During the meeting I discussed some of the many challenges facing our hospital. We must constantly be working to recruit and retain a hard-working medical staff. Sometimes unwelcome departures from the staff happen and we know these can be very upsetting. On the other hand, as the president of our medical staff, Dr. Dwight, pointed out new physicians often change practice sites three times in their first 10 years of practice. We have certainly seen that here in Washington County and we must work hard to make this a place to call home!

We also need to work to quickly install electronic medical records across the organization, develop and implement patient centered medical homes in our physician practices, expand and improve women’s health services, and address opportunities for improving community health through managing disease and promoting best health practices such as breast-feeding of newborns. We must continue down the road of collaboration with Calais Regional Hospital and health centers in Eastport, Lubec and Harrington. And finally, we need to be thinking about what our hospital should look like in 3 to 5 years as payment systems change and funding of healthcare becomes much tighter.

With best regards always,

Douglas T. Jones, FACHE
President & CEO
Richard Yensan, RRT (Registered Respiratory Therapist) had this to say about his department, “We are excited about our new cardiac telemetry management system. This system offers cutting edge technology with automated tracking and robust reporting, which is a huge benefit to our patients and their primary care provider, and it makes us competitive with other facilities.

We have also added a NuStep T4 which is one of the most popular recumbent cross trainers in the healthcare and fitness industries. The NuStep provides a seated, total body workout that burns calories, builds strength, and improves cardiovascular fitness – while minimizing joint stress and lower back pain. The trainer features a smooth stepping motion to simulate a natural walking pattern while simultaneously moving the arms.

This is important to our patients because it provides updated low-impact training with safety, versatility and effectiveness in helping them reach their goals!”

The Cardiac Rehabilitation Department offers an adult exercise program specially designed for patients at risk of or with a history of heart disease. The goal is to strengthen their heart and return them to the normal activities of daily living. Our Phase II Cardiac Rehabilitation is a medically monitored exercise program designed for patients who have had a recent heart illness or surgery/procedure. This program mixes exercise with education on lifestyle changes. It is an individually designed program that consists of a variety of exercises which helps to recondition and improve the physical working capacity of the heart. There is continuous cardiac monitoring during the entire session by qualified personnel.

Candidates for the program include those people who have had a heart attack, have been diagnosed with angina, have had coronary artery bypass surgery, have had pacemaker or have had heart valve surgery.

With a physician’s referral, patients may attend Cardiac Rehabilitation exercise and nutrition classes. For more information on additional services call 255-3356.
The emergency and obstetrics departments are pleased to welcome Anne Wilson, RN. Anne was born and raised in the province of Ontario. She moved to the United States in 1992 where she served 20 years as a clinical nurse and 6 years as a department and/or service line level director. Anne came to us from Mission Regional Medical Center, Mission, Texas where she worked as an Emergency and Children's Service Line Director and was responsible for the daily and fiscal operations of Children's and Emergency Services departments, which included NICU, Intermediate Nursery, Pediatrics, ER, Trauma, and Infusion Services. Rob Janssen, CNO stated, “Anne comes to us with an impressive array of knowledge in the OB and Emergency Medicine field and we are thrilled to have her here, joining us as part of our Nurse Management team at Down East Community.”

“I am happy to be closer to home and enjoying ‘normal’ weather. I love everyone who works here and enjoy this great community. There are lots of opportunities to do good things here in Washington County. Two of my 5 children still live at home and they are settling in very well at Bay Ridge Elementary in Cutler. We look forward to visiting neighboring towns and are thoroughly enjoying all this county has to offer.”

DEC Anesthesia Services Welcomes Martin R. Blaney II, DNAP, CRNA

The anesthesia and surgery departments are pleased to welcome Martin R. Blaney II, DNAP, CRNA to the surgical team. Martin is a Maine native, born and raised in Biddeford. He served in the United States Army for 12 years, both active and reserve, and it was there that he received his nursing education after also being a paramedic for 10 years. Martin continued his education at University of Maine at Fort Kent, receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. He then worked as a flight nurse at Lifeflight of Maine, Lewiston Base, where he was also the nurse educator for the program. It was at Virginia Commonwealth University that Martin completed his Masters of Science in Nurse Anesthesia and most recently his doctorate in nurse anesthesia practice (DNAP). His doctoral work focused on human factors in nurse anesthesia patient safety.

DECH is grateful to have Martin join the team and when asked what he looked forward to about being here, Martin shared, “I wanted to enjoy a rewarding practice environment and have opportunities to explore all that the down east coast has to offer.” Martin enjoys his coastal home in Whiting with his partner Ryan, a phlebotomist at Down East Community, and two cats, one ferret and lots of blackflies. His hobbies include kayaking, biking, hiking and camping.

The patients of Down East Community Anesthesia and Surgical Services are very fortunate to have Martin with his excellent knowledge and experience join a team that strives to provide exceptional care to its community.
OB Options - Individual Preferences
Women's Health Nurse Practitioner - Doula presence, Nurse Practitioner partnership, home birth consultations, birthplans, hydrotherapy, breastfeeding support

As Down East Community Hospital reaches out even more to Washington County’s young family population, Dr. Kara Dwight, OB-GYN, met with some young mom friends to receive insight into their experiences and desires regarding the special time of becoming a mom – first time or all over again. Paula Holm, fellow mom and friend of Kara, opened up her warm home to friends who shared openly their joys and fears of labor and delivery. Discussion about home delivery consultation, doula presence at labors, and general obstetric care all took place with many smiling and sincere hearts. Open feedback was plentiful and knowing that people have options was a key thought shared consistently among the friends. It was also shared that individual preferences should continually be welcomed and implemented whenever possible.

Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner – Doula Model

Chris Kuhni, WHNP, is now caring for pregnant patients, delivering prenatal care at Milbridge Medical Center. Chris will also be an active participant in caring for patients during the labor and delivery of the baby, acting as both a nurse and a doula. “I love the notion of combining the best of both worlds. The Nurse-Practitioner-Doula provides compassionate, nurturing care to low-risk women who are able to design their own birth plan. The focus is on allowing the pregnancy and labor and delivery to progress naturally in a totally supportive environment. The physician is always available. While the NP-Doula remains with the patient throughout labor, the OBGyn actually catches the baby. It’s a great team approach!”

Chris Kuhni, WHNP on having a nurse practitioner - doula presence

To make an appointment with Chris, please call 546-2391.

Nurse Practitioner Partnership

Down East Community Women’s Health Center and Harrington Family Health Center (HFHC) are pleased to announce a partnership in caring for prenatal patients. Beth Russett, FNP and Kimberly Sonderland, FNP will begin seeing prenatal patients in their practice at HFHC. Kara Dwight, DO and Christian Inegbenijie, MD will participate in prenatal care throughout the pregnancy and will be present for the delivery at Down East Community Hospital. Beth and Kim will be with their patients throughout the laboring process, whenever possible.

This unique partnership will allow patients to remain with the practitioners who they know intimately and will have two experienced physicians available to them throughout the pregnancy. To schedule an appointment with Beth or Kim or to find out more about this new partnership, please contact Harrington Family Health Center at 483-4502.

1 to r:
Christian Inegbenijie, MD,
Kimberly Sonderland, FNP,
Beth Russett, FNP, and
Kara Dwight, DO
Here at Down East Community, your ideas and thoughts about your labor are very important to us! As you plan the birth of your baby, we invite you to help us make your delivery everything you desire. Our birth plan encompasses all options available to you. You are in control and we are here to help guide you on the journey. Your birth plan will be sent to labor and delivery where the nursing staff will have it on file, your birthing room will be prepared as soon as we are notified that you are on your way. This will help ensure that your plan is carried out to your specifications. To view the Down East Community Birthplan form, please visit www.dech.org and click on printable documents.

Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy utilizes the soothing properties of warm water immersion to relax the patient and to help ease patient discomfort and anxiety while in labor. Total immersion produces buoyancy which creates a hydronamic lift reducing gravitational pull. It also produces hydrostatic pressure which equalizes the pressure on the body below the water surface. This helps to reduce pain, and allows patients to easily change positions such as knee to chest, seated, and standing.

Our OB department would be happy to tell you more. Give them a call at 255-0242.

Breastfeeding is Best…for baby…for Mom…and even for Dad!

Rich in nutrients and antibodies, breastfeeding provides babies with the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein for their digestive system and it helps protect babies by giving them the necessary antibodies to help them fight disease such as respiratory infections, asthma, and type 2 diabetes. Not only do women recognize the benefits of breastfeeding, so do men; even real men promote breastfeeding!

“I have severe seasonal and food allergies. Breastfeeding has given my boys a healthy start by helping prevent allergies from occurring in the boys. Not only did breastfeeding give my 3 boys a healthy start, it also allowed me extra hours of sleep to get ready for my long days lobster fishing. I didn't need to be woken to help prepare a bottle, my wife could easily feed them.” Chris Chipman, Captain of the f/v Monica Tymin.

An appointment with a lactation counselor can be set up through our OB Department at 255-0400 or Maine Families at 255-0481.
Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning
aka “Red Tide”

By Donna Stanley-Kelley, RN, CIC

Who would imagine these little morsels of delight could be fatal given the correct set of circumstances? Anyone who knows me is aware my nickname was and is “Clam digger” and I have dug my share of clams in my lifetime. Throughout my clam digging career I had a strong opinion surrounding red tide, given the event would occur annually just around the time the blueberries would need to be raked. It would be years later when science would dispel my strong opinion around the perceived myth of red tide and prove a scientific basis for the illness associated with red tide.

Red tide, which is also called PSP (paralytic shellfish poisoning), is caused by a microscopic alga called Alexandrium tamarense in the New England region. These algae can survive cold winters and flourish during the hot, dry, summer days typically seen during the month of August or can flourish when heavy rain is experienced during the summer months. The algae becomes concentrated in shellfish and is typically found in clams, mussels, quahogs, scallops and other bivalves. Regardless of the method used to cook the shellfish or the length of time the shellfish is cooked, they remain unsafe to eat when the algae count is high.

The severity of symptoms also depends on the amount of food an individual consumes. Typically a person who eats the seafood with a high count of the Alexandrium algae may experience symptoms within two hours. Mild symptoms of PSP include numbness and tingling of the arms, face and legs followed by headache, dizziness, nausea and muscular incoordination. Severe paralytic shellfish poisoning symptoms can occur from two to twenty-five hours after ingestion of the toxic shellfish. The severe symptoms lead to respiratory arrest and typically require ventilator support as there is no treatment/cure for the poisoning.

To prevent a potential ingestion of shellfish during seasonal high algae counts, the Department of Marine resources has a great website which is updated frequently as they continually take samples for testing and count determination. They also have a Red Tide and shellfish sanitation hotline you can contact twenty four hours a day for the latest updates and shoreline closures. The number is toll free 1-800-232-4733. Another great resource is your local Marine Patrol Officer and local shellfish warden who can inform you of the status of red tide. The safety of shellfish is highly monitored in order to provide a safe product to our local restaurants for their customers.

Eating shellfish is at the core of our beautiful Maine summers with our families. So, if you are brave enough to venture out and dig your own clams, do a little homework first. If you are going to one of our local restaurants, bring a friend and enjoy some of the best natural food Washington County has to offer!

Maine Families’ Washington County “Bridging” model gets green light to expand program statewide.

For over 3 years Maine Families in Washington County has been partnering with the Community Caring Collaborative (CCC) on a groundbreaking project, the first of its kind in the Nation. The CCC’s Bridging Program uses specially trained HomeVisitors from Maine Families and several other local agencies to work with families who have multiple needs that affect parenting and development and require multiple services or resources. Maine Families Bridgers collaborate with other trained Bridging specialists like nurses, child development experts, and mental health counselors to help reintegrate families back into the community as they work through critical incidents and crises.

Maine Families Home Visiting is a statewide program covering all of Maine’s Counties and serving more than 3,000 families. But it wasn’t until recent budget cuts threatened the program’s existence that the critical work being done quietly in Washington County came to light and was recognized by law enforcement officials, mental health professionals and legislators at the state level. When speaking about the CCC’s Bridging Program, Dr. Mark Brown, Chief of Pediatrics at EMMC, noted:

“Our thinking is that if we can “get it right” for these infants and families, then there will be a system of care in place for other infants who are high-risk, whether the risk factor is prematurity, disability, poverty or opiate exposure.”

Now the Washington County model of our Maine Families Bridging work is being replicated throughout the state! The intensive Bridging training instituted by the CCC will be required training in all counties that will be implementing the Bridging model.

Conceptualized by the CCC’s Director, Marjorie Withers, the Bridging program was made real with hard work by Marjorie and a small group of forward thinking leaders who joined forces to bring about change in Washington County. One of those first visionaries was Down East Community’s own Jane Brissette. As Manager of Down East Community’s Home Visiting Program she recognized the potential power of the Bridging concept and how the needs of her agency’s most vulnerable clients could be helped by this groundbreaking concept. For more information contact Anneke Waag in our Family Outreach Services dept. 255-0481.

Wellness Everyday (WE) Triumphs

The Down East Community worksite wellness program, Wellness Everyday (WE), has been seeking out employees working towards wellness in all its forms (getting well, getting in shape, getting in touch with people you care about, to name a few) and asked volunteers and staff to send photos and triumphs, to share their success.

“It is from couch potato to “something better” that I have been striving,” shared Gretchen Cherry. She has “taken advantage of the DEC business rate at UMM’s Center for Lifelong Learning and joined the Women on Weights fitness class. I lead a senior walking group at the Reynolds’s Gymnasium two mornings a week.” And for personal enrichment, she is “taking an art class and loving it! I am an active member of the Sunrise Senior College (come on, you only need to be 50 to join!).”

Jeremy Look, IT Manager (pictured right), “I have lost 54 pounds in 18 weeks, 40 before my 30th birthday. I continue to exercise on my elliptical machine 5 days a week while playing basketball Sunday afternoons. What helped me to achieve these goals were cutting back on fast food and increasing my daily intake of vegetables along with continuing support from my family and peers. I haven’t felt this great in a long time and plan to maintain this change.”

Continued on page 8...
Machias Blueberry Festival
August 18 & 19
Down East Community Hospital will once again sponsor the First Aid Station. Also look for the Auxiliary Raffle booth. Please support your hospital by purchasing raffle tickets. For advanced tickets or more information, call Bessie Schoppee at 433-2591.

Cancer – There is Hope Here in Washington County
October 5/Pellan Center/8:30am to 3:00 pm
This conference is to bring hope to those living with cancer or caring for a loved one with cancer. Guest speakers will be featured throughout the day and various agencies and organizations will provide information and resources to attendees. This all day event includes lunch and is free of charge thanks to support from the Maine Cancer Foundation. Call Tami at 733-1090 ext 2214 for more information.

Annual Baby Reunion
July 21/Robertson Bldg./10:00 to 11:30 am
Little ones getting together and a gift they will take. There’s a big party coming that we hope you can make! This event is for all babies (and their families) born at Down East Community Hospital from January 2009 to April 2012. Call 255-0244 to RSVP. Please call 255-0244 to register.

Wellness Everyday (WE) from page 7...
Laboratory Manager, Christina Newman, will participate in the Trek Across Maine to raise money for the American Lung Association. She had this to say in response to the support she received from her fundraiser at the hospital, “With the Lab donation and the luncheon, I raised $635.50! This exceeds the minimum fundraising requirement to participate in the Trek. I am humbled by the generosity of the group and hope to make you all proud.”