

# 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.