



The University of Vermont Medical Center's third cohort of nurses started their residencies in November 2018.

Nurse Workforce Development: Residency Programs

Vermont hospitals are instituting nurse residency programs in an effort to reduce turnover, and promote professional growth to provide safe, competent, and effective patient care.

Nurse residency programs provide a transition-to-practice learning and support model for newly licensed registered nurses. In Vermont, current programs vary in length from ten-weeks to one-year; one review asserts that programs at least 24-weeks in length had a positive impact on nurses' clinical leadership skills.¹ Core goals of nurse residency programs are to ease the transition from the classroom to clinical practice, enhance patient care, increase new nurse job satisfaction, and reduce workforce turnover. When lower turnover rates are achieved, the program can pay for itself; three states have adopted a state model for nurse residency: Hawaii, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Home health organizations also have begun to consider nurse residency programs.

The Vizient/American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Nurse Residency Program™ launched in February 2018 at the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMHC). Its year-long curriculum focuses on real-life skills and includes working with trained preceptors to learn the routine of the unit, master organizational skills, and become confident with the computer applications related to nursing documentation. The curriculum includes sections on leadership, stress management, decision-making, critical thinking, patient safety, quality outcomes and incorporating results-based standards into daily patient care. Participants complete an evidence-based practice project during their residency.²

One study concluded that "New graduate nurse transition programs using the University HealthSystem Consortium/ AACN Nurse Residency curriculum [Vizient] had the greatest impact."¹ Both the UVMHC and Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC) use the Vizient program which began in 2002 and is an

continued on next page

From the Editor

The UVM Office of Primary Care and the Vermont Academic Detailing Program have focused on a variety of projects to better understand and improve the prescribing of opioids in primary care, specialty care, and dentistry. "Right-sizing" the amount of opioids prescribed is an important strategy to reduce the likelihood for opioid diversion or misuse. Quarterly reports from the Department of Health have shown consistent gradual reductions in opioid prescribing: www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/reports/data-and-reports.

In this issue of *Primarily Vermont* we have included an insert of two educational handouts, one directed at patients, and the other at surgeons and their staff, regarding opioid use in the post-operative setting. They include web links to brief educational videos. These materials were based on research projects in the Department of Surgery at the UVM Medical Center and elsewhere and emphasize that historically prescribers have, on average, been prescribing higher volumes of opioids than many people require.

Please share these materials and video links with patients, colleagues, and staff. Additional copies can be printed from the flyers which are posted at www.vtad.org.

This public health project (03420-A181305) is in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, with funding from federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

REFERENCES:

- Fujii et al 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2018.01.058>
- MacLean et al 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pm/pny215>

Elizabeth Cote, Director, UVM Larner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program.

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Institute of Medicine-recognized model program.

The first cohort of UVMMC nurse residents graduated in December 2018; a second cohort completes the year-long program in July 2019, and a third cohort began in November 2018. RRMCC began their program in September 2018. Other Vermont hospitals such as Northwestern Medical Center, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, and North Country

Hospital also have a nurse residency program.

“As we commit to hiring newly graduated nurses, it is important to support them as they acclimate to their roles as registered nurses, and to the culture of the organization. The Nurse Residency monthly seminars are one way to build that support,” says Joanne Barton, MS, nurse residency coordinator for the UVM Medical Center. ■

FOOTNOTES:

1. Chappell KB, Richards KC. *New graduate nurses, new graduate nurse transition programs, and clinical leadership skill: a systematic review.* J Nurses Prof Dev. 2015; May-June; 31 (3); 128-137.
2. UVM Medical Center Starts Residency Program to Improve Transition for New Nurses. <https://www.uvmhealth.org/medcenter/news/uvm-medical-center-starts-residency-program-to-improve-transition-for-new-nurses>; April 4, 2018.

New Federal National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder Workforce

The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has advised that the application for this new program will be accepted through Thursday, February 21, 7:30 pm EST. More information is available at: <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loan-repayment/nhsc-sud-workforce-loan-repayment-program.html>.



Some basic information from HRSA is below:

Health care professionals who are qualified to provide substance use disorder treatment may receive educational loan repayment in return for their contractual service obligation at NHSC-approved sites.

Eligible sites can include:

- SAMHSA-certified outpatient treatment programs (OTPs)
- Office-based opioid treatment

facilities (OBOTs)

- Non-opioid substance use disorder treatment facilities (SUD treatment facilities)
- Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHCs)
- Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)
- State or federal correctional facilities
- Critical Access Hospitals
- Community health centers
- State or local health departments
- Community outpatient facilities
- Private practices
- School-based clinics
- Mobile units and free clinics

Eligible disciplines and specialties are:

- Physicians
- Nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants who are eligible to administer Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)
- Behavioral health professionals

- Substance use disorder counselors
- Registered nurses
- Pharmacists

Applicants from a NHSC-approved SUD treatment facility may receive priority if they:

- Have a DATA 2000 waiver;
- Serve in an opioid treatment program; or
- Are certified in substance use disorder interventions, such as master's-level substance use disorder counselors.

Additional loan repayment opportunities are available through HRSA programs, such as the National Health Service Corps and NURSE Corps, for professionals in specific Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Visit <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/>. ■

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

The Vermont Area Health
Education Centers (AHEC) Network
presents the

VERMONT GERIATRICS CONFERENCE

Thursday, April 11, 2019

DoubleTree by Hilton, Burlington, VT
(formerly the Sheraton)





Project ECHO

The Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) model™ is an evidence-based interactive distance-learning method developed by researchers at the University of New Mexico. The ECHO model™ links teams of interdisciplinary specialists with primary care clinicians. During tele-ECHO™ sessions, experts mentor and share their expertise across a virtual network via case-based learning, enabling primary care practice teams to treat patients with complex conditions in their own communities.

In 2018, the University of Vermont Project ECHO® presented nine tele-education sessions on the Treatment of Chronic Pain to practices around the state. Program expansion is planned for 2019 with a number of offerings in development, including running The Treatment of Chronic Pain series again with a new cohort of participants.

The Treatment of Chronic Pain, a 12-session series, will start on May 3, 2019 and run monthly (first Friday of each month, 11:30 am to 1 pm). This program highlights best practices and evidence-based care for treating patients who experience chronic pain. The program identifies strategies, screening tools, resources, and emerging topics in this field. The participating cohort is made up of individuals and practice teams, including family medicine, internal medicine, social work, behavioral health, and addiction medicine providers throughout Vermont.

Additional Project ECHO programs include:

- **Lyme and Tickborne Diseases**, a 6-session series, is scheduled begin on April 19th and run monthly (3rd Friday of each month, 11:30 am to 1 pm).

PROJECT ECHO: Doing More for More Patients



PATIENT

- Right Care
- Right Place
- Right Time

PROVIDER

- Acquire New Knowledge
- Treat More Patients
- Build Community of Practice

COMMUNITY

- Reduce Disparities
- Retain Providers
- Keep Patients Local

SYSTEM

- Increase Access
- Improve Quality
- Reduce Cost

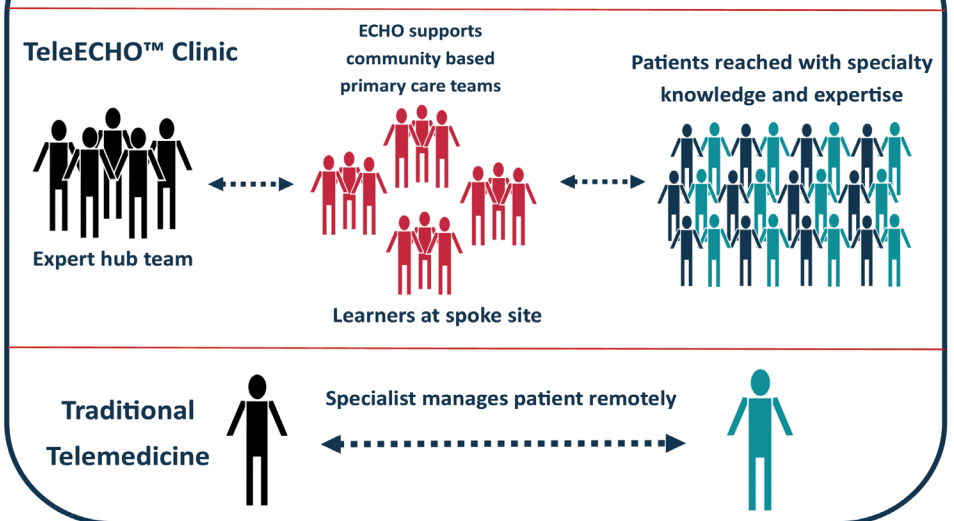
- **Transgender Care in the Medical Home**, an 8-session series, is scheduled to start on June 20th and run monthly (3rd Thursday of each month, 12 pm to 1 pm).

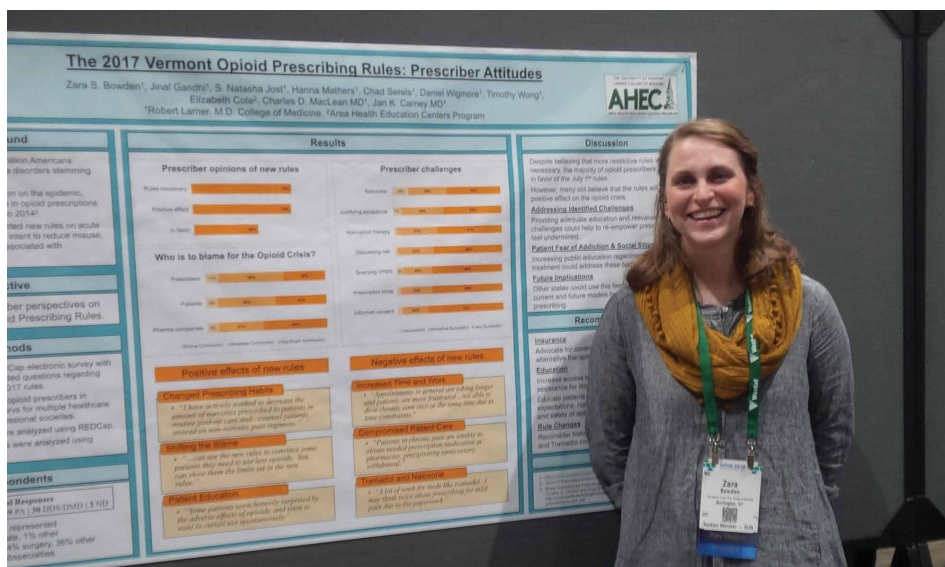
Project ECHO is offered at no cost to participants and the program enables participants to earn Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits for each learning session attended.

More information about these Project ECHO series, and others, will be posted at www.vtahec.org once materials are available.

General questions about the UVM's Project ECHO can be directed to Elizabeth.Cote@uvm.edu; clinical/topic-specific questions can be directed to Mark.Pasanen@uvm.edu. ■

ECHO vs. Telemedicine





Zara Bowden, UVM Larner College of Medicine Class of 2020 student, presented her group's research project in the poster session of the American Public Health Association's National Conference in San Diego.

Larner College of Medicine Students Present at National Public Health Meeting

A public health project by UVM Larner College of Medicine Class of 2020 students to determine prescriber perspectives on Vermont's July 1, 2017 Opioid Prescriber Rules was presented as a poster display at the November 2018 American Public Health Association National Conference in San Diego.

The students surveyed opioid prescribers in Vermont, and received 431 responses, of which 50% were in primary care, 14% in surgery, and 36% in other specialties. Results indicate that although most prescribers felt that more restrictive prescribing rules were necessary, about

half were concerned about the burden of time and effort required to comply with the rules. Some prescribers were critical of the inclusion of DEA Schedule IV opioids (e.g. tramadol) in the same category as the more potent Schedule II opioids, while others raised issues around the required 90-day visit interval for all patients on chronic therapy regardless of dose, condition, or risk. Prescribers pointed out some positive effects of the July 2017 rules, including decreased prescribing, improving shared decision-making discussions with patients, and improvement in patient and community awareness regarding the potential adverse effects of opioid use.

Zara Bowden, a member of the project team, presented the poster, accompanied by faculty advisor Jan Carney, MD, MPH, Associate Dean for Public Health at UVM. Other team members include Jinal Gandhi, S. Natasha Jost, Hanna Mathers, Chad Serels, Daniel Wigmore, and Timothy Wong. The project was sponsored by The UVM Office of Primary Care and Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program, with Charles MacLean, MD, Associate Dean for Primary Care, and Elizabeth Cote, Director of the UVM AHEC Program, as additional advisors. ■

FY19 Vermont Academic Detailing Topics

Academic detailing sessions present an objective overview of what evidence from studies shows about various drugs, and non-drug therapies used to treat a medical condition. An academic detailer will visit a primary care practice anywhere in Vermont to present the latest evidence-based prescriber support and education for managing common but challenging primary care conditions. Participants earn Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit per session. The program is funded through a grant with the Vermont Department of Health; there is no pharmaceutical company sponsorship associated with the program.

The Vermont Academic Detailing Program offers six program topics for the 2018-19 year:

- Management of Fibromyalgia
- Management of Opioids: The Rules
- Advanced Management of Opioids
- Management of Type 2 Diabetes
- Stroke Prevention in Atrial Fibrillation
- Oral Health and Fluoride Varnish in Primary Care Medical Practices

This year's new topic on the Management of Fibromyalgia includes reviewing the diagnosis of fibromyalgia, evaluating the evidence for non-pharmacologic management options, and discussing the pharmacologic approaches to management.

Small group or one-on-one sessions with an academic detailer are available for any of these topics, as well as "live" sessions online. Visit www.vtad.org to learn more. Contact the program coordinator, Laurie McLean, at 802-656-2888 or laurie.mclean@uvm.edu to schedule a session. ■

- "Excellent presenters; appreciate interactive session open to questions throughout." —Nanette Carpenter, NP; Occupational Health Partners
- "Amanda [Kennedy, PharmD, BCPS] is always awesome and SO helpful." —Natacha Jager, MD; SVMC Northshire Campus
- "Excellent and very helpful!" —Marian Bouchard, MD; Mountain Health Center in Bristol

PRIMARYLY VERMONT

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Federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Visits Vermont AHEC

Representatives of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) conducted its mandatory site visit of the Vermont Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program in September 2018; a previous site visit took place in 2007.

Lynda Bishop, DHSC, MHSA, MPH, Commander, U.S. Public Health Service, Senior Public Health Analyst from HRSA's Rockville, MD Headquarters, and Leon Latino, Public Health Analyst in HRSA's Regional 1 Office in Boston, spent three days in Vermont assessing the Vermont AHEC Program, which is partially funded by HRSA. The visit included reviewing the VT AHEC Network's programs, strategic work plan, evaluation plan, and collective impact. The HRSA representatives also met with community-based collaborators in each AHEC region: The Community Health Centers of Burlington, Springfield Hospital and Health Systems, and North Country Hospital participated in

and hosted these meetings.

The visit resulted in a favorable report about the achievements of the Vermont AHEC Network, with recommendations to continue increasing a focus on diversity in program participants and training sites in rural and medically underserved areas. The HRSA reviewers encouraged continuation and expansion of successful efforts such as health career pipeline activities, community-based clinical experiences, continuing education for providers, and sharing program accomplishments with other states' AHECs and the public. There were no negative findings. Commander Bishop said she was impressed with the VT AHEC Network's cohesiveness, program accomplishments, and effective collaboration. She described VT AHEC as "an exemplar" and "gold standard program." ■



UVM Med Student Research on Opioid Misuse Risk

Matt Tsai (Class of 2021), a student at the UVM Lerner College of Medicine, and **Charles MacLean, MD**, Associate Dean for Primary Care, analyzed the Current Opioid Misuse Measure (COMM) of UVM Medical Center patients to assess a patient's risk for opioid misuse. Data suggests patients taking benzodiazepines concurrently with a prescription opioid and patients with severe mental illnesses are more likely to have a positive COMM score. "Both of these traits are fairly prevalent in our population," according to Tsai. The research was a summer project sponsored by the UVM Lerner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program, with Dr. MacLean as faculty mentor/advisor. ■

Thank You, Marty Hammond!

Marty Hammond, M.Ed., retired in October after 17 years with the Southern Vermont AHEC, the last seven as the Executive Director.

Marty is proud to have been part of Vermont AHEC as it became an effective Network. She is also proud of the Southern Vermont AHEC team for its work to support health care and related projects throughout its five county region.

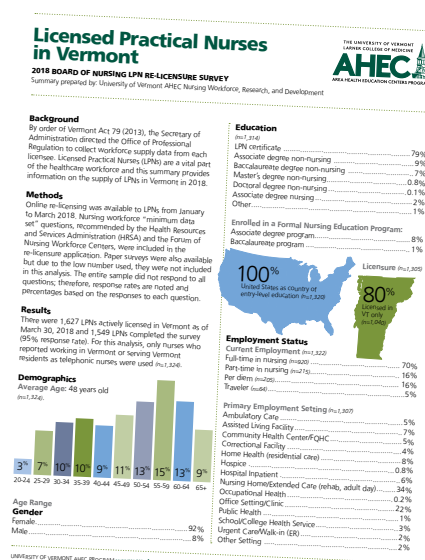
Her retirement plans include gardening, volunteering, travel, "reading my piles of books," and playing with grandchildren.

Thank you, Marty! Best wishes. ■



LPN Workforce Survey Results

The 2018 Board of Nursing Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) Re-Licensure Survey summary has been released by the UVM AHEC Program. Of the 1,549 LPNs who responded to the survey (95% response rate), 70% work full-time in nursing and 34% work in nursing home/extended care facilities. The number of male LPNs has doubled in a decade, from 4% to 8%. The full report can be seen at www.vtahec.org. ■



News Briefs

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Robert Crego, MAT, Named Executive Director at Southern Vermont AHEC



Robert Crego of Newfane has been chosen to lead the Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center (AHEC), succeeding Marty Hammond who retired in October. Crego has worked for nearly 30 years in community development, including as a founding director of Valley Cares and developer of the organization's 64-unit West River Valley Senior Housing project in Townshend. He has also worked as a grant writer and project developer

for Grace Cottage Hospital, as Development Manager for M & S Development in Brattleboro, and as a consultant with non-profit organizations in Vermont for 20 years. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY and a Master of Arts in teaching from the University of New Hampshire in Durham.

Freeman Foundation Legacy Medical Scholarship Recipients

Seven members of the UVM Larner College of Medicine Class of 2020 have been awarded scholarships of \$6,000 each from the Freeman Foundation Legacy Medical Scholarship Program which honors the Freeman family and Foundation. The recipients are: **Nathan Benner**, **Jennifer Boccia**, **Maeve Lauren Donnelly**, **Nathan Dreyfus**, **Eli Goldberg**, **Nektarios Konstantinopoulos**, and **Monica Rogers**. Students make a commitment to practice in Vermont after their medical residency when they accept the award.

Dr. Chen Begins New Role at UVM

Harry Chen, MD, is the new Executive Director for the Center for Health and Wellbeing and Public Health Officer at the University of Vermont. His focus will be enhancing student health services and prompting a public health model for the campus. Dr. Chen was an emergency medicine physician at Rutland Regional Medical Center, a state legislator, and Vermont Commissioner of Health. He and his wife recently returned from spending a year as Peace Corps volunteers in Uganda.

Amanda Kennedy is Keynote Speaker at NaRCAD

Amanda G. Kennedy, PharmD, BCPS, Director of the Vermont Academic Detailing Program, was the keynote speaker at the National Resource Center for Academic Detailing (NaRCAD) Sixth International Conference on Academic Detailing in November 2018 in Boston. She presented: "The little engine that could: A twenty year perspective from the Vermont Academic Detailing Program."

Vermont Medical Society News

Stephen Leffler, MD was elected president of the Vermont Medical Society at its recent annual meeting. He is the Chief Population Health and Quality Officer for the UVM Health Network. **Catherine Schneider, MD**, Chief of surgical services at Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, was named president-elect; **Simha Ravven, MD**, Interim Chief Medical Officer at Brattleboro Retreat, is the Society's new vice president. **Jennifer Boccia**, Class of 2020 at the UVM Larner College of Medicine, received the Society's Education and Research Foundation \$10,000 scholarship.

VERMONT

Vermont's Obesity Rate is Growing

A new study indicates Vermont's obesity rate continues to creep up, from 10.7 percent in 1990, to 17 percent in 2000 to the current rate of 27.6 percent. The statistics are in "2018 State of Obesity," a study that was conducted by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The study found that nationally, obesity rates in 2017 ranged from 38.1 percent in West Virginia to 22.6 percent in Colorado. The report also cites the economic cost, saying obesity costs the nation \$149 billion in medical expenses and lowers economic productivity by \$66 billion each year. The study is available at: <https://stateofobesity.org>.

Vermont Tech Secures Dental Program Funding

Vermont Technical College received \$400,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a program to educate dental therapists enabling expanded access to oral health care throughout the state. Vermont is one of three states in the country to authorize the practice of dental therapy, and the first state to require dental therapists to graduate from an education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

Vermont Overdose Rate Ranks 22nd Nationally

Vermont ranks 22nd in the nation for its rate of fatal drug overdoses, according to a report issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vermont had the lowest overdose death rate in New England, with New Hampshire the highest among the six New England states. The rate of increase in opioid-related deaths has slowed in Vermont.

Vermont Hospital, College Affiliate

Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) and Southern Vermont College in Bennington have formally affiliated to enhance healthcare education and workforce opportunities for college-bound high school students and working professionals who want to pursue a career in health care. The effort is intended to address projected nursing shortages at SVHC, with **Mary Botter, PhD, RN**, becoming Chief Nursing Officer at the hospital while retaining her role as Chair of the Division of Nursing and Health Services at the college.

Vermont Legislature Adds \$5 Million for Mental Health, Addiction Workers

The Vermont Legislature allocated \$5 million of a one-time \$28 million tobacco settlement to address the state's shortage in mental health and substance use disorder counselors. The money will be spread over a three-year period to fund the proposals most likely to build capacity of workers in those fields. A plan is being developed by a work group that includes the Agency of Human Services, Vermont State Colleges System, AHEC, consumers, and health care professionals. The Agency of Human Services will present the plan to the legislature in its upcoming session.

Springfield Schools Offer Medical, Dental, and Mental Health Services

The Springfield School District will offer medical, dental, and mental health services through an agreement with Springfield Medical Care Systems. The agreement calls for a physician, dentist, or mental health specialist to rotate through the district's four schools once every two weeks. The schools provide clinical space but the student's family pays for the service as they would in a clinical practice site.

Free SDF Trainings Available

Free in-office Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) trainings are available from **John Echternach, DDS**, a dentist who is traveling Vermont and New Hampshire to provide the trainings to health professionals. For more information, contact Dr. Echternach by email (jeje14470@outlook.com) with "SDF Training" on the subject line.

NATIONAL

AAMC Medical School Enrollment Survey

The American Association of Medical School's annual Medical School Enrollment Survey shows medical school enrollment has grown 29% between 2002-2017; almost all schools report they have or are planning to have within two years, programs or policies designed to increase school diversity; most are concerned about the availability of graduate medical education opportunities at the state and national level. Enrollment in Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)-granting schools has grown 16% since 2002 and continues to accelerate and the majority of schools are experiencing competition for clinical training sites from DO-granting schools and other health care professional programs. The full report is available at www.aamc.org.

Adult Smoking Rate Lowest Ever in 2017

Cigarette smoking has reached the lowest ever recorded among American adults, at 14 percent in 2017, down from 15.5 percent in 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). A notable drop in the figures occurred among young adults between 2016 and 2017: about 10 percent of those ages 18-24 years smoked in 2017, down from 13 percent

in 2016. Nevertheless, cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States and is responsible for the overwhelming burden of death and disease from tobacco use, the three agencies note. Cigarette smoking kills an estimated 480,000 Americans each year and about 16 million Americans suffer from a smoking-related illness.

Dental Opioid Painkillers May Put Youth at Risk

The use of opioid painkillers for teenagers and young adults who have their wisdom teeth extracted may put them at risk of addiction, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The study points out that in 2015, nearly 15,000 adolescents and young adults who received opioid prescriptions from dentists, 6.9 percent received at least one more prescription three months to one year later, a potential red flag for persistent opioid use. Also, 5.8 percent were diagnosed with opioid abuse within a year of the first prescription. Researcher **Alan Schroeder**, a pediatrician and professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine said, "Our findings should trigger heightened scrutiny over the frequency of prescribing dental opioids."

Life Expectancy Down in the U.S.

Increasing deaths from drug overdoses and suicides caused the life expectancy in the United States (U.S.) to drop slightly in 2017, a trend that has not been seen since WW I when war and a Spanish flu pandemic triggered a decrease in life expectancy. The estimate of how long a person born in 2017 can expect to live in the U.S. is 78.6 years, a decrease of 0.1 year from 2016. In 2016 and 2017 the female life expectancy was 81.1 years while male life expectancy dropped from 76.2 years to 76.1 in 2017. The ten leading causes of death in 2017 accounted for nearly three-quarters of all deaths in the nation, and are: heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, kidney disease, and suicide. Drug overdose deaths totaled 70,237; death rates were highest in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania and lowest in Texas, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. Over the past decade, the suicide rate has ranked as the tenth leading cause of death with rates being higher among men and in rural areas. In 2017 the suicide rate increased by 3.7%. "Life expectancy gives us a snapshot of the nation's overall health and these sobering statistics are a wakeup call that we are losing too many Americans, too early and too often, to conditions that are preventable," states **Robert Redfield, MD**, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Opioids, Car Crashes, and Falling: The Odds of Dying in the U.S.

A new report found that, for the first time, Americans are more likely to die of an opioid overdose than in a vehicle crash. But the likeliest causes of death are still heart disease and cancer. For the details, visit: <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/all-injuries/preventable-death-overview/odds-of-dying/> ■

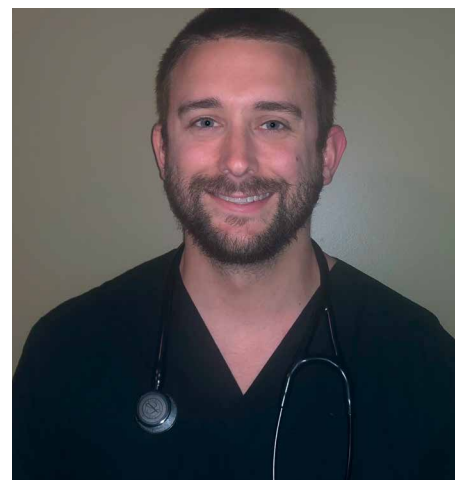
Educational Loan Repayment Provides Incentive for Physician Assistant to Return to Vermont

When **Ezra Bashaw, PA-C**, of St. Albans was eight years old, his father died of brain cancer and it changed his life. "I always knew, because of what my family went through with my dad, that I wanted to go into health care," he recalls. His family and friends formed the Jim Bashaw Cancer and Catastrophic Illness Fund to provide financial assistance to Franklin and Grand Isle County residents experiencing catastrophic illness from cancer or other causes. Fundraisers include an annual Bowlathon and the Run for Jim 5K race, as well as donations. To date, over \$550,000 has been raised in 17 years.

A self-confessed "math and science person," Ezra completed undergraduate studies in exercise science at the University of New Hampshire, where he decided in his sophomore year to become a physician assistant (PA). He graduated from the PA program at Northeastern University in Boston,

for which he completed a clinical rotation in primary care at the Community Health Centers of Burlington (CHCB). "Physician assistants can be very versatile, working in all aspects of medicine; they fill a void in health care," Ezra notes. "Forming relationships is very important in primary care where you're involved in all aspects of a patient's life," he continues.

An educational loan repayment award from the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment (ELR) Program, administered by AHEC and including employer matching funds, provided an incentive to return home to Vermont as a PA at the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH). "My ELR award is a strong incentive to work in Vermont. I grew up here and knew about NOTCH's work with the underserved, which is rewarding work. But it's huge to receive Educational Loan Repayment, since education is more and more



Ezra Bashaw, PA-C

expensive and looking at my educational debt can be daunting. ELR is a good model to recruit and retain primary care providers throughout the state," he concludes. ■

FY18 Vermont Educational Loan Repayment

The University of Vermont and AHEC Program administered the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Programs for physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, dentists, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses. The majority of Educational Loan Repayment funds are provided by federal and state grant funds, and health care employers. All recipients enter into a contractual service obligation and are required to serve Medicaid patients.

In the FY18 cycle there were 141 new applications (16 recruitment, 119 retention, and 6 job seekers) and 67 new awards. Additionally, there were 37 awards as part of a Year 2 auto renewal for two-year service contracts.

Awards totaled \$1,867,657 of pooled

federal, state, employer/community, and private funds.

The average (mean) educational debt of applicants was \$136,464 for primary care practitioners; \$275,429 for dentists; and \$33,517 for nurses. Educational debt ranged from \$5,624 to \$816,522 and the total debt of all applicants combined was \$13,403,258.

"Increasing educational costs and the corresponding increasing educational debt are very concerning. In the context of the current educational financing system, the need for educational loan repayment assistance becomes more evident every year, and plays an important role in recruiting and retaining the health care professionals Vermont needs most," notes Elizabeth Cote, Director of the UVM Office of Primary Care and AHEC Program. ■

We are so lucky to have AHEC as a resource that provides such a breadth of services! Personally I have seen great rewards from AHEC's efforts. Their reach to potential candidates is extensive, and year after year results in a hire at CVMC. The programs run for youth, such as MedQuest are well put together and productive. It's a real gift to see the spark in a student who is finding their path!

Thank you AHEC staff!

— Sarah Child, FASPR, Physician Services Manager, Central Vermont Medical Center, University of Vermont Health Network

Mallory Stultz, PEP Enthusiast

Mallory Stultz hopes to attend the University of Vermont (UVM) Larner College of Medicine where her great-grandfather, **Walter Stultz, PhD**, was a Professor of Anatomy in Dewey Hall.

She didn't always know she wanted to be a physician. Mallory, who grew up in Essex, has many interests, such as gymnastics, stem cells, math, genetics, singing, guitar, research, and spending time with her younger brother.

Following a gymnastics fall in high school that gave her a concussion, she became interested in neurology. As a UVM freshman, she job-shadowed **Kalev Freeman, MD**, in the Emergency Department and also talked with Dr. Freeman about an interest in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) research. During this job-shadow experience, Mallory realized she wanted to become a physician because it combines everything she likes: people, problem-solving, science, and helping others. "Another aspect of becoming a physician that I'm excited about is the eventual possibility that I'll be able to teach," remarks Mallory.

Now a UVM Honors College senior neuroscience major with a minor in math, Mallory credits the Premedical Enhancement Program (PEP) with focusing her attention on becoming a physician. "The fact that it gave me the opportunity to shadow physicians in different specialties gave me a look ahead, to be sure I'm on the path that I want to be on," she comments. Currently in her third and final year of PEP, she has job shadowed in neurology, surgery, and family medicine.

Her focus on medicine has resulted in a fall 2018 interview for admission to the UVM Larner College of Medicine. Reflecting on her PEP experience, Mallory enthuses about the AHEC staff who guided her through the program and notes, "All the doctors are such great teachers, and I was able to get another chance to look ahead by sitting in on classes with my medical student PEP mentor. I've loved getting to be a part of a community of students with similar goals." Eager to begin medical school, she declares no interest in taking a gap year after she graduates from UVM in May 2019: "I'm way too excited to get started," she explains, adding "The best thing that's happened to me is getting into PEP." ■



Mallory Stultz



Jennifer Savage, Physician Placement Professional, discusses career opportunities with a UVM medical student at the Larner College of Medicine.

Physician Placement Program

The UVM OPC and AHEC Physician Placement Program recruits physicians to workforce shortage areas of Vermont, with an emphasis on rural and disadvantaged populations. The program works with UVM Larner College of Medicine graduates and UVM Medical Center residents and fellows to match them to physician vacancies in Vermont.

During FY18, AHEC placed 19 physicians, of which 10 were in primary care, and nine in specialty care. Six physicians were placed in rural counties/underserved areas, one placement was made to a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) practice, and two at Critical Access Hospitals (CAH). One of the specialty care placements was in psychiatry. Currently there are 99 physician vacancies in Vermont listed with the UVM AHEC Program: 46 in primary care and 53 in specialty care. ■

About PEP

The Premedical Enhancement Program (PEP) is a formalized three-year mentoring program co-sponsored by the Larner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care and the UVM Honors College. The intent of the program is to provide academically qualified students with the opportunity to experience the complex realities of patient care and practice management while also witnessing the tremendous responsibility entrusted to physicians. Ideally, students will also begin to appreciate the important role physicians have in contributing to and advocating for the care of underserved Vermonters. Participants gain insight into the medical school process by being matched with a Larner medical student throughout their time in the program.

To learn more about PEP, visit www.uvm.edu/~career/pre_health/?Page=pep.html

New School Nurse Training

Fifty new school nurses participated in the fourth annual AHEC-sponsored New School Nurse Training (NSNT) that took place in August 2018 at the University of Vermont. The training was planned in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health and school nurses.

During the training, new school nurses engaged with veteran school nurses to:

- Identify public health competencies of the school nursing role;
- Learn about licensure, delegation, and creation of health care plans;
- Acquire current information on health issues confronting school nurses;
- Leave with contacts of experienced school nurses and important organizations.

Topics included: The Role of EMS, Immunizations, Delegation, Oral Health, Addressing Anxiety in School, Opioids, Lice, and more.

Post-conference evaluations were positive and attendees offered comments such as:

- I found the program to be informative and helpful in so many ways. It was great to connect with nursing colleagues. It was a day full of resources!
- I appreciated everyone taking the time to come out today to share with us their knowledge in their specialty/expertise. Overwhelmed a little with the information but comforted to know that if I have a question the resources are there.
- Amazing conference! So much appreciation! Thank you! ■



Lillian Rogers, Director of Public Health Nursing in 1902 in New York City (NYC), left, hired Lina Rogers, right, in 1902 who became the first school nurse in the U.S. to address population-based health issues in children so they could return to school to learn. The school nurse pilot program was so successful, improving school attendance by 90%, that the NYC Public Health Department hired more school nurses.

In real life, Sophia Hall, left, President of the Vermont State School Nurses Association, and Sharonlee Trefry, right, State School Nurse Consultant at the Vermont Department of Health, appeared as these characters to teach the new school nurses about the history of school nursing in the U.S.

VT AHEC Health Care Workforce Recruitment & Networking Day

In September 2018, the 25th annual fall Health Care Workforce Networking and Recruitment Day sponsored by Vermont AHEC attracted nearly 200 medical, nursing, and other health professions students as well as medical residents who visited with representatives from 25 Vermont and northern New York hospitals and health care organizations. Post-event evaluations indicated attendees and exhibitors appreciated the connections made during the day.

Comments included:

- "Everyone was so friendly and open to questions."
- "This event has produced the largest networking opportunity to our team. Our team was able to reach our target market on a face-to-face platform in an open and relaxed forum."
- "Connected with a social work student and discussed internship options."
- "Introduced through AHEC to an MD interested in delivering care in nursing homes. Wonderful!"
- "Spoke with an ortho doc who may fill a potential need in our area."



The 2019 event will take place on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at the UVM Larner College of Medicine.

- "We always meet well-prepared candidates in all disciplines."
- "Great connections with recruiters, and

the AHEC loan repayment process and its requirements." ■

Vermont Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)

Vermont AHEC is a network of academic and community partners working together to improve the distribution, diversity, supply, and education of the health workforce in Vermont. Established in 1996, Vermont AHEC has a statewide infrastructure with a program office at the University of Vermont, Larner College of Medicine, and two regional centers. Vermont AHEC focuses on achieving a well-trained workforce so that all Vermonters have access to quality care, especially those who live in Vermont's most rural and underserved areas.



During FY18, the UVM Office of Primary Care and the Vermont AHEC Network

- Provided 1,244 Vermont youth with health careers experiences,
- Supported 607 health professions students' clinical rotations,
- Delivered continuing education to 2,579 health professionals, and
- Placed 19 physicians in Vermont communities.



AHEC News From Around the State

For news from the Vermont Area Health Education Centers Network, check out their community-based web sites:

- **Northern Vermont AHEC:**
www.nvtahec.org
St. Johnsbury
(802) 748-2506
- **Southern Vermont AHEC:**
www.svtahec.org
Springfield
(802) 885-2126
- **UVM AHEC Program:**
www.vtahec.org
Burlington
(802) 656-2179

The University of Vermont Office of Primary Care and Area Health Education Centers Program gratefully acknowledges its core funders:

Thank you!

- Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
- Central Vermont Medical Center
- Copley Hospital
- Federal Health Resources & Services Administration
- Grace Cottage Hospital
- Gifford Medical Center
- Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Care
- North Country Hospital
- Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
- Northwestern Medical Center
- Porter Medical Center
- Rutland Regional Medical Center

- Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
- State of Vermont
- University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine
- University of Vermont Medical Center



Thank you to AHEC Supporters and Collaborators:

The Vermont AHEC Network offers sincere thanks to the hospitals, health care practices, community-based organizations, state agencies, colleges and universities, and many professionals throughout Vermont for their generous contributions of time and resources in support of AHEC's health workforce development programs (e.g., MedTrek, MedQuest, job-shadowing

experiences, PEP, clinical preceptors, student projects, and community-based housing hosts). These caring and committed organizations and individuals each contribute as we work together to inspire, motivate, teach, cultivate, and nurture the future generations of health care professionals for Vermont. ■



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Larner College of Medicine
Office of Primary Care
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Burlington, Vermont 05401

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Calendar

* For more information call: UVM Larner College of Medicine Continuing Medical and Interprofessional Education at (802) 656-2292, or go online to www.med.uvm.edu/cme.

JANUARY

24-27 Vermont Physician
Assistant Academy Winter
Conference, Equinox Resort,
Manchester, VT Contact:
PAAVWinterCMEReg@
conmx.net

APRIL

4-5 Vermont Nurse Practitioners
Association Annual
Conference, Stowe/Flake
Resort, Stowe, VT
Contact: VTNPA.org

11 Vermont Geriatrics
Conference*, DoubleTree by
Hilton (formerly Sheraton),
Burlington, VT

APRIL

19 Project ECHO: Treatment
of Lyme & Tickborne Diseases,
Tele-education series
start date (meets third
Friday of each month,
11:30 am-1:00 pm)
802-656-2179

MAY

3 Child Psychiatry in Primary
Care Conference*, Hampton
Inn, Colchester, VT

3 Project ECHO: Treatment
of Chronic Pain, Tele-
education series start date
(meets first Friday of each
month, 11:30 am-1:00 pm)
802-656-2179

7 Vermont Blueprint for Health
Conference*, Doubletree by
Hilton, Burlington, VT

MAY

10 Thyroid Conference*,
UVM Davis Center,
Burlington, VT

JUNE

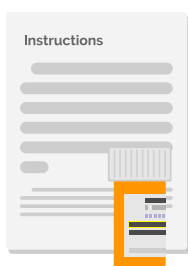
3-7 Annual Family Medicine
Review Course*, DoubleTree
Hotel, Burlington, VT

7-8 Wilderness Medicine*
DoubleTree Hotel,
Burlington, VT

20 Project ECHO: Transgender
Care in the Medical Home,
Tele-education series start
date (meets 3rd Thursday of
each month, 12 pm to 1 pm)
802-656-2179

HOW TO SAFELY TAKE OPIOID PAIN MEDICINE

Opioid pain medicines are sometimes prescribed to keep you comfortable after surgery or an injury. Here are some tips if you are prescribed these medicines.



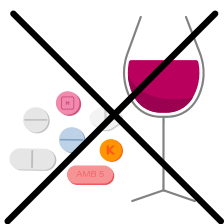
TAKE ONLY AS PRESCRIBED

Opioids can be dangerous if not taken as prescribed.

Check your instructions carefully—opioids are often prescribed AS NEEDED, not around the clock.

Common side effects include feeling:

Sleepy, Dizzy, Itchy, Constipated, Sick to your stomach, Foggy



NEVER MIX

Never mix opioids with alcohol, sleeping pills, muscle relaxers, and certain anti-anxiety medicines.

Mixing these can cause serious side effects, including overdose and death.

Tell your doctor about ALL other medicines you're taking.



DISPOSE SAFELY

Dispose of your leftover opioid pills safely.

Never throw them in the garbage or flush them.

Drop them at a permanent drug disposal site.

Call 2-1-1 to find one in Vermont.



LEARN MORE

Get additional tips on taking pain medicine safely after surgery. Watch our video at **www.vtad.org**



TIPS FOR SAFE OPIOID PRESCRIBING AFTER SURGERY

1. REVIEW

Review safe and effective prescribing amounts and durations for common surgeries and procedures.

See the table at the right for examples. →

2. DISCUSS

Discuss these recommendations with your medical staff, and develop standards for your practice or department.

3. SHARE

Share these standards with your whole team, including nurses, medical assistants, and office staff, so everyone is on the same page.

4. FOLLOW

Continue to follow Vermont's rules for prescribing opioids, including discussing the **benefits and risks of opioids**, especially side effects and interactions with other medications.

5. REMIND

Remind patients to store their opioid prescriptions safely, ideally in a locked box or drawer, and to dispose of leftover pills at an approved location.

CALL 2-1-1 PATIENTS CAN CALL 2-1-1 TO FIND A PRESCRIPTION DISPOSAL LOCATION NEAR THEM

TYPICAL OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS FOR COMMON SURGERIES IN MMEs (Morphine Milligram Equivalent)

Procedure	Proportion with an opioid prescribed	MME prescribed, median
Appendectomy (laparoscopic)	78%	64
Cholecystectomy (laparoscopic)	85%	64
Hernia (inguinal, ventral, incisional)	95%	64
Mastectomy, partial	65%	40
Knee Arthroscopy	97%	68
Hip Arthroplasty	88%	375



We've created a patient education video on taking opioids safely after surgery.

ASK EVERY PATIENT TO WATCH THE VIDEO BEFORE THEIR PROCEDURE AT:
WWW.VTAD.ORG

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND LATEST RESEARCH ON OPIOID PRESCRIBING TRENDS IN VERMONT, VISIT WWW.VTAD.ORG



The University of Vermont
LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
OFFICE OF PRIMARY CARE & AHEC PROGRAM