions.
2. **Provider Shortages** - Even in light of NCH's growth strategies focusing on patient access, the fact remains that our ability to expand the outpatient footprint depends on our abilities to recruit and retain providers. Many of NCH's clinical program are dependent on only a few providers, making them at risk in the

event of provider shortages.

3. **Health Disparities** - If any of you have ever taken the opportunity to review our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), you'd note that Coös County experiences significantly higher rates of chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity compared to urban populations. Mental health and substance use disorders, including opioid addiction, are also disproportionately higher in our primary service area. In a nutshell, we care for sicker and more complicated patients that many of our counterparts, with the same or less resources.
4. **Age of Plant** - It should surprise few that many of our facilities and associated infrastructures are outdated and in need of attention. These types of expenditures are not particularly exciting, and don't always directly impact patient care, but clearly are necessary for the ongoing success of our organization.
5. **Medicare Advantage Programs, or Medicare Managed Care** - These programs create systemic challenges for hospitals by prioritizing cost control over ease of care delivery. While I don't generally get too opinionated in these newsletters, I believe that the financial and administrative hurdles imposed by these plans ultimately detract from their ability to provide high-quality, timely care to patients. Unfortunately, NCH has seen an increase in these programs and quite frankly, they will likely increase into the future.
6. **Workforce Wellness** - Rural healthcare workers face higher levels of stress and burnout due to long hours, professional isolation, and the challenges of serving high-need populations with limited resources. NCH has invested substantial resources to counter this, and will clearly need to continue to do so into the future.

Let's continue this conversation, and let's keep building a future where every challenge we face is met with innovation, teamwork, and a shared commitment to the people who depend on us. Thank you for everything you do to make NCH a beacon of hope and healing.



Finance/Accounting

Matthew Streeter, MBA, FACHE, FHFMA,
Chief Financial Officer



Revenue Cycle Optimization

Last month, we discussed the Eclipse Insights engagement to assess our revenue cycle operations along with the announcement of Matt Hartzler as our Interim Vice President of Revenue Cycle. While that project is only in its beginning stages, the team has already found numerous opportunities for improvement and have begun cleaning up some of the issues in our Accounts Payable. This has caused some interesting results in our financial statements related to writing off uncollectible accounts and sending others to bad debt

for collections. We are optimistic that our reserves will help to offset these large adjustments; however, it will take a few months to really see how the dust settles. We will continue to provide updates as we continue this important work.

Meditech Optimization – GL Rebuild

The GL Rebuild project is complete from the perspective of the General Ledger itself; however, the downstream rebuilding of reports and files continues. As you can probably imagine, changing the GL numbers and structure requires updating all of the systems that incorporate our GL numbers (e.g., ADP, QuickCharge, CNB Credit Card Portal) as well as all of the reporting (e.g., responsibility reports, board financial statements, and budgets). The Accounting teams have been working to accommodate the new GL structure in their daily work. Thank you for your patience while we continue our work to rebuild. We anticipate being able to speed up some of this work once the annual audit is complete this month.

IT System Updates

Darrell Bodnar, BS, CPM, CPHIMS,
Chief Information Officer



The holiday season is a peak time for cyberattacks on healthcare organizations, and North Country Healthcare has seen a dramatic rise in the sophistication and volume of these threats. Bad actors, particularly from Russian and Chinese sources, are launching increasingly advanced attacks across multiple vectors, including phishing emails, ransomware, and brute force attempts. Recently, we experienced a sustained attack with over 100 firewall intrusion attempts per minute, underscoring the aggressiveness of these campaigns. Many of these attacks now leverage AI to craft convincing phishing messages, making them harder to detect. As threats grow more sophisticated, vigilance is critical - be cautious with unexpected emails, avoid clicking unknown links or attachments, and report anything suspicious immediately. Together, by staying alert and informed, we can protect our Systems and patients. I appreciate all your support and effort.

hardware lifecycle initiatives. This involves replacing outdated legacy systems that have reached the end of support. Additionally, we are proactively addressing critical software updates, as vendors like Microsoft phase out support for widely used platforms such as Windows 10, Windows Server 2016, and various Microsoft SQL Server versions. These upgrades are essential to sustaining operational efficiency, ensuring data security, and maintaining compliance across the organization.

Ambient Voice Technology

We have extended our Augmedix ambient voice solution pilot, which employs advanced technology for real-time transcription and clinical documentation. Early feedback from providers has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting its potential to ease administrative burdens. That said, we recognize certain limitations and are carefully evaluating its fit across multiple service lines. Behavioral Health has been a specific challenge. This is due to the complexities of that service line and the maturity level of the product in this particular care documentation. This ongoing effort underscores our dedication to adopting innovative tools that boost provider efficiency while delivering high-quality patient care.

Hyve Vitality Scorecard

The Hyve Health Vitality Payer Scorecard is effectively live, with efforts currently focused on automating the file delivery process. Progress has been steady, and we anticipate that Hyve will offer comprehensive dashboards enabling business leaders to benchmark payer practices regionally and nationally.

Upcoming Project Highlights

UniteUs

The UniteUs platform represents a transformative effort to establish a statewide, closed-loop referral network designed to enhance resource sharing and care coordination. By reducing barriers to access for underserved populations, this platform empowers healthcare providers, community organizations, and stakeholders to deliver timely and appropriate services. UniteUs is poised to make a significant impact on vulnerable communities, leveraging real-time data exchange to drive collaboration and improve population health outcomes.

Point-Click-Care

The Point-Click-Care platform is a robust communication and messaging solution aimed at optimizing Emergency Department operations. By streamlining processes related to admissions and readmissions, it holds significant promise for improving outcomes across all NCHA member hospitals. While deployment is temporarily on hold due to the State of New Hampshire addressing key issues around funding, consent, and privacy compliance, we remain steadfast in our commitment to partnering with state agencies to overcome these challenges and realize the full potential of this solution.

Current and Completed Projects and Highlights

CCFHS MS Teams Messaging

Coös County Family Health Services, Inc. (CCFHS) has completed their internal work on their MS Teams deployment. With that work, NCH employees can now securely communicate via MS Teams with the staff at CCFHS.

Meditech Expanse 2.2

The Meditech 2.2 upgrade is progressing smoothly. This version includes robust enhancements for scalability and improved health information management workflows. The project has a go-live target of June 2025. There is a lot of work to do with this project. The testing and parallel runs will be time consuming but will position us with the latest and greatest that Meditech has to offer. Your engagement and cooperation are greatly valued.

NCHHA MS Office Migration

The consolidation of the NCHHA MS Office platform into the unified tenant for NCH has been successfully completed. A special thanks to Tyler Ruggles and everyone, who contributed to this effort. Thanks to meticulous planning and pre-migration testing, this was one of the smoothest transitions I've witnessed. Outstanding work by all involved!

Software and Hardware Lifecycle

A primary focus for this fiscal year is tackling deferred software and

Nursing Leadership Communication

**Tiffany Haynes, MSN, RN,
Chief Nursing Officer, NCH**



As we enter 2025, I feel as though we have a lot of momentum and it's really encouraging! It has been a pleasure to meet with the Emergency Department (ED) and Surgical Services groups to see their passion and expertise shine through as they develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the System-wide dashboards we will be creating. I am really looking forward to seeing what these teams, as well as Primary Care, arrive at for metrics- I know they will impact the efficiencies and patient care tremendously! We have started to identify leads for the service line mapping goals for the ED, Pain Management service line, and Behavioral Health programs. Thank you in advance to those who have stepped up and will help us map these service lines - this is a big undertaking, but it's very important. In order for us to improve the care we deliver, we need to understand what we are offering today.

November barcode scanning rates were excellent and continue to be on an upward trajectory. AVH saw a large improvement and went from 97.3% to 98.6% in one month! This is a huge success and shows their commitment to

meeting the 99% goal. We also saw two days where there were no scans missed at any affiliates! Amazing work everyone - I am thrilled with these results!

Senior Leadership Rounding by Tom Mee, Jen Bach-Guss and me, starts at the end of January. We will be at the following affiliates listed with dates and times, below. If you have a project you would like to share with us in person, please reach out to Jen or me so we can ensure we see you when we are on your campus.

Weeks Medical Center:

Tuesday, 1/28
11:00am - 12:30pm

Androscoggin Valley Hospital:

Thursday, 1/30
12:00pm - 1:30pm

North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency:

Wednesday, 1/29
11:00am - 1:00pm

Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital:

Thursday, 2/20
2:00pm - 3:30pm

[Click here,](#)
**or click on the image
to the right, to take
the survey!**

**WE
WANT
TO
HEAR
FROM
YOU**

**Take
the
Survey!**

**Community Health
Needs Assessment 2025**

This survey should take less than 10 minutes and will be open until January 31st, but we look forward to your response as quickly as possible.

This is very important in our commitment to our community, and we appreciate your time and assistance!

Human Resources Corner

Human Resources Team

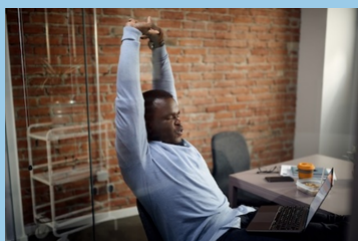


As we usher in the New Year, the Human Resources team would like to extend our warmest wishes for a successful and fulfilling 2025. We are excited to continue our journey with each of you, building on the achievements and progress we made in the past year. This new beginning provides us with a fresh opportunity to set ambitious goals, embrace new challenges, and further enhance our workplace culture. Together, let's make 2025 a remarkable year of collaboration, innovation, and success!

KGA Wellness Spotlight: Healthy Body, Healthy Connections

Join us as we nurture the connection of physical well-being and meaningful relationships to enhance our overall health.

Back and Stretch Series Video ([click here to watch](#))



When thinking about your physical wellness it is important to make good choices to live a healthy and balanced life. For most people, it is hard to understand where and how to begin when it comes to their physical

wellness. Each activity in this series is designed to be done within the comfort of your own home at any time during your work day. With no equipment required, these exercises are an accessible and effective way to strengthen your body; safely at home or the office.

Unlocking Everyday Fitness Workshop ([click here for info](#))

Unlock a fresh perspective on fitness with our transformative workshop. Designed to seamlessly blend into your life, this experience will show you how to make fitness effortless and enjoyable, no matter where you're starting from. Dive into interactive sessions that reveal the hidden benefits of fitness, realistic goal-setting, and discover time-savvy workouts that fit into your day. With hands-on demonstrations and personalized strategies, you'll leave not just motivated but equipped with a plan to elevate your well-being and redefine your fitness journey. [Click here to register for January 21, 2025 at 12:00PM Eastern Register.](#)

An Antidote to Loneliness: Simple Strategies to Foster Meaningful Interactions ([click here for info](#))

In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General announced an epidemic of loneliness and isolation that is affecting our collective wellbeing. This workshop equips participants with practical, accessible tools for fostering genuine connections in everyday

life - whether in workplaces, schools, or social settings. This webinar is 60-minutes long. This webinar will be recorded and made available on the wellness calendar page within 48-hours following the live event. [Click here to register for January 21, 2025 at 12:00PM Eastern Register.](#)

Payroll Distribution Process Update

Reminder: Effective January 2, 2025, paper checks will no longer be available for pickup. Instead, payroll checks will be mailed directly to employees' designated addresses. For anyone receiving a paper check, to ensure prompt delivery, please make sure your mailing address is up-to-date in ADP.

We understand that this change may require some adjustment, and we want to ensure that all employees have access to the most convenient and secure method of receiving their pay. As an alternative, **direct deposit** is available. We strongly encourage employees to sign up for it, to ensure prompt and reliable access to your wages.

If you are interested in signing up for direct deposit, please log into ADP and go to: Myself>Pay>Pay Options

For Address updates go to: Myself>My Information Information>Profile>Personal Info and select the view more option.

Please do not hesitate to contact an HR Representative with any questions or concerns.

Welcome to the NCH Team!

We are excited to welcome the following new members to the team that had successfully been through our December Orientation. Give a warm NCH welcome to the following members:

Amanda O'Rourke	Surgical Technician, WMC
Luellyn Valtin	System Director of Quality
Jordyn Marshall	Patient Access Representative, NCH
Emily O'Neill	Executive Assistant to President, AVH
Tiffany Sweatt	Dietitian, AVH
Nicole Gross	Philanthropy Coordinator, NCH
Jodi Marazzi	Certified Medical Assistant, AVH
Brian Cambrola	Patient Access Representative, NCH
Mary Pothier	Registered Nurse, WMC
Kristen Mosher	Executive Assistant, Administration, NCHHHA

Quality Corner

Luellyn Valtin, System Director of Quality



What Does Quality Mean to You?

Hello, my name is Luellyn Valtin, and I am excited to be the new System Director of Quality at North Country Healthcare. My role is to support the quality managers at each NCH affiliate.

I have had the privilege of observing the dedication and passion of our staff across various communities within our healthcare System. Although each community is unique, I've quickly realized that they share a common thread - an unwavering commitment to providing quality care to our patients.

Since I joined the team on December 2, I've been inspired by our staff through the countless stories I've heard and the remarkable efforts I've seen, from the frontlines of patient care to the behind-the-scenes work. Whether they're striving to improve patient flow, enhance communication, or refine clinical processes, every member of our team is dedicated to ensuring our patients receive the highest standard of care.

At its core, quality in healthcare is about trust. It's about being present with our patients, listening to their concerns, and

providing compassionate care that reflects their needs and values. It's about how we communicate with one another, ensuring a seamless and supportive environment for both staff and patients.

I've also heard about the performance improvement projects you're leading, improving processes and systems that directly impact the quality of care provided to our patients. Quality care is not just about metrics or performance indicators; it's about the relationships we build, the trust we earn, and the ways we collaborate.

In a tight-knit rural community, quality also means accessibility - ensuring that our services are available and that we're meeting the needs of our patients, regardless of the challenges our rural settings present. And it's about ensuring that every interaction with our patients, no matter how brief, is meaningful and impactful.

So I ask: What does quality mean to you?

Whether it's the way you connect with patients, the trust you foster in your relationships, or your involvement in performance improvement projects, your role in providing quality care is essential and your insights are invaluable in shaping how we define and achieve this at NCH.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the communities we serve. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to improve the care we deliver and build a culture of quality that reflects our shared values and commitment to our patients.

NCH Professional Wellbeing Initiative

Standardization: A Path to Clinician Wellness

by Bernie Adams, LSSBB, Chief Quality Officer

In healthcare, the wellness of our clinicians is essential to delivering high-quality care. As we reflect on strategies to improve workplace satisfaction and reduce stress, it won't surprise you that one concept stands out to me: standardization and the consistent application of best practices.

Standardization may sound like a buzzword, but its impact is profound. By adopting streamlined processes and evidence-based protocols, we can significantly reduce unnecessary burdens on our clinicians. When every step is clear and predictable, it minimizes inefficiencies, reduces decision fatigue, and allows staff to focus their energy where it truly matters - on patient care.

Take documentation, for example. A standardized workflow can eliminate redundancies, ensuring that tasks are completed faster without sacrificing quality. This not only decreases the workload but also frees up valuable time. When clinicians no longer need to reinvent the wheel for routine procedures, they gain the capacity to concentrate on the nuances of their patients' needs, fostering deeper connections and better outcomes.

Moreover, standardization creates a sense of trust and reliability within the System. Clinicians can feel confident that they're following proven methods, eliminating unnecessary guesswork. This leads to a work environment where providers are not constantly worried about processes or inconsistencies, but instead, can engage in meaningful, fulfilling work.

At North Country Healthcare, our commitment to wellness is grounded in enabling our providers to perform their best. Standardization and adherence to best practices are not just tools for efficiency - they are investments in the well-being of our teams. By making systems work for us, we create space for what matters most: improving lives, one patient at a time.

As a member of the Wellness Committee, I encourage everyone to reflect on how standardization can support not just patient outcomes, but also our collective well-being. Let's embrace these opportunities to simplify, streamline, and support one another - because clinician wellness is the foundation of patient care excellence.



All employees have free access to Be Well and KGA, our Employee Assistance Program. Links to these and additional resources can be found on the Intranet under: Quick Links > Employee Wellness Resources.

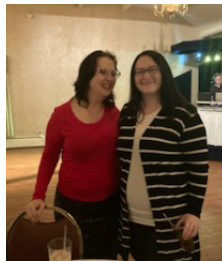
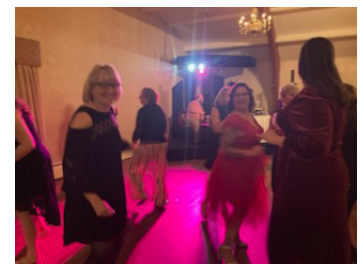
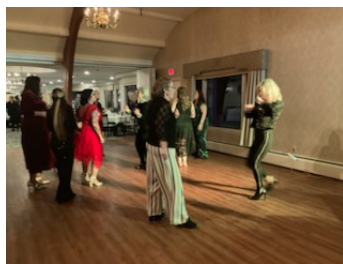
Androscoggin Valley Hospital

Michael Peterson, FACHE, President and CEO



Special thanks to everyone who attended one of last month's presentations of the 2025 – 2026 North Country Healthcare (NCH) Strategic Plan. Along with Tom Mee, NCH Chief Executive Officer and Bernie Adams, NCH Chief Quality Officer, I had the honor of sharing all of the exciting priorities and opportunities that we have in front of us over the next two years. It's truly a pleasure to be able to roll up my sleeves with you and continue to serve the residents of, and visitors to, our communities.

I also want to thank everyone who was able to attend the AVH Holiday Party on January 10, as well as the event host, the Town & Country Inn & Resort in Shelburne. It was a festive night. I'll admit, I like having the event in January, as opposed to leading up to the holidays. It's a fun opportunity for us to exhale after a very busy season. Special thanks to the AVH Employee Engagement Committee, lead by Candy O'Neil, Committee Chair, for planning the event.



It was also great to see Santa, (aka Materials Management's own Mike Stewart) grace AVH with his presence last month. Several children of AVH and NCH employees were overjoyed to see jolly St. Nick, and it's always a pleasure to host him. Thanks, Mike, I mean, 'Santa.'

From a financial perspective, I was very pleased with the way that AVH started our fiscal year, with a healthy, positive operating margin in October. We all know that it's a long year, and there are a lot of variables which go into our success, financial and otherwise, but it's always a good feeling to come out of the gate strong. One of NCH's System goals for this year is to achieve 7.5% of all employees attaining Yellow Belt certification. Implementation of the Lean principles taught within Yellow Belt training is one way that we can continue to best position ourselves for financial health.



Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to close with the words on a card of thanks recently received at AVH, and mailed to us by a grateful patient:

"Dear Hospital Staff, Thanks to all of the doctors, nurses, LNAs and other staff for the wonderful and special care shown to me during my stay which started October 17. You're all so caring and special and assisted with my ongoing recovery. I'm back home because of all of your care and concern. I simply can't thank you enough. Kind regards, R"

Without all of you, working together, as a team, we would not be able to personify the AVH Values of Quality, Service and Collaboration. THANK YOU!



North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency

Jessica Foster-Hebert, RN, CHHCM, CHCM, Interim President and CEO



As we enter 2025, it is a fitting time to reflect on the remarkable achievements of our Agency over the past year. We have reached significant milestones in areas such as enhancing high reliability, improving the patient experience, strengthening clinical services, advancing our Durable Medical Equipment program, and launching the LNA Clinical Ladder. We also enjoyed another successful Home Health & Hospice Gala which was a great night of fun, and of course, fundraising to support our Mission. All these accomplishments are a testament to the unwavering dedication of our leadership and staff, who continually prioritize delivering exceptional care to our patients—whether it be hands on care, behind the scenes, or by organizing events to support and raise awareness of our Mission.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the Home Care, Hospice, and Palliative Care Alliance of NH Conference. This conference provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with agencies across New England. Together, we exchanged ideas on how to emphasize and promote the essence of true hospice care: a compassionate, supportive environment that ensures the highest-quality care for patients and their families during life's most vulnerable moments.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our Mission. By building on this year's successes and addressing challenges with integrity and collaboration, we will continue to uphold our promise of exceptional care for every patient and family we serve. I am deeply grateful for the efforts of our team and partners, whose shared dedication to excellence inspires confidence in the road ahead. Together, we will make 2025 another year of growth, innovation, and compassionate service.

Reminder...

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT

We're excited to share that as part of our efforts to unify and maintain consistency across the North Country Healthcare System, North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency (NCHHHA) has successfully migrated to the @northcountryhealth.org email domain!

Effective immediately, all NCHHHA employees will have email addresses in this format:
john.smith@northcountryhealth.org

Thank you for embracing this change as we continue to strengthen our shared mission. We're thrilled to have NCHHHA fully integrated into the North Country Healthcare family!



Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital

Greg Cook, FACHE, President and CEO



As 2024 has come to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on our journey this past year and look ahead to the exciting opportunities that 2025 holds for our hospital and community.

This year has been a testament to the dedication, resilience, and compassion that define UCVH. Together, we have made remarkable strides in enhancing patient care and fostering an environment of collaboration and innovation. Despite the challenges we faced, we continued to put our patients at the center of everything we do, working tirelessly to improve their health and well-being.

I am incredibly proud of our team - providers, nurses, and staff - who have shown unwavering commitment to our Mission of striving to improve the well-being of the rural communities we serve by promoting health and ensuring access to quality care. From advanced treatment options and new technology to community outreach initiatives and patient education, we have made great progress in meeting the ever-evolving needs of our patients.

A few highlights from 2024 include:

- The successful launch of a new Hospital Medicine partnership with Hospital Medicine Solutions (HMS).
- The retention of Cardiology Services at UCVH with our new NCH partner, Concord Health Cardiology Services.
- An investment of \$1.1 million in equipment and infrastructure. In addition to the infrastructure improvements, we have ongoing improvements in emergency safety protocols, ensuring that UCVH remains a state-of-the-art healthcare facility.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of every member of our UCVH family. Thank you for your passion and commitment to making UCVH a place where healing and hope are at the forefront.

As we look ahead to 2025, we continue to embrace our Mission with renewed purpose and energy. We will continue to focus on enhancing patient experiences, advancing healthcare technology, and fostering a compassionate and supportive work environment.

May the New Year bring you good health, happiness, and continued success. Thank you for being a part of our incredible journey, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together in 2025.

CONGRATULATIONS

Susan Reed

RPh, CPHQ, LSSBB

Susan "Sue" Reed has recently been named NCH Director of Pharmacy.

Sue began her NCH career as Pharmacy Operations Manager in July 2023 and is on-pace to earn her Master's of Business Administration, with a Healthcare Concentration, in June 2025, and will then sit for the Board of Governors Exam.



NCH
north country healthcare

Weeks Medical Center

Matt Streeter, MBA, FACHE, FHFMA, Interim President, Weeks Medical Center



I would like to congratulate both Tom Mee, Chief Executive Officer of North Country Healthcare, and Karen Woods, Vice President, Physician Practices, Weeks Medical Center, on being named to the list of the 200 Most Influential Business Leaders in in New Hampshire, by *NH Business Review*.

We asked Karen to share a little bit about herself and how she came in to her career in healthcare:

"I went to NHTI, where I received an Associate Degree in Science, and I obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Healthcare Management through Ottawa University, where I'm currently finishing (2025) a Master's Degree in Leadership.

I began my career as a Registered Radiologic Technologist and earned certifications in mammography and CT Scan.

I have spent my entire professional career in New Hampshire and all of my positions have been in a Critical Access Hospital environment. I have held the following leadership positions: PACS Administrator, Director of Radiology, Director of Ancillary and Specialty Services, Director of Primary Care, Administrative Director, and most recently, VP of Physician Practices. I have been with Weeks Medical Center for three years, come April.

I currently serve on the North Country Health Consortium's Board of Directors, as Secretary. I also serve as Board Chair for the NH/VT Chapter of Medical Management Medical Association (MGMA).

I am unclear who nominated me for this particular award, but I did receive an Award of Excellence in Healthcare through the *NH Business Review* back in 2020. It's an honor to have received this nomination and award, as one of the 200 Most Influential Business Leaders in in New Hampshire.

North Country Healthcare's ongoing effort toward aligning its organizations will not only enhance access to care, promote financial stability, and enable more effective resource utilization, but it will also facilitate the delivery of comprehensive care to our region. It is rewarding to be a part of an innovative initiative that will ensure quality healthcare in a patient-centered environment. Thank you."

200 Most Influential Business Leaders in NH

Both Tom Mee, MBA, RN, BSN, North Country Healthcare CEO; and Karen Woods, CRHCP, Vice President, Physician Practices, Weeks Medical Center, were named to the list of the 200 Most Influential Business Leaders in New Hampshire, by *NH Business Review*.



Tom Mee, MBA, RN, BSN
North Country Healthcare CEO



Karen Woods, CRHCP
Vice President, Physician Practices,
Weeks Medical Center



Androscoggin Valley Hospital
North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency
Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital
Weeks Medical Center

Marketing Update

James Patry, FACHE, Vice President, NCH
Marketing & Community Relations



Happy 2025! I hope the new year has started positively for you.

As previously reported, a recent survey regarding awareness of services provided by NCH affiliates was conducted. As shown in the attached slide, the lowest five service lines, correctly identified as existing within one or more NCH affiliates were: PET scan; Rheumatology (previously offered via Telehealth); Dermatology; Addiction Recovery; and Neurology.

PET scans are actually offered at Weeks Medical Center, a leader in state-of-the-art radiology technology (Open Bore MRI, CT scan, nuclear medicine and 3D Mammography, in addition to PET scans). The information discovered as a result of PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scans can help diagnose a number of conditions, not the least of which are brain disorders, cancer and heart disease. Findings from our area's 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (another such Assessment is currently underway – more about that in a moment) showed that cancer and heart disease were the number 2 and 3 areas of concern from survey respondents (Mental Health narrowly surpassed cancer for the #1 spot.) These findings make PET scan availability all the more important for early diagnosis.

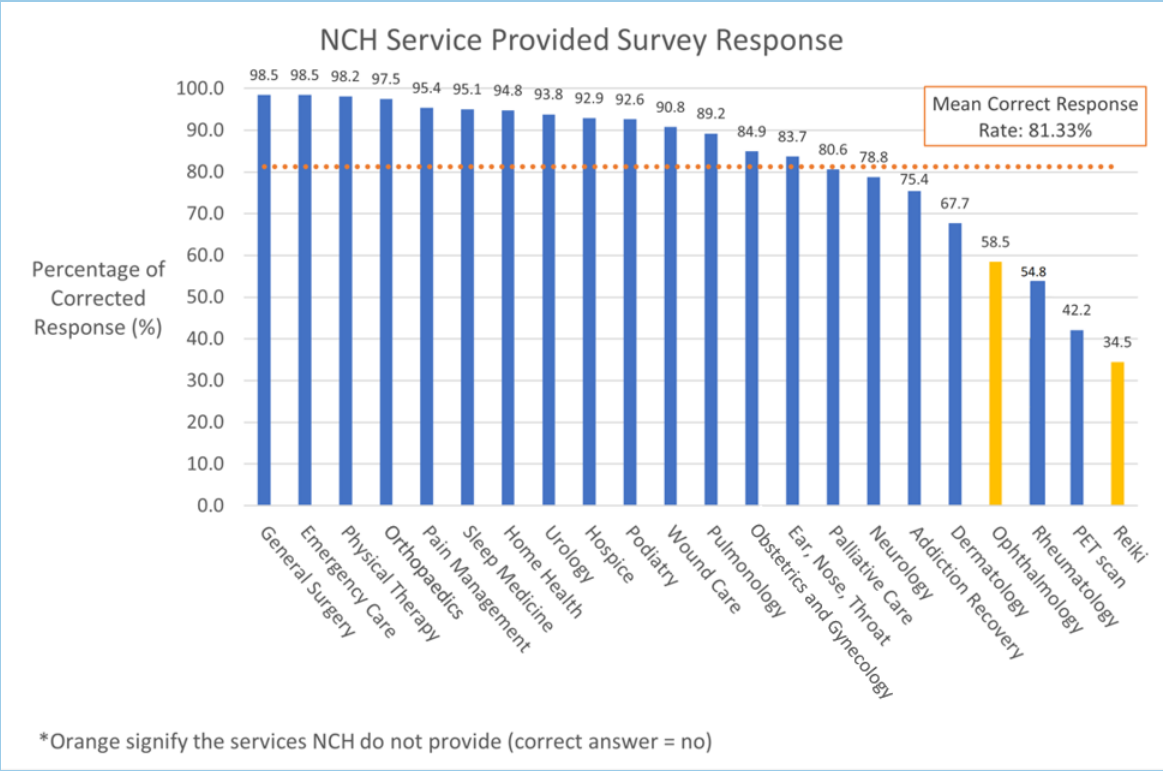
We'll continue to feature other departments within NCH, in future issues of this newsletter. In the meantime, a list of departments can be viewed here: [Services - North Country Healthcare](#)

Speaking of the

Community Health Needs Assessment, your completion of the brief, anonymous survey, which has been shared to members of the public, would be highly valued and greatly appreciated. Please click on the link at the very top of the NCH website (northcountryhealth.org) to access the Survey. THANK YOU!

I hope you were able to attend one of last month's NCH 2025-2026 Strategic Plan presentations. Four presentations were held, each at a different affiliate within our healthcare System. I'd like to thank Tom Mee, NCH Chief Executive Officer, Bernie Adams, NCH Chief Quality Officer, and Michael Peterson, AVH President and CEO, for taking the time to showcase the Plan, as well as key priorities and strategies. In case you missed it, the presentation can be viewed via our Intranet ([News & Announcements section](#)).


One of the NCH Marketing Department's goals for 2025 is to conduct and complete an assessment of our Systemwide Intranet. A number of focus groups will be held, and a survey issued to get employees' and providers' feedback about this communication tool. Your honesty and forthrightness will be appreciated, as we look to ensure that it best meets our organization's needs. More information to come! Have a wonderful month!



IMPORTANT UPDATES!

Paying Your Bill Just Got Easier, As We've Gone Digital!

Please see the two informative flyers on this page for details.



NCH Androscoggin Valley Hospital
North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency
Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital
Weeks Medical Center

Paying your bill just got EASIER!


Expect More from North Country Healthcare!

Because of your feedback, we at North Country Healthcare have improved the patient experience to be more convenient for you!

- **Statements** designed to provide you one guarantor-based statement for your North Country Healthcare services, *excluding North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency*. The statements feature a clean, fresh, new look for easier readability and a QR code to save you time when you make payments and access our new patient payment portal.
- **New Online Patient Payment Portal - Quick, Easy & Secure Access with no need to remember passwords.** Our patient payment portal is designed as a self-serve tool where you can manage your own payment, automatic payment plans, set up preferred electronic statement delivery, and securely store financial details.
- **Digital Communications** including text, email, and web chat so you can communicate through your preferred preference. Don't worry, we are still available by phone. In fact, we have a new highly engaged team ready to work with you.
- **Increased Staffing and Healthcare Knowledge** to drastically improve your previous call wait-time and/or billing inquiries.

* With our enhanced features, our priority is your patient experience.

Thank you for allowing North Country Healthcare to serve you.



NCH Androscoggin Valley Hospital
North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency
Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital
Weeks Medical Center

Good news... We've gone digital!

Our patient billing has gone digital to:

- Increase convenience** for you
- Reduce paper waste**
- Provide personalized** email and text messages

So you can:

- ✓ Complete payments in **just a few clicks**, with no usernames and passwords to remember.
- ✓ See **past** statements and payments.
- ✓ Set your **delivery preferences**.

What to expect:

- ✓ We are now delivering communications via **email, text or mail**.
- ✓ **You will always be able to control** how you are receiving these and can change your preferences at any time.

Why go digital?

- ✓ To make the **payment process easier** for you.
- ✓ With digital communications, it is **easier and faster to view and pay** any statement.
- ✓ To help the environment—we want to **minimize paper waste** sent to patients who would prefer digital communications.
- ✓ To give you a **more individualized experience**. We know that no two patients are the same, so you should be communicated with in the ways that work best for you.