



## Grandma was right: eat your vegetables!

*Every ten years the government conducts the National Health and Nutrition Evaluation Survey (NHANES) during which health and dietary factors in thousands of Americans are studied. The earliest of these studies showed that cigarette smokers who identified themselves as “liking carrots and broccoli and eating them regularly” had more than 40% less lung cancer than those who said that they “did not like carrots and broccoli and rarely ate them!”*

Given this information, a large study was undertaken to investigate what happens when smokers take extra Vitamin A. The study had to be cancelled when those taking the extra Vitamin A started getting more lung cancer than expected! Various theories exist as to why this happened, but it is my belief that the large amounts of Vitamin A overwhelmed the body's ability to absorb all the other important nutrients in those healthful natural foods. We have since learned that there are 600-some compounds in carrots that are related to Vitamin A. Who knows which of these is important to our health? So even though some of these other compounds, such as lycopene and lutein, are now popular additions to supplements, we still don't know which ingredients – and in what ratios – are important in helping our bodies fight cancer.

Similarly, studies decades ago showed that higher Vitamin E levels seemed to be associated with a lower rate of heart disease. Millions of Americans took Vitamin E by the handful for years. Numerous very large studies over the years showed no heart disease benefit of taking Vitamin E supplements. The high Vitamin E level, however, might be a marker that those people consumed more whole grains, a major source of vitamin E. We now know that consuming whole grains is associated with a reduction in heart disease – we just don't know why.

Likewise, early studies showed that people who had more selenium in their bodies had a lower rate of prostate cancer – but a large study of selenium supplements given to tens of thousands of men showed no reduction in prostate cancer. Selenium is found in beans, nuts, and vegetables, and so selenium levels may simply go along with consumption of these healthy foods.

We would all like to have a magic pill that would keep us healthy, fit, young – and thin! But nothing like that exists. We know that the absolute most important things to live long and healthy are avoiding smoking, getting regular exercise, controlling high blood pressure, and if you have high cholesterol or are at high risk of heart disease, taking a statin medication to lower your cholesterol. And everything we find out in regards to nutrition and health all falls back to the importance of whole foods – and this also means moving more towards a plant-based diet and having less dependence on meat. And in these times when we have ready access to an abundance of heavily processed foods it is sometimes harder to take the time to prepare and eat whole foods and to simply do as grandma always advised – *to eat your fruits and vegetables!*



Stephen Blythe, D.O.  
practices at  
DECH Medical  
Associates in  
Machias  
255- 4567



# Be Prepared

By Donna Stanley-Kelley, RN Infection Prevention Nurse

*Winter has arrived and with it coughs, colds, fevers, earaches, and the flu.*

*Do you ever wonder what the difference is between the flu and the common cold? The cold and flu are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. It is often difficult to tell the difference between the two based on the symptoms alone. Generally, the flu is worse than the common cold. Symptoms of the flu include fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough. The common cold symptoms are milder; people usually have a runny or a stuffy nose.*

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting the flu vaccination every year. Every year 5% to 20 % of the population gets the flu in the United States and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications.

*Prevention is the key! Getting your flu shot every year and practicing “respiratory etiquette” will minimize your chances of getting the flu.*

## Respiratory Etiquette:

- Cover your nose or mouth with a tissue or the sleeve of your shirt (if you sneeze into your hand, germs you sneeze can be spread to others as you touch objects)
- Dispose of the used tissue promptly
- Wash hands frequently or use alcohol based hand sanitizers

## Be prepared! A few items to stock up on are:

- Non-prescription drugs such as Tylenol, Motrin, Pepto Bismol, cough syrups, cold remedies, and vitamins
- Canned soups are a quick, light meal. Gatorade or other drinks with electrolytes help to prevent you from becoming dehydrated should you become ill
- Frequent hand washing is important in preventing the spread of an illness
- If you become sick, stay home to prevent sharing the illness with others



*Remember – Keep those hands clean!*

## January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month



Cervical cancer affects approximately 10,000 women in the United States each year. Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer for women worldwide, but because it develops over time, it is also one of the most preventable types of cancer. Deaths from cervical cancer in the United States continue to decline by approximately 2 percent a year. This decline is primarily due to the widespread use of the Pap test to detect cervical abnormalities and allow for early treatment. Most women who have abnormal cervical cell changes that progress to cervical cancer have never had a Pap test or have not had one in the previous three to five years.

Cancer of the cervix tends to occur during midlife. Half of the women diagnosed with the disease are between 35 and 55 years of age. It rarely affects women under age 20, and approximately 20 percent of diagnoses are made in women older than 65. For this reason, it is important for women to continue cervical cancer screening until at least the age of 70.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for a Pap test, please contact the DECH Women's Center at 255-0400.



Central Maine Medical Center College of Nursing and Health Professions has begun the process of providing distance learning education for their nursing program to the Washington County area. Since October first, the college has been working in collaboration with Axiom Technologies, Down East Community Hospital, and the University of Maine at Machias, along with several carefully selected vendors, to insure the educational experience being offered contains all of the tools for the students enrolled to be successful.



In December, the first round of students began the advanced placement program. The advanced placement program is an accelerated admission to the senior year for LPNs. These students met the admission criteria and completed the preparatory work necessary for them to enter their senior year of the Associate Degree Nursing program offered through the college. In December, college representatives were at Down East Community Hospital participating in clinical experiences with the students and the new faculty hired for the program to represent CMMC in Machias.

As the program progresses, it will continue to grow by admitting eight freshman in September. This is open to anyone! We are very excited to have the opportunity to partner with so many wonderful folks from Washington County, and hope to have many qualified applicants to choose from for the fall. If you are interested in being a registered nurse, please call Dagmar or Matt at 795-2840 or go to [www.cmmcollege.edu](http://www.cmmcollege.edu) for more information.

#### ABOUT THE PROJECT

*Washington County is a major hub for blueberry agriculture and commercial fishing in Maine. Axiom Technologies has been awarded an NTIA BTOP Sustainable Broadband Adoption grant that will provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment and support. The project will equip ten local farmers and ten local fishers with wireless equipment and a rugged laptop as a pilot project to help local industries utilize broadband technology in the field and for small business and economic development purposes. In addition, to address a healthcare worker shortage in the area, the project will expand distance learning for healthcare professionals in partnership with the Central Maine Medical Center College of Nursing and Health Professions, with the goal of expanding the pool of local residents with associates' degrees in nursing.*

## Helping Our Neighbors

Washington County residents have a great reputation for helping their neighbors. We do it because it is the right thing to do and because we want to. That holds true for the employees at Down East Community Hospital and its physician practices. They have been raising money through their Jean's Day program and giving the proceeds to many different programs such as House In the Woods, DECH Relay for Life Team, Senior Companion Program, supplies for area schools, food pantries, Ronald McDonald House, Women's Health Resource Library, the Jimmy Fund, and Toys for Tots.

Separate from the Jean's Day were several "drives" for boxes filled with things from home for Maine soldiers stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq. This was a combined effort of hospital employees, physicians, and community members.

The employees also help provide a merrier Christmas for area children in need through the Let's Have a Merrier Christmas program by providing presents for the children they picked from the Angel Tree.

The spirit of giving is alive and well in Washington County. Thank you to everyone in our Hospital and our community for gently touching the lives of others.



# In the Community

## BIGGEST LOSER Wellness Competition To Begin In Washington County

Down East Community Hospital is excited to be a participant in the upcoming *Washington County: One Community BIGGEST LOSER Wellness Competition*. The purpose of this competition is to support your efforts to meet a safe weight for you, follow a healthy diet plan and exercise program, and to establish healthy patterns that you can continue long after the contest is over.

America's expanding waistlines have led to a dramatic increase in the risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other obesity related illnesses. As a result, health care costs have also risen significantly. Fortunately, a wellness trend is also developing and growing quickly. Many employers are leading the way, providing worksite wellness programs and incentives for employees who adopt healthier lifestyles. Businesses benefit from lower health care costs and a healthier, more productive workforce.

A *BIGGEST LOSER Wellness Competition* is a great way to motivate individuals toward the goal of better health & fitness, while building teamwork and boosting morale.

*The program will start on January 7, 2011 and run for twelve weeks, ending on April 1, 2011. The last day of weigh-in will be April 4, 2011. The last day to register is January 11, 2011. Late registrations will be considered on case by case basis.*



### **Basic Wellness Competition Package: (with honor system accountability) Free to Participants**

Basic Package Includes:

1. "How to Get Started & Rules of Competition" handout for participants
2. Team Enrollment Form
3. Outline of Biggest Loser Diet pdf file
4. Compilation of weekly competitions and weigh-in data
5. Notification of weekly and grand prize winners
6. Facebook Group ONLINE for participant/team
7. Outline of Biggest Loser Workout Plan pdf file (Facebook) based on either beginner, intermediate, or advanced fitness levels. Participants may choose the one that best suits their perceived fitness level, or join one of the group fitness classes provided in the resource guide
8. It is encouraged that all participants consult with a physician before starting the challenge

*\*All information between participant and WC:OC is completely confidential and falls under the confidentiality agreement.*

*The competition is not only fun, it delivers results.  
At the end of the competition you will be healthier  
and happier!*

For competition details and to get your team started  
contact:

Angela Fochesato at [angelaf@dech.org](mailto:angelaf@dech.org)  
or 207-255-0225

OR

Sara McConnell at [smcconnell@wc-oc.org](mailto:smcconnell@wc-oc.org)  
or 207-255-3741

# When Mourning



The Rev. Bonnie Haase

*“Someone you know has died. Maybe they died recently, or maybe it was awhile ago. Maybe it’s one person you are remembering right now, or maybe it’s several people. Whoever it is, chances are life has lost some of its sparkle for you, some of its interest, maybe some of its meaning. You may even wonder if life has lost all its meaning. Sometimes that happens... Grief is a natural, normal, instinctive way of coming to grips with the loss of something you prize or someone you love. Your grief has one very important purpose—to help you return to life and to go on living so that you can find meaning again in your days, and fulfillment, even joy.” James Miller*

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that sorrow makes us all children again. Isn’t it strange how when we are hurting, when sorrow overwhelms us, we feel out of sync? We can think we are lost in the woods and no one is coming to find us. A person’s sense of taste and smell can even be affected by grief. Hearing can become over acute and loud noises may make you jump. All of these things are part of the grief process and though they are uncomfortable, painful even, in time, with conversation and support, things can and do get better.

Here at Down East Community Hospital we are using a program called *“When Mourning Dawns”* for our bereavement group meetings. The beauty of this program is that it approaches grief as if it were a year of seasons. Thinking of grief in terms of changing seasons is a wonderful visual as well as heartfelt way of viewing, experiencing and reconciling our feelings about the person or persons whose loss has touched our hearts, our minds and our very beings.

A photo in the program used to describe the *“winter of our grief”* is a picture of red berries on a vine covered with ice. It is an excellent visual description of how frozen in place we can get when we are grieving. It is an image of how hard it is to make decisions and think about the future.

When people come to the support group, the first few weeks can be hard, the retelling of the stories of ones loss can bring it all back as if it only happened yesterday. The joy of the group is that by the end, although people may still feel wounded, they begin to believe in tomorrow as being a place of joy once again in this life.

It is my hope that through the Bereavement program at the hospital we are able to provide a process of healing; a process that heals our bodies, our minds and, our spirits.

*“Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower, where I thought a flower would grow.” Abraham Lincoln*

*“I had thought that your death was a waste and a destruction, A pain of grief hardly to be endured. I am beginning to learn that your life was a gift and a growing and a loving left with me.” Marjorie Holburn*

## *Living Your Life Fully Through the Seasons of Your Grief*





Vicki Brown  
Patient Financial  
Services Director

*Down East Community Hospital has been listening to its patients!* Beginning early in 2011, the hospital will begin sending statements in a new format. Each patient who is private pay or has commercial insurance of some type will receive an itemization of their bill in their first statement. This enables our patients to better recognize what they are being billed for, addressing the number one request that patients have when calling the billing office. In addition, each statement will have a new look that is more user friendly, including the direct phone number to the Patient Account Representative that handles your accounts. This new statement also provides an online option for viewing your bill "real time." This enables the patient to view their bill by account number and shows the original detail of the account as well as any payments that have been made by insurance and/or the patient.

*Please be watching for further information as we get closer to the time we begin offering this new service. For further information, you may call Vicki Brown in the DECH Business Office at 255-0460.*

## DECH Recognized by Harvard Pilgrim Honor Roll

Down East Community Hospital, along with 7 other Maine hospitals, has been recognized by the Harvard Pilgrim Hospital Honor Roll for 2010. The Hospital Honor Roll recognizes those adult, acute care hospitals whose performance was among the top 25% of those measured nationally on a set of composite quality and patient experience measures, as reported by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Hospital Compare, and from Leapfrog patient safety measures.

Hospital Compare measures how well hospitals care for patients with certain medical conditions or surgical procedures, and results from a survey of patients about the quality of care they received during a recent hospital stay. Leapfrog is a national coalition of business leaders and major health care purchasers formed in 2000 to promote the increased safety of inpatient care. To determine the Honor Roll, Harvard Pilgrim used Centers for Medicare and Medicaid data for quality measures in the treatment of heart attack and chest pain, heart failure, pneumonia and the surgical care improvement project. In addition, data from Leapfrog was used in comparing the prevention of medical errors, appropriate ICU staffing, steps hospitals take to avoid harm and the reduction of in-hospital injuries.

This is the first time that Down East Community Hospital has been named to the Harvard Pilgrim Hospital Honor Roll. *"It is an honor that our efforts to improve quality in clinical and service excellence at Down East Community Hospital are recognized by such a highly regarded organization as Harvard Pilgrim Health Care"*, said Douglas Jones, CEO at Down East Community Hospital.

*For more information on the Hospital Honor Roll, go to [www.harvardpilgrim.org/HospHonorRoll](http://www.harvardpilgrim.org/HospHonorRoll)*



*"It is an honor that our efforts to improve quality in clinical and service excellence at Down East Community Hospital are recognized by such a highly regarded organization as Harvard Pilgrim Health Care"*

*Douglas Jones, CEO  
Down East Community Hospital*

## message from the CEO

Dear Friend of DECH,

By the time this message reaches you, our Board of Trustees will be well on its way toward creation of a strategic plan that better defines the objectives and goals of the organization during 2011 and for several years beyond. The purpose of the strategic plan is to create expectations for the hospital as a whole and for leadership in particular. This begins a clear process of holding the CEO and hospital leadership accountable for results.

In creating bottom-line accountability there are many ways of measuring success and, in setting our goals, we will not try to micromanage the work of every individual but will establish a balanced set of measures that define excellence and success from multiple perspectives in ways that, together, assure that every stakeholder (patients, community members, employees, physicians, regulators and insurers) recognize our progress and the value that we deliver.

One of our success measures will relate to *Service* or patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is evidenced in many ways including our customer service surveys administered by Press-Ganey and our success in addressing patient complaints.

In our strategic plan there will certainly be *Quality* objectives. We have many clinical indicators that we are monitoring and, while most people think about quality as it applies to patient care, we have also established indicators for every department in the hospital and we look at our progress on each indicator every single month.

Our goals can only be achieved through the *People* with whom we associate. Therefore, we will establish goals that ensure that we have people who see how their efforts make a difference resulting in low employee turnover and higher staff satisfaction.

Our strategic measures must also address *Growth*. In addressing community needs, we know that there are important issues that must be addressed whether they involve general community health issues such as obesity or the prevalence of smoking or more specific issues such as the availability of expanded cancer services locally.

Needless to say, we will establish goals related to *Finance*. The financial health of the organization is part of the foundation that allows us to exist and to serve and we will be held accountable for our financial performance.

All of these measures are important and together they signal to the Board of Trustees the progress of our hospital in serving healthcare needs for all of us in a balanced, well-planned manner. I look forward to sharing the results of our strategic planning process and, expect during the coming year, that our community will recognize our performance in each of the dimensions outlined above. I am excited to see our emergency receivership heading toward a rapid conclusion. I am excited about the possibility of future collaboration with our good friends and mentors at Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems. I look forward to continued, sustainable, accountable and transparent progress for our community hospital.

With best regards always,



Douglas T. Jones, FACHE  
President & CEO



## Gastric Bypass Support Group

January 3 & 17, February 7,  
March 7 & 21

5:00 pm

MacBride Building at DECH

Provides on-going support to those who have gone through gastric bypass surgery as well as their family and friends. Topics include healthy eating and nutrition, impulse control, exercise. On-going emotional support is provided around the day-to-day challenges encountered post surgery. For more information, contact Janet Monaghan at 255-0485.

## Diabetes Support Group

January 21, February 18, March 18  
January 7, February 4, March 4

12 Noon

12 Noon

Milbridge Medical Center

Down East Community Hospital

Provides on-going support to people with diabetes as well as their family and friends. Topics include nutrition, prevention of acute complications, managing high and low blood sugar, disease process, among others. On-going emotional support is provided around the day-to-day challenges faced by persons with diabetes. For more information, contact Jesse Burns, RN at 546-2391 or Julie Hixson, Community Relations & Marketing Coordinator at 255-0244

## Childbirth Classes:

February 12, April 9

January 8, March 12

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Milbridge WHRL

Down East Community Hospital

This free class provides expectant parents with a tour of the Hospital's Obstetrics Department, information on what to expect during labor and delivery and tips for taking care of that new bundle of joy. For more information or to register, call Jane Brissette at 255-0438.

*Please visit our calendar of events on our website at [www.dech.org](http://www.dech.org) for updates.*

## February is Heart Disease Awareness Month



Although many people think of heart disease as a man's problem, women can and do get heart disease. In fact, heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. It is also a leading cause of disability among women.

The most common cause of heart disease is narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart itself. This is called coronary artery disease and happens slowly over time. It's the major reason people have heart attacks. Prevention is important: two-thirds of women who have a heart attack fail to make a full recovery.

The older a woman gets, the more likely she is to get heart disease. But women of all ages should be concerned about heart disease. Remember to talk to your doctor about your heart health.



**Good Medicine** is published quarterly for Down East Community Hospital. We welcome comments and suggestions from readers. The information contained herein is intended to educate the community about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a physician.

**Douglas T. Jones**, Chief Executive Officer  
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For more information: call **Down East Community Hospital** at 207-255-3356, FAX 207-255-0427 or write 11 Hospital Drive, Machias, Maine 04654, Attn: Julie Hixson.  
[www.dech.org](http://www.dech.org)