Compassionate Hearts...

Healing Hands.

DOWN EAST HEALTH SYSTEM
2008 Annual Report
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1,171 Admissions
112 Babies
33,855 Outpatient Registrations
74,805 Lab Tests
8,140 ER Visits
17,375 Diagnostic Imaging Exams
2,254 Inpatient & Outpatient Surgeries
A Message from our Leadership

This past year was a very challenging year for our health system where we experienced some of life’s best and most difficult moments. As an organization, we invest in our people through education and training so that they can perform at their very best. At the same time, we are an organization of human beings and just when we believe that we are providing state-of-the-art medical care, life’s events remind us that we can always do better.

Late in the year, we had the opportunity to meet with many community members to share information and discuss issues that concern us all. We deeply appreciate this dialogue and plan to continue conversations with you on an on-going basis.

One issue that we can all agree on is that Down East Community Hospital plays such an important role in our community. In addition to providing jobs for more than 225 people, our organization enables thousands of Washington County residents to receive quality healthcare, close to home.

Our organization has become even more determined to advance its quality, customer service, facility and healthcare improvement agendas. On the quality and patient safety front, our hospital earned two blue ribbons from the Maine Health Management Coalition, was renewed as a Tier 1 provider in the State’s preferred provider list through Anthem, and our National Quality Alliance Scores out performed the majority of Maine and U.S. hospitals.

In today’s progressive healthcare environment, hospitals like ours must work hard to keep pace with advances in technology that support the delivery of quality care. In 2008, new technology was acquired such as digital imaging equipment, a centralized monitoring system and additional computer hardware and software upgrades that enabled us to take one more step toward developing an Electronic Medical Record System. These new technologies will provide more precise diagnostic images of patient organ functions, enhance patient vital signs monitoring capabilities, and more complete electronic medical record information. A strong bottom line is what helps us improve the care we provide by allowing us to upgrade our facilities, purchase new technologies and employ additional healthcare specialists. In these tough economic times, it becomes even more critical to manage our finances responsibly so that our organization can remain vital.

Of course, all of the good work achieved through our health system is only possible through the commitment of the employees, physicians, volunteers and board members who contribute their time and talent to ensure outstanding care to our patients. We care deeply for the people who work here and we are grateful to our community for the privilege of being your hospital.

Sincerely,

David C. Rioux  
Medical Staff President

Wayne T. Dodwell  
President & CEO

Walter N. Plaut  
Chairman of the Board

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Down East Community Hospital is committed to providing quality care for all individuals regardless of their ability to pay. In 2008, the hospital provided $508,042 in charity care, including uncompensated care for the uninsured and underinsured.

While approximately one-third of Maine hospitals lost money from operations in 2007 and again in 2008, Down East Community Hospital continued its strong financial performance.
As with many other businesses across the country, Down East Community Hospital posted its unrealized losses on its investments as a result of the downturn in the financial markets.

In 2008, we invested in our building and in equipment and technology that advance the care provided. The hospital has been burdened by a leaky roof for years and last year a roofing project that applied a ceramic coating to the roof has finally remedied the problem. Our pharmacy was renovated to improve the work flow and meet all new regulations that pertain to pharmaceutical services. The hospital invested in new technology for the nursing units including a clinical monitoring system and also the Point of Care system, which is the first step in electronic medial records. A new, state-of-the-art echocardiogram system was purchased for our cardio-pulmonary department to provide advanced diagnostics for cardiac patients.
Our goal is to meet and exceed customer expectations for service, comfort, privacy and communication. In 2008, Down East Community Hospital launched a concerted “Service Excellence” initiative in order to weave a strong customer service ethic into our culture. We began to develop service standards that define the behaviors and attitudes our customers should expect from our “workforce” which includes employees, physicians and our volunteers. This initiative will be on-going.

Press Ganey is the nation’s leading company that measures patient satisfaction. Down East Community Hospital is one of well over 1,900 acute care hospitals throughout the country using Press Ganey to measure our patient’s perception of the quality of our service. Just one year into our Service Excellence Initiative, our Press Ganey scores have improved significantly, placing Down East Community Hospital in the top quartile of the hospitals rated by Press Ganey.

Our Emergency Department staff worked as a team to dramatically improve their service by implementing new systems and protocols. For instance, the Emergency Department’s new goal is for a nurse or doctor to greet and briefly assess a patient within 30 minutes of arrival in the department’s waiting room. This alone has received tremendous feedback from our patients. Their hard work has paid off because at the beginning of 2008 they were ranked 23rd out of 100 (100 being the best) and by the end of the year they achieved a ranking of 76. This is a very impressive achievement.

Equally impressive is lab and radiology team’s improvement from a ranking of 32 at the beginning of 2008 to an increased rank of 80 by the end of the year. Our lab and radiology team members outperformed 80% of all other hospitals participating in Press Ganey surveys.

In the fourth quarter of 2008, our Inpatient satisfaction scores also increased to the top quartile among all Press Ganey Hospitals. Our Inpatient staff team outperformed 76% of the 1,780 hospitals participating in the Press Ganey’s Inpatient Satisfaction rating program. Service excellence and team work are contributing to increased patient satisfaction and we are inspired to continue reaching loftier heights in the months to come.
**Quality & Patient Safety**

Quality of care and patient safety is at the forefront of everything we do at Down East Community Hospital. We recognize that health care must be safe, effective, patient-centered, timely and efficient. We constantly measure and monitor the care we provide internally through our Quality Improvement Committee which meets monthly. Additionally we participate in several external monitoring programs.

For example, Down East Community Hospital participates in the Hospital Compare program with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS evaluates hospitals nationwide, rating each facility on a set of standards in four major areas: surgical care, heart attack, pneumonia and heart failure. In evaluating how hospitals rate in the four major service areas, Hospital Compare considers each facility’s performance against 24 “measures.” In 2008, Down East Community Hospital outperformed hospitals nationwide in 90 percent of the categories in which all hospitals are rated. Specifically:

A key aspect of patient safety is ensuring that the processes we follow in dispensing medications to our patients are safe and error free. In 2008, Down East Community Hospital received both planning and implementation grants from the Maine Health Access Foundation to implement new patient safety initiatives around medication dispensing.

Down East Community Hospital implemented the Point of Care (POC) system in November. This system is the clinical electronic medical record that allows nursing and allied health professionals to document patient notes at the bedside using a computer. This has had a positive impact on patient care and nursing. In particular, the system’s medication management safety features are of tremendous benefit to our patients.

According to “Hospital Compare” ([www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)):

- DECH ranked above the national average in 19 of the 21 measures.
- DECH ranked above or equal to state average in 18 of the 21 measures.
- DECH was the top performer in 8 out of the 21 measures.

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“DECH has some of the best doctors in the State!”

“Nurses were compassionate and highly professional!”
A Patient’s Story

Chris Rudd - “...my confidence and faith in the ability of this hospital to heal me did not waver.”

“It was the start of what I thought was a typical day for me,” relates Chris Rudd of Machias. Chris, a career woman who directs two childcare centers in Machias, got out of bed, hit the treadmill, had breakfast and went off to work. But at about 9 A.M., she felt a wave of aches and chills come over her as if she were getting the flu. By mid-morning she felt worse and left work.

As Chris drove home, her teeth chattered uncontrollably. As soon as she walked into her house, she went straight to bed. Chris knew she should eat and drink something, but every time she tried to get up, she just could not. Finally, she got out of bed to take pain reliever for her aches but started to hyperventilate from the pressure in her chest.

At around 5 P.M., Chris called her husband, Paul, and told him she thought he should come home. Paul took one look at her and immediately called their physician's office. Paul was told to get Chris to the Emergency Department immediately.

Chris was so sick that she does not remember her ride to the hospital, “But what I do remember is the great experience I had as a patient at Down East Community Hospital.”

Immediately upon arrival at the ED, she was taken into a room and connected to an EKG to rule out a heart attack. A heart attack was discounted, yet her symptoms were severe and atypical; her white blood cell count was not elevated nor did she have a fever.

Having had bronchitis and pneumonia before, Chris explained that her symptoms seemed to somewhat mirror those two illnesses. With that, a chest x-ray was ordered that showed her lungs were full of pneumonia. A blood test revealed that the pneumonia was in her blood as well.

It took several days to identify the bacteria causing the illness. The hospital worked with the lab in Bangor and even the Center for Disease Control (CDC) so that ultimately the right treatment could be administered.

During this time, Chris remembers her family and friends asking her if perhaps she should go to Bangor for treatment. “I told them absolutely not. There was nothing they could do in Bangor that was not already being done here. I also knew that it would be a far easier road for me if I was in my own community rather than being 90 miles away from my family and friends.”

This was the sickest Chris had ever been, “yet my confidence and faith in the ability of this hospital to heal me did not waver. I had a great team giving me the best care possible.”
Chris appreciated the thorough diagnostic approach of Down East Community Hospital physicians. “I have had many experiences over the years with the physicians and I feel they don’t just look at the surface. They leave no stone unturned to find the underlying cause of a condition.”

During her twelve-day hospitalization, Chris encountered employees from many different departments and was equally impressed with them all. “The Cardiopulmonary clinicians were attentive, knowledgeable and answered all of my questions. The phlebotomists from the lab were wonderful, considering I am not an easy draw!” From housekeeping, to the lab, to imaging and case management, she has all good things to say about them all.

Chris was awed by the way everyone did whatever they could to make her feel comfortable. “The nurses have a deep appreciation for the fact that having your family and friends around you is an important part of healing. They were friendly to my visitors and yet they were respectful of my privacy by asking visitors to step out of the room during treatment if I so chose.”

Reflecting back on her experience, Chris has nothing but the best to say about her care. “At Down East Community Hospital, you are not just a patient, you are a person. I cannot imagine what we would do in this community without this hospital.”
Medical Staff

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Vice-President-Kara Dwight, DO
Secretary/Treasurer-Leonid Brodsky, MD

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Kara Dwight, DO Chief of Obstetric Services
Victor Parisien, MD Chief of Surgical Services (interim)
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James Rohan, MD Chief of Radiology Services

In 2008 the following physicians joined the Active Staff:

Theron C. Mock, Jr., MD, Victor Parisien, MD,
General Surgery Orthopedics

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Urology
Dhanvant Rathod, MD

Women’s Health
Christine Kuhni, WHNP
The Sunrise Care Facility

As the new administrator of Sunrise Care Facility, I feel privileged to be a part of a nursing home that has served the community for over 40 years. The majority of our residents grew up together, raised their children together and are now able to spend time with one another again. We have three residents that we call our “Golden Girls” who love telling tales of their younger days. This familiarity contributes to the home-like atmosphere that we are known for.

We are particularly proud that our nursing home was rated a “5 Star” Facility by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). Out of 112 nursing facilities throughout the state, Sunrise was one of 26 that received the distinction of this highest rating. These scores are based on three years of inspections.

In 2008, we received grants from the Maine Community Foundation and the Davis Family Foundation to assist in funding the cost of a new whirlpool bathing system. Our residents can now enjoy the therapeutic and healing benefits of the whirlpool. Additionally, we acquired new furniture in our common areas for our residents.

The Sunrise Care Facility Activity Department was busy last year with various shopping trips and outings to restaurants. Additionally, we again provided backpacks filled with school supplies to the Beals, Jonesport and Addison elementary schools. On the 4th of July, we hosted the children’s mini parade in our parking lot and the residents voted on the best overall float!

We have much to be proud of at Sunrise and we remain grateful for the support of Down East Community Hospital and our community.

Geri Bryant
Vice President, Long-term Care Administrator
Genero

Our Volunteers

Since April of last year, the community has been invited to participate more fully in the life of Down East Community Hospital with the launching of our formalized volunteer program. Volunteers, found in all corners of the hospital, are adding a very important dimension to the care we provide by assisting our patients and families as well as our clinical and administrative staff. Our volunteers, aged 14 and up, work days, after school, nights or on weekends; whatever suits their schedule and our needs.

Volunteer Coordinator Sharon Hext remarks, “while they receive no pay, we hope our volunteers are collecting paychecks of the heart from the important contributions they are making in the lives of our employees, patients and visitors.”

Pastoral Care

Upon completion of the hospital’s beautiful Chapel, built with the strong support of the Down East Community, the hospital initiated a Pastoral Care Program and hired its first Pastoral Care Coordinator, Reverend Bonnie Haase.

Down East Community Hospital recognizes that pastoral care is an integral part of the healthcare team. Pastoral care offers benefits to four parts of the healthcare system: patients and their families, healthcare staff, the healthcare institution and the community at large. Whether it is a tragedy, a surgery or other illness, pastoral care provides a caring and compassionate presence to patients and their families. This much needed element of spiritual healing adds to the overall physical and emotional health of patients and their families. At the same time, pastoral care offers support to hospital staff in stressful times. Pastoral Care providers respond to concerns in unique ways, drawing on the historic traditions of spirituality that contribute to the healing of body, mind, heart and soul.
The Down East Health Trust

Gratitude for Giving! Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the gifts of our generous donors during 2008.

- With funds raised through the Down East Health Trust, a new, state-of-the-art echocardiogram was added to the Cardiopulmonary Department
- At the Light A Life celebration on December 4, 2008, The Robertson Building was dedicated in memory of Dr. Donald M. Robertson
- DECH received a grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation for a medication safety planning and implementation grant and a grant for pediatric sedation dentistry.

Our Donors

With generous hearts and open arms, our donors in 2008 gave of their time, talent, and charitable support.

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In Memory

In Memory

Sara Lund [2]

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Thank you for your generosity

These donations were received between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list of donors. If we have inadvertently omitted, misspelled or incorrectly listed a name, we offer our most sincere apologies. Please call the Down East Health Trust at (207) 255-0274 so that we may correct our records.

Please note that due to space limitations, gifts under $25 are not listed. However, please know that each gift received is equally important to our mission, and we express our most heartfelt gratitude to our 148 donors in the under $25 category.