



Annual Report Overview

We look back on a truly unique year and we see the obvious – financial sustainability, leadership changes, and COVID-19. We welcome the chance to report on these, as there has been great progress made on each. The videos of our staff talking through the COVID-19 response are particularly powerful and we encourage you to watch them. These clips are real, unscripted, and moving. We could not be more proud of how our entire team and our community partners have responded in the face of the pandemic and it is an honor to share their story.

We also see accomplishments that risk being overshadowed in such a turbulent year: impressive success with provider recruitment; increasing our minimum wage; advancing Clinical Practice Governance among our nursing staff; educating ourselves to reduce the impact of bias in healthcare; increasing focus on exceptional clinical quality; celebrating our remarkable staff; and more. We are pleased to pause with you and reflect on what has been accomplished while we continue forward toward with a shared vision of excellence and value in local healthcare.

2020 NMC ANNUAL REPORT

COVID-19

Editor's Note:

Telling our COVID-19 Story

Gearing up to produce the 2020 annual report, it felt like much of NMC's year fell into the long shadow of COVID-19. I found myself asking: Did anything else happen? Of course, many non COVID-related events and changes happened at NMC, as you will see throughout this report. But, so much of our focus and efforts were pandemic-driven, it was obvious that summarizing our response would be a key part of the 2020 Annual Report.

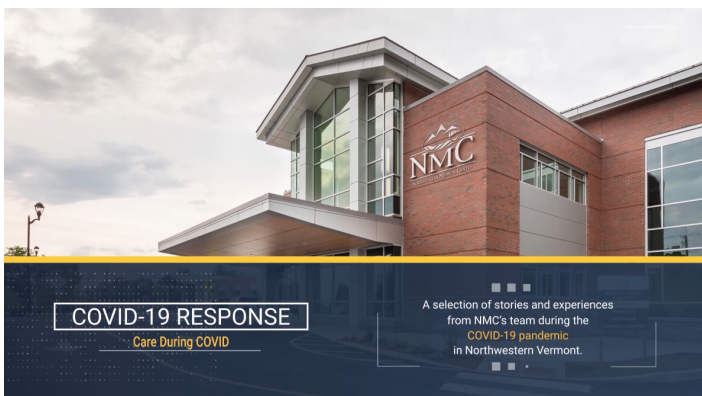
Finding a way to accurately and meaningfully share the story was a challenge. We elected to produce this series of mini-stories through short videos interviewing our staff, rather than taking a traditional written approach. As a life-long writer, this was far outside my comfort zone. I would like to recognize Paul Snyder, Director of Northwest Access Television for his outstanding dedication to helping capture and shape this collection of videos. NMC is deeply indebted to NWATV for their partnership on this and many other projects – thank you, Paul.

In the end, the video series serves two main purposes.

Firstly, I hope it gives you a peek inside the walls of NMC, enabling you to see up close some of the heroes among us. Second, and maybe more importantly, recounting these stories gave NMC'ers a chance to process what happened here, and I also hope that watching and sharing these will also provide a meaningful opportunity for reflection. It was quite a year.

We could not interview everyone who was involved, and we could not tell all the stories there are to tell. These few videos tackle themes that emerged as key to our response, and we interviewed a representative sampling of people who had a birds-eye view of how we operated during the pandemic. To anyone we missed, or anything left out, rest assured that we see you. Our most heartfelt thanks to all NMC'ers for all their contributions ... exceptional care is deeply rooted here.

CARE DURING COVID



View Video:

<https://rb.gy/ftn1jp>

In this segment, you will hear from a nurse with first-hand experience caring for COVID-positive patients. Stephanie Richer, RN brings to life the care experience that required organization, stamina, teamwork and compassion.

While caring for patients with infectious disease is not uncommon in healthcare, COVID-19 presented a higher level of personal safety concerns, and a requirement to act as patient's caregiver, family, support, and only direct human contact during care.

Featuring

Stephanie Richer, RN, Progressive Care Unit

A TIMELINE OF OUR RESPONSE



Looking back, NMC's response over the months of March and April was awe-inspiring. It is powerful to re-examine the milestones in our response, and reflect on how much we accomplished in such a short time span. Many at NMC describe those months as a blur in which one's sense of time was distorted. This segment of our series outlines the milestone dates at NMC, from our early preparations to our first case, to our "stand down" of Incident Command.

View Video:
<https://rb.gy/el9bjc>

Featuring

Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Nilda Gonnella-French, Risk & Accreditation Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs | Chris Reinfurt, Emergency Management & Safety Coordinator

BRINGING STRUCTURE TO CHAOS



It became quickly clear at NMC that responding to an international health crisis is not business as usual. Thus, NMC activated its Hospital Incident Command Structure during the pandemic, a management system that allows staff to respond to the crisis quickly and efficiently with clear lines of reporting and singular focus. An Incident Command Post was established, a command staff team assembled, and the group worked around the clock for 55 operational periods until the local peak of COVID cases had passed. This segment illustrates a bit about how the Incident Command structure works, and how it served NMC and the community well.

View Video:
<https://rb.gy/ftn1jp>

Featuring

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KEEPING SAFETY FIRST THROUGH STRONG PREPARATION



As in any emergency or crisis, the preparations done years in advance pay off when the pandemic hits the fan. This was true for NMC during the COVID-19 pandemic as supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were vital for staff safety and the safe care and treatment of patients. Years of planning, drilling, and advance buying put NMC in a good position as you will hear in this segment about how our team felt prepared and used creative solutions in infection control and conservation of supplies.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/xv5olg>

Featuring

Courtney Leduc, RN Supervisor for Northwestern Pediatrics | Anneke Merritt, Director of Quality | Chris Reinfurt, Emergency Management & Safety Coordinator

NMC STRONG: ONE TEAM IN ACTION



The response of the NMC staff to COVID-19 clearly showed their dedication to the community and to one another. In an incredible demonstration of teamwork, front-line healthcare stepped up, and all other teams took on new roles and duties in support of those patient care teams. NMC closed clinics and halted regular work, freeing up staff to take on new roles in curbside testing, cleaning, implementing new protocols, and much more. The pandemic brought with it a silver lining: an opportunity for NMC'ers to work together toward an urgent common goal, getting to know one another more deeply during a time of great stress.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/wsgxdo>

Featuring

Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Courtney Hodet, Infection Control Coordinator | Courtney Leduc, Clinic RN Supervisor, Northwestern Pediatrics | JoAnn Manahan, RN, ED Nurse Manager

COPING WITH COVID



In Healthcare, illness and death are part of our daily work. Healthcare providers learn to cope with difficult situations and find ways to leave the stress of the day behind. COVID-19, however, brought a new level of stress as schools and businesses closed, groceries were difficult to get, and the news brought non-stop attention to the growing pandemic. The emotional toll on our staff was very real. And once again our staff responded remarkably, supporting one another and helping deal with fear and uncertainty both at work and in their personal lives.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/l8bx18>

Featuring

Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Nilda Gonnella-French, Risk & Accreditation Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs | Courtney Hodet, Infection Control Coordinator | Courtney Leduc, Clinic RN Supervisor, Northwestern Pediatrics | Anneke Merritt, Director of Quality | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs

AGILITY IN A CONSTANTLY CHANGING CRISIS



One of the most striking aspects of COVID-19 was how rapidly the scenarios emerged and changed. To meet the demands of this crisis, we had to compact what felt like a year's worth of work into an 8-week period. Early on, it became clear that in order to keep up with all the changing factors with lives hanging in the balance, we needed to work at remarkable speed.

There was no room or time for red tape, turf wars, or a sense of "this can't be done." Our team fully embraced the whatever-it-takes" approach, and it was truly amazing to see. We hope to give you a glimpse of the incredible agility and speed of NMC's response in this segment.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/midtlk>

Featuring

Dr. Kahren Aydinyan, Northwestern Ear, Nose and Throat | Dennis Boucher, Operations Manager, Information Systems | Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Dr. Louis Dandurand, Director of the Emergency Department | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs | Chris Reinfurt, Emergency Management & Safety Coordinator

A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER



We have always valued the spirit of collaboration in our community. This was never more evident than in the response to COVID-19 as our partners stepped up and joined us in so many ways. NMC could not possibly have responded alone, and we were incredibly fortunate to get guidance, leadership and support from the Vermont Department of Health, long-term care facilities, local funeral homes, community volunteers, donors and more. In fact, there are far too many community members and organizations to list, and this segment gives just a few examples of deeply appreciated partnerships.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/rcjhqu>

Featuring

Nilda Gonnella-French, Risk & Accreditation Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs | Courtney Hodet, Infection Control Coordinator | Courtney Leduc, Clinic RN Supervisor, Northwestern Pediatrics | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs

THE MOMENT IT BECAME REAL



At first, COVID-19 was a theoretical, a news story happening on another continent. Eventually, though the pandemic reached us, right here in our hometowns. Each of us experienced a moment when the impact of the pandemic became real to us. In talking to our staff, we found that the “real” moment came at different times for different people, but it was an unforgettable moment in time.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/tvuu8e>

Featuring

Dennis Boucher, Operations Manager, Information Systems | Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Nilda Gonnella-French, Risk & Accreditation Coordinator, Regulatory Affairs | Courtney Hodet, Infection Control Coordinator | Anneke Merritt, Director of Quality | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs

WE ARE FOREVER CHANGED



It is clear that NMC has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our waiting spaces are different, our check-in processes have changed, we wear masks, we do telemedicine, we keep distance while we work together. We have stopped trying to “get back to normal” and instead are trying to find our new path forward. As we travel the new path, we do so with a fresh perspective and as a stronger team. We have learned that we can take on a challenge of vast size and meet our community’s needs. We are better. We are stronger.

View Video:

<https://rb.gy/iwshpu>

Featuring

Dennis Boucher, Operations Manager, Information Systems | Kristy Cushing, Manager, Rehabilitation Services | Courtney Leduc, Clinic RN Supervisor, Northwestern Pediatrics | JoAnn Manahan, RN, ED Nurse Manager | Jamie Pinkham, Manager, Regulatory Affairs

You will notice that our interviewees are not wearing masks in these videos. Our film crew stayed 6 feet or more away from the subjects, and wore masks throughout the filming. The exception to this was segments filmed inside our COVID-19 unit with ED Nurse Manager JoAnn Manahan.