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An Update on Programs and Services

Dental Program

The Mascoma Valley Health Initiative in collaboration with Alice Peck Day Hospital has created a school-based dental program to provide dental services to elementary school students grades K to 3 in the Mascoma Valley and Lebanon school districts. These programs are scheduled to begin this fall when the children return to school.

A full time Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) will provide services in the schools using portable dental equipment. The RDH will provide dental education, basic screening and cleaning to all students. Arrangements for restorative care will be made on an as needed basis. There are no income criteria - all children are eligible. This program has the support of school administrators, principals, parent teacher organizations and school nurses. This program, funded by APD, is in response to regional health needs assessments that indicate dental care as one of the highest health needs of our region.

Here Today

On March 2, 2004, *Here Today*, an award winning documentary film about heroin use was presented to all students, grade 9 to 12, at an afternoon assembly at Mascoma Valley Regional High School. *Here Today* profiles six families from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom as they struggle to battle their addiction, or to support their loved ones. The film was followed by discussion with some of the Here Today cast members, who spoke frankly and poignantly about the problems and effects of heroin use. That evening, more than fifty interested friends, area officials, and community activists watched the film. An intense question and answer session followed. School officials reported that students particularly liked the actors of the documentary fielding questions. The experience initiated conversations throughout the week. MVHI, Mascoma Valley High School, and DMHC co-sponsored the event.



Suicide Prevention

Suicide and depression are major issues for many of our area youth. The New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey data indicates that 14-18 year olds in our region report a high level of depression, 34%, and serious contemplation of suicide, 24%. In hopes of addressing this issue in a preventive pro-active way, MVHI has submitted an application for funding to be the pilot site for the Frameworks Youth Suicide Prevention Project. If the application is accepted, MVHI will coordinate training of police, school officials, and community youth leaders to identify children at risk, and to respond competently to suicidal events or threats. Our service area includes many active community resources, who could design a multi-faceted, comprehensive training and educational program.

Emergency Preparedness

A key function for MVHI is to assist area Emergency Management Directors in updating town emergency response plans and risk communication plans. These meetings will provide an opportunity to share information and identify needed technical support. A regional emergency response plan to address incidents larger in impact or geographical scope than any of our towns can manage on their own will be the next step. In June 2005, we expect to publish a regional emergency resource directory for public use; in January 2006, we will publish a directory specific to the needs of emergency services and public health professional.

The New Hampshire Public Health Network

...assuring the health and safety of all New Hampshire residents

In 2000, under the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Turning Point Initiative funded four sites in the state of New Hampshire to establish a local public health infrastructure. The mission was to improve the health and safety for all New Hampshire residents. The Department of Health and Human Services increased the number of sites from four to twelve community collaboratives with federal funding. The plan divides the state into a Public Health Network charged with developing models for local public health. Each model is based on local needs, unique problems and resources. Network organizations work to establish strong relationships with social service agencies, hospitals, police, fire, schools, faith communities and businesses at the local level and with state agencies, who can assist with additional resources when necessary.

This strategy is based on the theory that health improvement is best achieved at the local level.

Partners in Health

Kidney Disease, Asthma, Cystic Fibrosis, Cardiac disorders, Cancer, Diabetes, Mitochondrial disorders, immune system diseases, Epilepsy, Spina Bifida, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Orthopedic issues, rare and terminal diseases... These are just a few of the many diseases children in our communities face. Does your child or do you know children who have a chronic health condition? If the answer is yes, your local Partners in Health program is looking to serve children in your neighborhood.

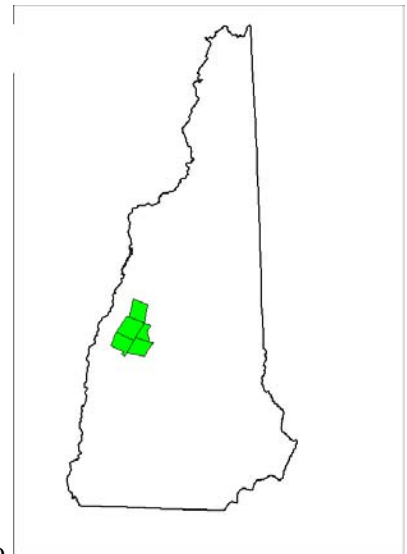
NH Partners in Health is now a statewide program with a local coordinator right in Lebanon at the Upper Valley Support Group. Partners in Health is a family support program for parents of children through 20 years of age with chronic health conditions that impact daily life. Partners in Health provides information, resources, financial support, educational and other advocacy, and at no cost to parents. Income and insurance is not a factor when determining eligibility.

Partners in Health helps support parents who may not know where to turn when they have needs regarding their child's condition. Partners in Health can help defray the cost of traveling to Boston for specialty care and surgery. Many families with children with asthma can't afford the whole cost of replacing flooring and bedding or to purchase a nebulizer. Partners in Health can help. If your child has

The MVHI is the collaborative for:

Canaan, Dorchester, Enfield, Grafton and Orange.

The priorities of the MVHI are set in direct response to research data from the 2003 Community Needs Assessment, Upper Valley Coalition, Census 2000, hospital utilization data, 2003 New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey, The Survey of Student Resources and Assets, in addition to



other data sources. These priorities will lead to an improvement in the health and safety of residents of our five-town area.

diabetes and you would like financial assistance to send him/her to a diabetes camp, or if you need support in buying an insulin pump, call Partners in Health. Partners in Health can also assist with some of the other needs of your entire family, including respite for parents and caregivers and sibling needs.

Coordinator, Katie Ouelette works with families to make sure they have the supports in order to minimize the impact of a child's medical condition. With Partners in Health Flexible Funds, money has been provided for camps, medical equipment, clothing, transportation costs, conferences, respite, medications, and recreation. She has served as an advocate for families at school meetings, with professionals, and with town governments. Katie has worked collaboratively with other organizations and programs in order to cover the cost of a needed item or service; she has also written and helped write grants to foundations who have granted dollars for certain items - computers, camps, hearing aids, ceiling lift, and van conversion.

It's easy to join Partners in Health. You do not have to be in crisis to use the program. A simple phone call to Katie Ouelette at **448-7108** is all that's needed to get started. We are available and want to support families.

Check us out on the web at:

www.uvsg.net or www.nhpih.dartmouth.edu

Wanted: New Family Council Members

If you want to have a voice about what Partners in Health can do for your community, children and families you may be interested in joining the Family Council. The Partners in Health Family Council serves as advisors to the local program. We meet monthly to identify needs within our community and then take action. If you are the parent or caregiver of a child with a chronic health condition and would like more information about the council, call Katie Ouelette at **448-7108**.

Here are a few projects we are working on:

- ?? Gift bags for children who are hospitalized
- ?? IEP/504 Parent Training - Helping families understand the plans, advocate for their children and work together with the school system
- ?? Mom Appreciation Day-FREE respite for mothers

An interview with Phil Neily, Health Officer, Enfield

What are your primary duties as health officer?

There are three major areas of specific concern: septic systems, Day Care Centers, and unhealthy living conditions. We also respond to issues of water safety, West Nile virus, and communicable diseases, etc. I am also Fire Inspector and Building Inspector. In many cases these three areas overlap. I often find health and fire safety issues in the same visit.

Much of our focus is on enforcement and conformity to existing local and state codes.

For example, day care centers must be licensed by the state and, in Enfield, must be inspected by both the local health officer and one from the state. We look for compliance with all health issues - such as food storage, bathrooms, fenced in play yards. As the Fire Inspector, I am looking for all life safety requirements - proper exits, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, wood stove protection. I must inspect homes to be sure they meet all health, fire, and zoning codes. We are able to advise new day care centers with ways to meet proper standards. This is an important aspect of our job, since there are more than twenty licensed day care centers in Enfield.

We are also concerned about people in unhealthy living conditions - with inadequate heat, unsafe drinking water, or the unsanitary presence of garbage, insects, or rodents. We also inspect housing renovations for proper removal of lead or asbestos.

Public Health Fair

Saturday September 25, 2004

10:00 - 2:00

Mascoma Valley Region High School

Music ~ Games ~ Face-painting ~ Refreshments

Free giveaways ~ Prizes ~ Health screening ~

Injury Prevention ~ Family Fun Run

What is your responsibility with regard to septic systems?

Most of our investigations begin with a complaint. Someone will call and complain about a neighbor's septic system. We inspect the system and, if appropriate, certify failure and then reinspect when repairs are made. I would encourage anyone who has a problem with a failing septic system, to call us first. We can advise them on what is necessary to fix the problem. Many people don't understand that older systems can be replaced in kind, meaning that a tank or drywell can be replaced with the same size, or larger. We also suggest getting a state approved septic design. It is a plus for resale value.

What would you most like to have residents know about your job?

That I encourage calls, even anonymous calls. We can then be pro-active in solving problems before they get out of hand. We are here to help. State and local public health rules and laws exist in order to protect the public. The sooner we know about a problem, the better.

Mascoma Valley Health Officers

Canaan: Richard Roberts, 523-4501

Dorchester: Selectmen, 523-7119

Enfield: Phil Neily, 632-4201

Grafton: John Knott, Jr. 523-7700

Orange: Don Pfaefflin, 523-7054

DHMC - Good Neighbor Clinic

The Clinic provides free medical care to low-income, uninsured residents of the Upper Valley.

The Satellite Clinic is located in the Mascoma Pediatric Clinic in Canaan.

Clinic Hours: The first and third Monday of every month, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

For more information call:

1-802-295-1868

or toll free

1-877-552-4815



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Lori.Dacier@mvhi.org
<http://www.mvhi.org>**

MVHI Mission

Our goal is to maintain and improve the health and well-being of Canaan, Dorchester, Enfield, Grafton and Orange residents using the principles of public health. Public health succeeds when the span of healthy life and the quality of that life is increased.

Volunteers Welcome

The Public Health Fair needs your help. We have planned many exciting and varied events for the entire family. If you would like to volunteer, we can find the right activity for you.

We have two open positions on the Board of Directors for interested residents of Orange and Dorchester.

We are always looking for community members who would enjoy working on our various committees.

If you would like more information regarding any of these opportunities, please contact Lori Dacier at 523-7100.

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