



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

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

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



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

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.

THE MOMENT IT BECAME REAL



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

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.

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.

OUR NEW CEO

NMC Announces New Chief Executive Officer

In early October, Northwestern Medical Center announced the hiring of Dean French, MD, as the hospital's new Chief Executive Officer. Dr. French joined NMC after 5 years of service as CEO of Community Medical Center in Missoula, Montana. Dr. French will start at NMC on November 30.

Dr. French has 17 years of experience in hospital administration in roles including CEO, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Operations Officer, and Vice President of Medical Affairs and Quality. Dr. French is board certified in Family Practice and has worked as both a Hospitalist and an Emergency Department physician. He earned his medical degree from the University of Washington. Prior to becoming a physician, Dr. French served in the US Army Special Forces.

"Dr. French's expertise and experience was very evident during our selection process," said

NMC Board Chair Janet McCarthy. "Dr. French's perspectives and desire to serve in a rural community such as ours will help NMC provide the best health care possible in our community."

Dr. French was selected from the more than 75 qualified healthcare leaders who applied for the position through the search co-facilitated by QHR Health and WittKieffer. This pool was eventually narrowed to three finalists by NMC's Search Committee, chaired by NMC Board Member Jake Holzscheiter, using criteria based on input from NMC's Board, Medical Staff, Leadership, Management, Hospital Staff, and community partners. Representatives from those same groups participated in the finalist interviews, helping to inform the Search Committee's recommendation to the NMC Board.

A Conversation with Dr. French:

Q: What did you learn from serving in the US Army Special forces that shapes your approach?

DF: My military experience taught me the value of two things which might seem opposed to one another: the importance of following process and chain of command as well as the importance of learning how to adapt and overcome. Also, the Green Berets' attention to being culturally attuned with those involved in our mission taught me how important culture is when working to move an organization forward.

Q: What drew you into medicine and what part of being a physician did you enjoy most?

DF: I cross-trained as a Special Forces medic and did a Peace-Corps style mission. This experience led me to Medical School and I realized I wanted to be a generalist – as Green Berets are generalists. I really enjoyed the relationships with patients over their lifetime. As a generalist, I was able to attend to all their needs and delivered over half the babies in our area over a ten-year period.

Q: Based on what you learned in the interview process, what do you see as areas of opportunity for NMC?

DF: It would be premature to rush into specifics without learning more, but there are opportunities here. It was clear from everyone I met during the interview process that Northwestern Medical Center has a strong legacy. This reputation and the community's support are a foundation to build on. We can focus on that as the place to start as we come together on how to move forward.



Q: What are your connections to Vermont and the northeast?

DF: While I'm coming to you from Montana, the northeast is not foreign territory for me. I was born in Connecticut and grew up in upstate New York. We used to summer on Lake Champlain when I was younger. I have family here in Vermont (Corinth) as well as in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Q: What do you enjoy when you are way from work?

DF: I enjoy lots of things. I'm a motorcycle aficionado and love to ride, repair, and modify motorcycles. I love to camp and fish. I'm an avid reader and I love to hang out with my grandson.

Q: What does a perfect day look like to you?

DF: A perfect day is when someone – a patient, a nurse, a doctor, a staff member – says to me "I really like this place and here's why." Those are the days when you go home and say "we're doing something right." Those moments make it all worthwhile.

Q: What else would you like people to know before you arrive at NMC?

DF: You should always feel comfortable to stop me in the hall or walk into the office and say "I need to tell you something."

CEO Hiring Timeline

SPRING

- NMC Board forms CEO Selection Committee;
- Quorum Health Resources and Witt-Kieffer engaged to facilitate the search for NMC's new CEO
- Opportunity profile posted nationally, based on input on the qualities and experience desired from employees, medical staff, management and leadership, Board, and community partners.

SUMMER

- More than 75 qualified leaders express formal interest in the role of NMC's next CEO;
- Field of candidates eventually to three finalists;
- Day-long interviews are held with each of the finalists, with more than 60 individuals participating in small group interviews from employees, medical staff, management and leadership, Board, and community partners;
- The Board's Search Committee reviews input from all interview participants and advances a recommendation to the full Board for approval.

FALL

- NMC announces the hiring of Dr. Dean French of Montana as our new CEO;
- Transition planning begins with a start date for Dr. French at NMC of November 30, 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HAPPENINGS

Investing in a Healthier Future

Partnership is one of our formal core values at NMC, as we know that community needs are larger than any one organization and that it takes more than even exceptional medical care to help ensure a healthier future for all. NMC is also a not-for-profit organization and one of the largest employers in the region, so we understand we have a formal and informal responsibility to invest in helping address critical issues which impact community health. The Internal Revenue Service calls this “community benefit” – we call it the right thing to do as a community hospital.

NMC’s flexible financial assistance program is a key piece of our approach. We know healthcare costs can be a burden, so we provided approximately \$1.3 million in free care in FY’20 for patients whose incomes are up to 400% of poverty. Our staff works closely with patients to help them through the application process and many are surprised and relieved to find they qualify. We also contribute to and administer the Jim Bashaw Cancer and Catastrophic Illness fund, the NMC Diabetes fund, and the Smiles for Recovery fund which assist patients with related expenses. In addition, NMC provides flexible funding through our care management process to help patients address social determinants that interfere with their recovery and good health.

The benefits NMC receives from participating in the 340B drug pricing program contribute to the level of financial assistance that NMC can make available to patients who meet established criteria. No specific discount or financial assistance is offered to patients that receive drugs under the 340B drug pricing program; rather, patients can apply for NMC financial assistance that is available to all who qualify.

This year, NMC was thrilled to establish a partnership with Vermont Tech and Community College of Vermont to expand nursing education programs here in our community. NMC is sponsoring scholarships for students in the Vermont Tech nursing program and is underwriting a portion of a nursing faculty member and new space for the program.

This is a wonderful way to help make it possible for more students and mid-career adults to enter the amazing nursing profession and care for our community.

NMC continues to invest in the RiseVT movement to embrace healthy lifestyles in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. We have adjusted this considering NMC’s financial challenges. Preventing chronic disease to reduce the demand for costly medical treatments is a vital part of bending the cost curve in healthcare long term. The return on investment is long-term and it is real. The 2019 RiseVT measurement study showed statistically-significant encouraging findings relating to the key health indicator of the children of our community. The national Prevention Institute says, “For every dollar we spend on prevention we see a 5 to 1 return on investment in just 5 years. We simply can’t fix our economy without it.”

Even with the financial challenges of FY’20 and the impact of COVID-19, NMC continues to invest in the fine work of community partners relating to social determinants of care and quality of life locally. These agencies are able to have a positive impact in areas outside NMC’s direct expertise which directly impact the lives of our patients and our staff. NMC is a significant funder of the United Way of Northwestern Vermont and also provides donations and support to partners including: the American Heart and American Cancer societies; Martha’s Kitchen; Northwest Family Foods of CVOEO; Tim’s House; Franklin County Home Health Agency; Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce; the Vermont Futures Project; the Howard Center; Special Olympics; Make A Wish; Voices Against Violence; Girls On the Run; Prevent Child Abuse Vermont; the St. Albans Rotary Club; and more.

We live in a wonderful community and still, there are needs that must be addressed. No single individual or agency can tackle the challenges of our community alone. NMC is proud to invest in our community and collaborate with these great partners as we work collectively towards a healthier future for all.

Healthy Hearts

NMC once again hosted a health and wellness activity fair at St. Albans City School in February. The morning-long event was attended by hundreds of families and community members who enjoyed games and activities that encouraged healthy habits. NMC partners with Northwestern Counseling and Support Services on the event, with other partners including the Northern Tier Centers for Health, the Vermont Department of Health, RiseVT, and the Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition.



The Family Center of Northwestern Counseling & Support Services hosted high-energy fun in the gym at St. Albans City School during Healthy Hearts. Families enjoyed parachute play, a wiggle zone, crafts, a bouncy house, Imagination Playground blocks and more!



Staff from NMC's Family Birth Center hosted a "Dress Your Doll" activity, teaching families about car seat safety and what clothing is appropriate for kids in car seats.



Dr. Laura Bellstrom of Northwestern Pediatrics (in red vest) plays a food fishing game with a few Healthy Hearts attendees.



NMC's Danielle Pothier encourages a young attendee to throw a bean bag of a healthy snack to Hungry Herbie. NMC's Sous Chef Jon Newhard provided the voice of Herbie and encouraged healthy eating by throwing back the junk food.



NMC ELECTS FIRST PRESIDENT OF NURSING STAFF

NMC's Clinical Practice Governance reached a major milestone this year with the election of Tayler Levesque, BSN, RN as the NMC President of the Nursing staff.

Clinical Practice Governance (CPG) is a shared-decision-making structure addressing the clinical care of patients, family and community served by NMC. The CPG model includes Unit-Based Councils representing distinct clinical departments to discuss, investigate and develop plans on healthcare practice.

In the summer of 2019, CPG participants elected Levesque to this new position that advances CPG's work across the community of nurses at NMC. She will provide leadership and the essential perspective of a direct care professional RN at all levels of the organization.

Levesque said that she was thrilled at the opportunity to play a key role in expanding CPG at NMC.

"I believe deeply in Shared Governance (SG), what we call Clinical Practice Governance," said Levesque, "Which is clinical nurses making decisions about their practice and being involved with decision-making at all levels of the organization."

Social Justice

This year, NMC joined in support of the national movement to address racism and discrimination. NMC'ers twice gathered on our front lawn in silent reflection and NMC issued a statement underscoring our commitment to the health and safety of people of color.

Taking more concrete action, NMC contracted with Dr. Mercedes Avila to conduct training for NMC staff focused on improving cultural competence and recognizing implicit bias. Sessions were conducted remotely and each lasted 3.5 hours. Both clinical and non-clinical staff, management, and providers participated in the series of sessions with seven sessions offered on different days at different times.

Session evaluations showed that participants increased their awareness of racial, ethnic, and class bias and increased knowledge of links between racial and health inequities. Participants also shared their desire to tackle issues like language barriers, care accessibility, and bias awareness. We see these steps as part of an ongoing effort to provide exceptional care for all and we are committed to continuing this work.



Minimum Wage Increase.

In January, NMC announced a move toward a \$14 minimum wage for all employees in recognition of the high performance standards carried for all staff as we count on the entire team to provide exceptional care for every patient.

After careful consideration of the needs of employees for a liveable wage and the benefit of strong recruitment and retention on patient care and organizational financial health, this pro-active increase was recommended by NMC's Leadership Team and approved by the community Board of Directors as the right strategy for NMC.

The change was part of an overall wage plan carefully crafted to make the most of NMC's investment in its people. NMC's Leadership Team did not receive raises and management raises were put on hold. By strengthening our ability to recruit and retain top talent in front-line positions like Patient Care Attending, Patient Access, Environmental Services, Restaurant & Catering, Phlebotomy, Switchboard, etc., NMC is better positioned to achieve "excellence and value" in all we do.

The wage increase will help avoid quality employees from being forced to leave NMC to take jobs in other industries simply to make ends meet for their families.

Reducing turnover means less time and money spent on overtime coverage, recruitment costs, and training new staff. Those savings fund the increase and even more importantly, bring greater continuity to our staff which makes exceptional care easier to provide. Avoiding expensive and disruptive churning allows a stronger focus on exceptional care for all of us.



COVID-19 precautions changed the way everyone socializes, and that was especially true at NMC. Many of the events and celebrations we hold to thank our staff had to be shelved right at the moment when we wanted to show gratitude in the biggest way possible. One of the creative ways we inserted some fun back into our atmosphere was to host a couple of outdoor food truck events and encourage staff to take a break, get outside and enjoy a treat. Our thanks go to Pickle's Snack Shack, Scooter's Pretzels and Southern Smoke Foods who provided the culinary excitement – we were glad to support your businesses!



Tobacco Control

In 2020, Vermonters utilized the 802Quits cessation programs to make quit attempts at record numbers. This was likely due to the 2019 E-cigarette or Vaping Associated Lung Illness (EVALI) outbreak combined with the identification of tobacco use as a high-risk category for COVID-19 infection/health risks.

Regional events this year were designed to raise awareness and promote even more quit attempts, helping support those record numbers of quit attempts. Between April and August, the Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition hosted 10 Cigarette Butt Litter Clean Ups in seven municipalities in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

The Coalition is housed with NMC's organizational structure and supports efforts at protecting our community members from dangerous secondhand smoke and cigarette litter, helping prevent young people from ever smoking or vaping, and

motivating and supporting all who use tobacco and/or vape products to quit for good.



During Coalition events, 111 volunteers including several local businesses, municipality staff, and elected officials worked together to clean up 53,053 cigarette butts in 10 different events.

As a result, 1 municipality will be posting more signs promoting their tobacco-free parks ordinance and several area businesses are working closely with the Coalition to actively promote quitting with their employees.

If you or someone you know is thinking about quitting tobacco use or vaping, getting help through 802Quits is effective and free. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit 802Quits.org. Youth interested in quitting vaping should check out the new mylifemyquit.org for help.

Cigarette Butt Litter Clean-Up 2020 - A Summary

53,053

*Cigarette Butts
Cleaned Up*

27,756

*The most butts picked
up at 1 event (St.
Albans Industrial
Park)*

2,100

*The most butts picked
up by 1 individual at
1 event*

111

Volunteers

10

Cleaning Events

7

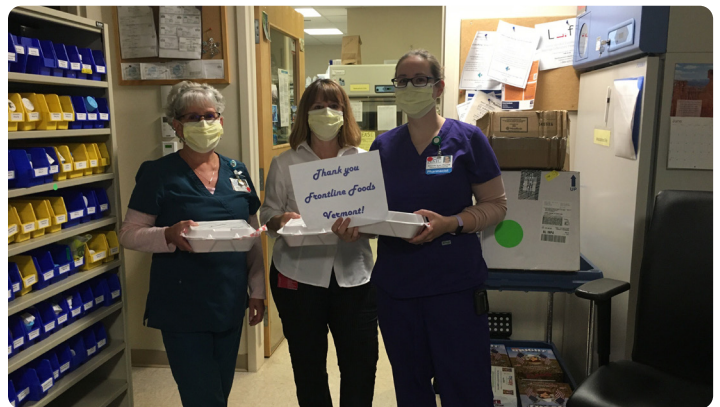
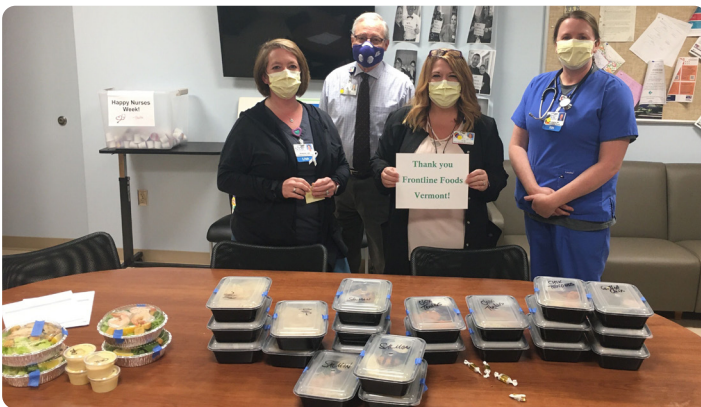
Municipalities

6

*Community
Parks*

Additional Clean-up spots:

- School parking lot
- Hospital
- Boat Launch
- By a Lake
- Library parking lot
- Rail Trail
- Industrial Park
- By a River



Frontline Food Deliveries

During the pandemic, Frontline Foods VT provided an astounding 465 meals to NMC'ers. Frontline Foods is an organization that helps feed frontline healthcare workers and supports local restaurants by collecting monetary donations and then purchasing local meals to share with staff. In our area, Jeff's Maine Seafood, the Drake, Twiggs, Pie in the Sky, and Nelly's all provided food for nearly all NMC offices and departments. The meals were a welcome treat and the staff felt good knowing the community supported their work.

Please note that these photos were posed for quickly, and then staff returned to 6-foot social distancing



Generously Supporting Our Community

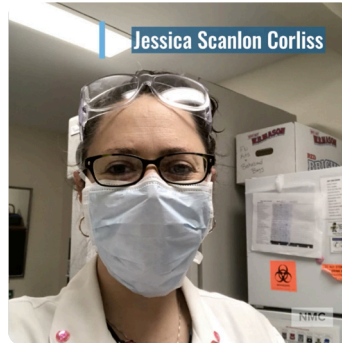
Despite 2020 being a challenging year, NMC'ers rose to the occasion to help support the community and raised over \$29,000 for the United Way of Northwest Vermont.

The funds were raised mainly through individual donations, but NMC also held a highly successful bake sale put on by the Restaurant and Catering team. Five percent of sales in the Courtyard Café for the week also supported the campaign.

During the campaign week, NMC staff also collected nonperishable items which were donated to Martha's Kitchen and Northwest Family Foods. The staff gathered an impressive 500 pounds of goods for the drive.



Jen Armstrong



Jessica Scanlon Corliss



Kate Merchant, RN



Jake Ashline



Sam Owen, RN

NMC Strong

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NMC recognized staff with a social media campaign: #NMCStrong. Although we could not high five, fist bump, hug or gather together, it was important that we got to see and share the faces wearing the masks, and say thank you. Staff took selfies and we published them to Facebook and Instagram and played them on digital monitors throughout our hospital. The community feedback on social media was a bright spot during dark days.

A TURBULENT YEAR

Returning to Financial Sustainability

After four years of losing money, NMC implemented an aggressive sustainability plan in FY'20 and has made progress toward returning to financial stability. This improvement came despite the impact of the pandemic and significant change in hospital leadership.

In April, NMC's Leadership Team and Board of Directors shared the 10-point sustainability plan with staff, Medical Staff, Incorporators, and our community. As Interim Chief Executive Officer Jerry Barbini said at the time, "While NMC is not in a truly emergent financial position yet, the trajectory of losses is alarming and immediate action is needed."

NMC's 10-point sustainability plan for FY'20 included

1 Applying for a mid-year rate increase

This request, though not granted by the Green Mountain Care Board, raised crucial awareness. After continued work on issues by NMC, the Green Mountain Care Board did approve a 13% rate increase for FY'21. This did not reflect the requested amount. It is an increase which kept NMC's prices below State averages.

2 Securing Federal reimbursement to offset COVID-19 expenses

NMC was very successful in navigating available resources to offset an estimated \$13.5 million in financial issues caused by the pandemic.

3 Reducing investment in Lifestyle Medicine and RiseVT

NMC achieved efficiency by integrating Lifestyle Medicine services into Primary Care. Further savings came in better aligning the RiseVT effort with the approach across the State.

4 Altering construction plans

NMC did not pursue the build-out of a proposed Lifestyle Clinic; opted to sell two residential properties; redirected internal renovations; and deferred the start of the Emergency Department project.

5 Using tele-medicine to strengthen patient access to care

Telemedicine was key to restoring access within NMC's practices. This approach was so well received by patients and providers it will be maintained as an option as long as Federal regulations allow.

6 Reducing Costs in Administration

NMC's Leadership Team has absorbed two open Vice President positions and both Leadership and Management went without raises.

NMC's 10-point sustainability plan for FY'20 included: *Continued*

- 7 Restoring elective surgeries and procedure as soon as safe and authorized**
Through proper advanced planning, NMC was able to reopen safely for in-person patient care as soon as that was authorized.
- 8 Aligning staffing with volumes and revenues**
NMC implemented both voluntary and involuntary reductions in force. Individuals losing jobs were provided with severance packages and support in their transitions. These layoffs of dedicated personnel were painful, but necessary to better position NMC to efficiently provide exceptional care.
- 9 Adapting service lines**
NMC transitioning two service lines to community partners who were better equipped to sustain them: Addiction Services went to Howard Center and Phoenix House and Neurology Services returned to the University of Vermont Medical Center.
- 10 Adjusting benefits while remaining competitive**
After a thorough review to ensure continued competitive status, NMC's change in third-party administrator of its health benefit leveraged significant savings for NMC and avoided a costly increase for staff.



“No hospital can simply cut their way out of the financial challenges we all face,” said Barbini. “However, impactful reductions in expenses have to be a significant part of our efforts. NMC has returned our focus to the fundamentals of our mission of providing exceptional care for our community and we must reshape our business accordingly.”

This progress on the Sustainability Plan enabled NMC to reduce its operating loss for FY'20 from an April projection of \$10 million to an actual (unaudited) loss of \$1 million by year end. This compares favorably to the operating loss of \$9.3 million in FY'19. NMC is on the right path, though our FY'21 budget with the GRCB-reduced rate increase does reflect a projected operating loss as we enter the year. NMC's unwavering focus on proper access and exceptional care will continue, as will our ongoing efforts to increase efficiency and financial sustainability.

2020 NMC ANNUAL REPORT

FINANCE

	<i>Actual</i> 2019	<i>Projected Actual</i> 2020	<i>Budget</i> 2021
Patient Services Revenue	211,039,163	193,153,406	251,232,924
Less Subsidies to MCR, MCD & Contractuals	97,341,371	84,394,448	128,643,440
Less Free Care	1,089,453	1,317,726	1,360,958
Less Provision for Bad Debt	6,899,923	8,153,915	7,536,988
Net Patient Revenue	105,708,416	99,287,317	113,691,538
Other Operating Revenue	3,799,952	21,028,259	5,433,765
Total Revenue and Other Support	109,508,368	120,315,576	119,125,303
Salary and Wages	56,737,224	54,873,235	55,541,326
Employee Benefits	13,817,362	13,988,321	13,266,270
Supplies	12,195,947	11,801,164	13,261,842
Contracted Services	17,365,873	19,282,214	18,954,655
Other Operating Expense	6,800,078	7,491,994	8,760,394
Medicaid Tax	5,402,811	5,471,364	4,025,705
Depreciation	5,696,512	6,197,039	6,189,830
Interest & Amortization	770,957	745,629	893,795
Total Expenses	118,786,764	119,850,960	120,893,817
Income from Operations	(9,278,396)	(464,616)	(1,768,514)
Net Investment Income	2,524,918	(789,730)	1,400,000
Other	(1,739,887)	(957,583)	273,675
Total Non-Operating Income	(785,031)	(167,853)	1,673,675
Excess of Revenue and Other Support Over Expenses	(8,493,365)	(296,763)	(94,839)
Admissions	2,348	2,254	2,334
Total Patient Days	6,953	6,849	7,071
Average Length of Stay	2.96	3.04	3.03
Emergency Department Visits	25,681	19,623	24,101
Births	343	387	336
Surgeries	3,107	2,612	2,589
Outpatient Diagnostic Imaging Procedures	54,408	44,310	54,056
Outpatient Laboratory Tests	352,953	290,938	329,580
Physician Practice & Urgent Care Visits	133,055	113,110	120,335
Medicare/Medicaid % of Patient Revenue	55.80%	54.90%	56.00%
Days in Accounts Receivable	41.5	36.2	36.5
Age of Plant (Years)	11.4	11.8	12.1

NMC By The Numbers



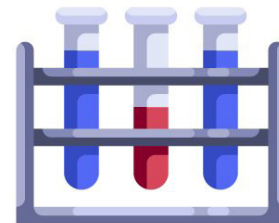
2,254

*Hospital
Admissions*



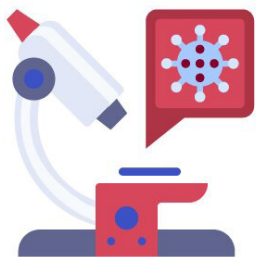
393,321

Lab Tests Run



59,512

*Diagnostic
Imaging Tests*



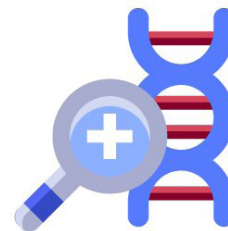
1,069

*Curbside
COVID-19 Tests*



48,377

*Diagnostic
Imaging Tests*



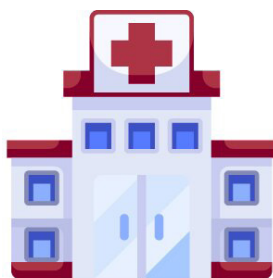
42,859

*Specialty Practices
Visits*



14,946

Urgent Care Visits



19,623

*Emergency Room
Visits*



34,162

*Primary Care and
Peds Visits*

Births
397

Total OR Hours
4,377

Pharmacy Doses
317,418

Laundry Pounds
309,021

Patient Meals Served
28,005

NEW PROVIDERS

New Providers

NMC welcomed many new providers to the medical staff this year in the fields of Primary Care, Cardiology, Neurology, Audiology, Urgent Care and Emergency Medicine.



Kaitlyn Barrett, DO

NW Endocrinology

Dr. Kaitlyn Barrett is an endocrinologist at the University of Vermont Medical Center, and works at NMC through a collaboration with the UVMMC to bring endocrinology services to St. Albans.

She specializes in diabetes (both type 1 and 2), thyroid disease, osteoporosis and general endocrinology. She considers herself privileged to care for patients and aims to provide them with the resources they need to manage their disease. She values the opportunity to establish long-term, collaborative relationships with her patients and prioritizes their goals and opinions.

She earned her DO from the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, Old Westbury, New York and did a residency and fellowship at the University of Vermont Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine/University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, Vermont



Dr. Christopher Bartels

NW Medical Surgical Associates

Dr. Bartels joined Dr. Stephen Payne and Dr. Michael Kennedy in their practice, with offices located at 148 Fairfield Street. He has 30 years' experience as a general surgeon, having started his career at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and spending 20 years there. He was then recruited to Excelsa Health in Western Pennsylvania where he worked as Chairman of Surgery at a three-hospital community program. He moved to Vermont with his wife and enjoys fishing, ice hockey and walking the dog.



Ashlea Dosanjh, Au.D.

NW Ear, Nose and Throat

Prior to joining NMC in 2020, Ashlea worked clinical rotations in private practice, two ENT offices, a hospital as well as abroad in outreach facilities in Malawi. She is passionate about evidence-based practice and patient-centered care, having entered the field of audiology after discovering an interest in human connections and maintaining the vital links in relationships, the ability to communicate.

Ashlea is well-versed in all the major hearing aid brands, and is ready to help patients with any hearing-related challenge they may face. She has first-hand experience in the field, having a hearing loss of her own, allowing her to relate to the challenges facing those with a hearing loss.

In her free time, she enjoys her two dogs, spending time outdoors, visiting farmers markets, antique sales and playing soccer.



Matias Gnass, MD

NW Primary Care & NW Georgia Health Center

Dr. Gnass joined NMC and Northwestern Primary Care in the summer of 2020.

After graduating in 2017, he worked as a Locum Tenens doctor in both Primary Care and Urgent Care settings, traveling through the United States and working in diverse regions like the deserts of Arizona, the tropical island of Guam, and the green Northwest.

As a Family Care practitioner, Dr. Gnass said he enjoys the privilege of caring for patients through all stages of their lives.



Dr. Tracy Hagerty

NW Cardiology

Dr. Hagerty is a University of Vermont Medical Center physician working in collaboration with NMC through Northwestern Cardiology. She is able to implant cardiac devices (pacemakers, defibrillators, CRT) and perform and interpret echocardiography studies including TEE (trans esophageal echo).

Dr. Hagerty enjoys getting to know patients and gaining a better understanding of the various contributors to their spectrum of cardiovascular disease. She partners with patients to develop a care plan that is understandable, attainable and offers maximum benefit to their long-term health.



Ethan Hundley, MD

NW Primary Care & NW Georgia Health Center

Dr. Ethan Hundley joined NMC in the fall of 2020 having most recently worked in Family Medicine in Jackson, Tennessee, caring for patients of all ages in both hospital and clinic settings. Dr. Hundley chose NMC because of the kindness and hospitality of staff and the surrounding community.

Dr. Hundley enjoys the practice of Family Medicine because it gives him the opportunity to get to know patients on a personal level and allows long-term continuity of care with patients. He said that he is passionate about empowering people to take charge of their own health.



Andrew Myrtue, MD

NW Orthopaedic & Rehabilitation Center

Dr. Andrew Myrtue joined NMC in 2020. He earned his medical degree from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and performed his residency in orthopaedic surgery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. He retired from the military after a 30-year career in the US Air Force, having worked most recently as a general orthopaedic surgeon in a small to medium-sized community hospital setting. His current practice focuses on joint replacement, arthroscopy and sports medicine, hand surgery, and the treatment of fractures.

Dr. Myrtue is passionate about the personal side of providing care to patients. In his spare time, Dr. Myrtue spends time with his wife and two daughters. Now that his children have gotten older, he finds himself with more free time to enjoy mountain biking, snowboarding, playing ice hockey, and playing guitar.



Tyler Vogt, DO

NW Primary Care & NW Georgia Health Center

Dr. Tyler Vogt joined NMC in the fall of 2020 having previously worked at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. At DHMC, Dr. Vogt provided Primary Care, Family Medicine as well as care for acute and chronic medical conditions for patients of all ages.

Dr. Vogt said he is passionate about the integration of behavioral health into the primary care setting for seamless coordination of care. He looks forward to working with people to stay healthy and maintain the active lifestyle they desire.

{ New Providers



Mary Alice Watts, FNP-C

NW Primary Care & NW Georgia Health Center

Mary Alice Watts did her medical studies at Belmont University, Nashville, TN. In the field of Primary Care, she is particularly interested in preventative disease management and women's health. She chose NMC because the high-quality facilities and the kind people who work there.

She and her husband moved to Vermont because they love the Green Mountain State, having traveled her many times before. The couple likes to travel as well as hiking and camping with their two hound dogs.

Urgent Care and Emergency Medicine

Providers joining the Urgent Care and Emergency Department teams include:

Jared Blum, MD

Lauren Pelski, PA-C

Shaunna St. Clair, PA

Blake McKnight, FNP-C

Alissa Peterson, NP

Eli Schned, MD

Elizabeth Owens, PA-C

Meghan Reilly, APRN

Christopher Williams, MD

OUR PEOPLE

The 2019 Deogracias “Deo” P. Esguerra, MD Service Award



Dr. Robert Beattie earned the “Deo” P. Esguerra, MD Service Award and is pictured here with (from left to right) Former CEO Jill Berry Bowen, RN, Beattie’s wife Jane Catton, daughter Cate, son Cameron and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. John Minadeo.

Dr. Robert Beattie of the Northwestern Orthopaedic & Rehabilitation Center was honored with the Deogracias “Deo” P. Esguerra, MD Service Award at NMC’s Medical Staff Appreciation Dinner held in November 2019.

The award was created in 2011 to honor a provider with a “passion for excellence and dedication to the patients of our community.” Its namesake, Dr. Esguerra, was known as a caring, passionate, and inspirational physician who loved both the science and art of medicine.

Dr. John Minadeo, NMC’s Chief Medical Officer, said that Dr. Beattie’s remarkable passion for medicine is much like that of Dr. Esguerra. “Your enthusiasm is felt by those you encounter not only in the operating room or clinic, it is felt by

all you pass by as you walk through the halls of the hospital. Your energy is boundless and your optimism is felt by everyone you meet.”

Dr. Beattie joins a list of “Deo Award” honors that includes Dr. Toby Sadkin, Dr. Fred Holmes, Dr. Frank Zsoldos, Dr. Mike Corrigan, Dr. Robert Zelazo, and Dr. Stephen Payne. Some of those providers were on hand at the dinner to congratulate the new honoree, including Dr. Minadeo who won the award in 2018.

Board of Directors



Janet McCarthy

President

Janet McCarthy, of Georgia. Mrs. McCarthy is the Executive Director of the Franklin County Home Health Agency.



Jake Holzscheiter

Vice President

Jake Holzscheiter, of Westford, Mr. Holzscheiter is the President CEO of A.N. Deringer, Inc.



Lowrey Sullivan

President of the Medical Staff

Lowrey Sullivan, MD, of St. Albans. Dr. Sullivan is a practicing physician at Northwestern Obstetrics & Gynecology. He served as Chief Medical Officer from 2011 to 2018 and as the Chief Medical and Quality Officer from 2017-2019.



Dawn Bugbee

Treasurer

Dawn Bugbee, of South Hero. Mrs. Bugbee is a retired Vice President and the Chief Financial Officer of Green Mountain Power Corporation.



John Casavant

Secretary

John Casavant, of St. Albans. Mr. Casavant is a Risk Management and Insurance professional with NFP.

Leon Berthiaume

Mr. Berthiaume is the CEO of the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery.

Nick Hadden

Mr. Hadden is an attorney.

Barb Toof

Ms. Toof is a banker at Peoples Trust Company

Karyn Rocheleau

Ms. Rocheleau is retired and is a former owner of a Training & Consulting Company.

Corey Parent

Mr. Parent works in insurance at Hickock and Boardman and is a Vermont State Senator.

Marietta Scholten, MD

Dr. Scholten is a practicing family medicine physician, former Medical Director for the Vermont Chronic Care Initiative and the Medical Director of the Franklin County Hospice Program.

Medical Executive Committee

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President of the Medical Staff

Donny Khela, MD
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Anna Royer, MD
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Katie Montagne, MD
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Megan Smith

Karen Staniels

Thomas Suppan, MD

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Casey Webb

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Deirdre Young

Board of Incorporators

The NMC Incorporators is a group of up to 150 local residents from throughout northwestern Vermont who serve as a formal connection between the hospital and the community we serve. The Incorporators meet twice a year with primary functions being electing the Board of Directors, approving the corporate bylaws, and acting as ambassadors and advocates.

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David Ducham	Bridget Howrigan Rivet	Steve Payne, M.D.	
	Shirley Jacobs	Peter Perley	

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In Memory of Brad Paradee

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Mary Cronin

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Loretta Pigeon

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Young's Accounting

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Northwestern Medical Center complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Northwestern Medical Center does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Northwestern Medical Center:

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters
 - Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)

- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Information written in other languages
 - If you need these services, contact: Jamie Pinkham

If you believe that Northwestern Medical Center has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance with:

Jamie Pinkham

Northwestern Medical Center
133 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, Vermont 05478
802-524-5911, TTY 800-253-0191
jpinkham@nmcinc.org

You can file a grievance in person or by mail, or email.

If you need help filing a grievance, Jamie Pinkham is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights](#), electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, or by mail or phone at:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201
1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD)
Complaint forms are available [Here](#)

ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1-802-524-5911 (ATS : 1-800-253-0191).

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191)。

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

ध्यान दिनुहोस्: तपाईंले नेपाली बोल्नुहुन्छ भने तपाईंको निम्ति भाषा सहायता सेवाहरू नि:शुल्क रूपमा उपलब्ध छ। फोन गर्नुहोस् 1-802-524-5911 (टिडिआइ: 1-800-253-0191)।

OBAVJEŠTENJE: Ako govorite srpsko-hrvatski, usluge jezičke pomoći dostupne su vam besplatno. Nazovite 1-802-524-5911 (TTY- Telefon za osobe sa oštećenim govorom ili sluhom: 1-800-253-0191).

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

XIYYEEFFANNAA: Afaan dubbattu Oroomiffa, tajaajila gargaarsa afaanii, kanfaltiidhaan ala, ni argama. 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث انكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوفر لك بالمجان. اتصل برقم 1-802-524-5911 (هاتف الصم والبكم: 1-800-253-0191).

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 1-802-524-5911 (телетайп: 1-800-253-0191).

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).

注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援をご利用いただけます。1-802-524-5911 (TTY:1-800-253-0191) まで、お電話にてご連絡ください。

टिप्पणी: ถ้าพูดภาษาไทยคุณสมารถใช้บริการช่วยเหลือทางภาษาได้ฟรี โทร 1-802-524-5911 (TTY: 1-800-253-0191).