

Enhancing the Patient Experience



Transparent Leadership



As we reflect on the year's challenges and accomplishments, we are so grateful for the gift we are entrusted with to make a difference in your lives. We recognize that the people we serve are more than patients and that our mission as a provider of healthcare must extend beyond the treatment of just the illness. As a community hospital, we are proud, but never satisfied, in our commitment to the people who trust us to deliver exceptional care.

A hospital is more than bricks and mortar –at the heart of our hospital is a caring team of individuals who makes exceptional care possible. Never before were the extraordinary men and women who represent Northern Maine Medical Center more engaged in the hospital's mission than they demonstrated in 2018. Quality benchmarks were surpassed as shown by the recognition earned from: The Leapfrog Group, Press Ganey's Pinnacle of Excellence Award, a Top 20 Rural Hospital from the NRHA for a second consecutive year, a double five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and recognition from Becker Healthcare Review as a Top 100 Hospital in the country. With these impactful accomplishments in mind, we have selected this group, our employees, for the 2018 Annual Report dedication.

By adopting strategic quality initiatives, we have been able to realize consistent improvements across the continuum of health care. Not only have services exceeded national quality standards, services were also expanded to increase access to care for our patients by: adding 3D Mammography, the purchase of a retail pharmacy and the addition of Telemedicine to provide more specialties close to home.

As before, you can count on us to deliver services with transparency, integrity and sincerity, to you and your loved ones, now and into the future. Northern Maine Medical Center has been proudly providing care to the people of the community since 1952; after sixty-six years in service, we are truly honored for the privilege to serve you.

Best Regards,

Peter J. Sirois
President and CEO

John Ezzy
Board of Trustees Chairperson

Bravo to Our Employees



The successful transformation of healthcare depends on the engagement of truly exceptional individuals who share a common vision to make a difference in the lives of those in their care. The national recognition earned by the hospital this year is testimony to the 532 employees that are the face of Northern Maine Medical Center.

With a strong and stable workforce, a rise in employee engagement and lower turnover than the national rate, rising patient experience scores speak volumes. Countless anecdotes circulate weekly, if not daily, about the small things that make a big difference -going above and beyond for our patients.

With news of hospital closures across the country and the

state, it would be easy to blame the healthcare environment and then do nothing to change the situation, but as the great Martin Luther King, Jr. so eloquently said, "The time is always right to do what is right." And that is what drives the remarkable workforce at Northern Maine Medical Center.

For their commitment, integrity and drive to become a high reliability organization, the 2018 annual report is being dedicated to the employees of Northern Maine Medical Center and the unique role that each contributes to the quality of life of patients each and every day. NMMC employees embody the philosophy of Albert Schweitzer who said, "The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others."

Redesigning Medication Delivery



Nationally, studies show an average of twenty percent of prescriptions go unfilled. Of those that do get filled, only about fifty percent of patients take their medicines as prescribed, sometimes leading to hospital readmissions and worsening conditions.

In the quest to continually improve the patient healthcare experience and to proactively prevent hospital readmissions as well as avoidable Emergency Department visits, Northern Maine Medical Center purchased a local retail pharmacy. In support of patient convenience, as well as the importance of medication management, the new service redesigns the medication delivery system.

Pharmacists at the retail pharmacy now have access to patients' medical information from the hospital and physicians' offices, including diagnoses, clinical progress notes, allergies, lists of current medications and lab results. This centralized source of medical and prescription information enables pharmacists to provide the most appropriate service by: filling prescriptions prior to the patient's discharge from the hospital, reducing the risk of duplicating or missing medications and delivering medications in pre-packaged unit doses to support medication adherence. The retail pharmacy provides a unique service to patients to expand the continuum of care by closing the loop and connecting the inpatient experience to outpatient services.

With renovations currently underway at the retail pharmacy, the next phase will implement onsite professional education opportunities to support wellness, disease management and disease prevention.

The Top Rural Hospital award was bestowed on Northern Maine Medical Center (NMMC), by The **Leapfrog Group**. Regarded as the nation's preeminent quality hospitals, the top honor is given to the highest performing hospitals on each year's Leapfrog Hospital Survey. The highly sought-after and competitive award is based on performance across many areas of hospital care, including: preventing infections, reducing C-sections, **use of technology to prevent errors**, surgical quality, and leadership policies and practices. The scoring is extremely comprehensive, utilizing twenty eight national performance measures to evaluate individual facilities in six domains of quality: inpatient care management, inpatient surgeries, pediatric care, **medication safety**, maternity care, and infections. In addition to satisfying the quantitative criteria, hospitals must also meet the Committee's qualitative requirements for overall excellence, which includes a review of data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other publicly available information pertaining to the hospital.



Innovation in Care Delivery



Maximizing the time during the hospital stay is crucial for the healthcare team to assess what type of education and support the patient will need when they return home. Understanding medications, as well as overcoming many other challenges, can make the difference in patient outcomes when preparing for discharge from the hospital. The hospital stay is generally brief, complex and filled with treatments and procedures making it challenging for patients to stay focused on what they need to learn before they transition to another level of care.

NMMC has implemented multiple best practices to improve the success of its patients such as: the use of the teach-back methods of instruction, courtesy home visits where the home setting is more conducive to the inclusion of family members and provides a clearer assessment of the patient's surroundings, and most recently, the purchase of a retail pharmacy. Ownership of the pharmacy will create new processes to reduce the risk for patients. One such example is the availability of providing medications in prepackaged unit packs, greatly reducing the risk for medication error.

SafeCare Top 100 Hospital

NMMC ranked 36th in the nation

As a Top 100 SafeCare Hospital an exemplary level of performance has been achieved in the comprehensive, evidence-based metrics of the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) value based program (HVBP), readmissions reduction program (HRRP), and acquired complications reduction program (HACRP). The distinction represents performance in evidence based metrics for Medical Surgical Infections, 30 day mortality rates, complication rates for Medical Surgical Care, Patient Satisfaction and **Readmissions**.

100 SafeCare Hospitals
Recognizing Healthcare Excellence



Imaging Efficiency

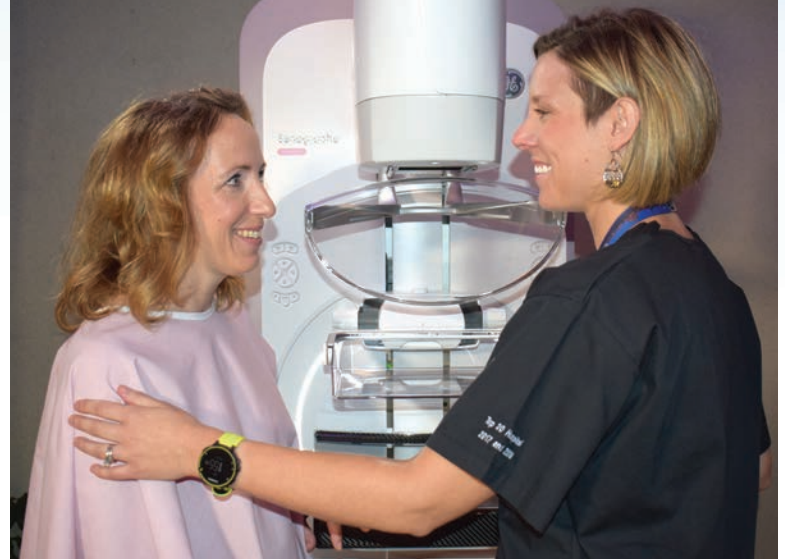
Annual breast screening is a critical component of promoting the health of all women. The arrival of a new patient-centered approach to breast imaging at Northern Maine Medical Center is reshaping the woman's experience. Utilizing 3D technology and state-of-the-art detection capabilities, the breast imaging suite is designed to create a unique sensory experience focused on improving every aspect of care for exceptional breast imaging.

"The new suite is designed with women in mind. The music and the images in the room are soothing, and made the experience so much more comfortable for me. I could actually relax."

- Catherine St. Pierre, patient



A **Five-Star Rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** was earned in both the overall rating and the rating by patients for excellence in the patient experience. The top rating reported by CMS represents a summary for up to fifty-seven quality measures reflecting common conditions. The measures used to calculate ratings include: mortality, readmission, complications, imaging efficiency, unplanned hospital visits, process of care, healthcare associated infections and patient satisfaction.



Technique

With patient safety at the top of the list of priorities, and motivated by other critical factors such as clinical competency and recruitment and retention challenges, Northern Maine Medical Center, (NMMC), invested in state-of-the-art simulation equipment and created three training tracks to support its priorities.

According to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), an international organization whose mission is focused on health care best practices and innovation, fourteen studies have found that simulation-based learning helped improve not only clinician performance and

Leading With Innovation



For Carlene Martin, sitting in a car and driving for over three hours for a visit to see a rheumatologist was not an option. The joint pain and stiffness she endures on a daily basis would be exacerbated by the immobility she would be exposed to while sitting in a vehicle for an extended period of time. Telemedicine provides Martin, and other patients in similar circumstances, the expertise needed to assess and manage a medical condition without leaving the St. John Valley.

Access to state-of-the-art technology has a positive and significant impact on the lives of patients. For some patients, traveling to receive medical services can be a significant hardship. With primary care providers and specialists at a level below the population need, and with the total number of hospitals, in Maine, continuing to decline, Northern Maine Medical Center is utilizing innovative strategies such as: increased partnerships, sharing of providers, and leveraging state-of-the-art technology to improve access to care for patients in our rural communities.

As a result of a partnership with St. Joseph Healthcare, along with a Rural Utility Services Grant to facilitate the acquisition of the necessary equipment, patients are able to access medical expertise in the specialty of rheumatology through telemedicine.

For the third consecutive year, the **BECKER TOP 100 HOSPITAL** ranking was awarded for: excellence, **leading innovation**, quality patient care and recognition across various publications and accrediting organizations.



Not Technology

task success, but also reduced patient discomfort, complication rates, and costs of care.

Simulation training offers opportunities for clinical teams to work together and build interpersonal relationships, prior to being faced with real life emergencies where strong communication is a key factor in ensuring successful patient outcomes. When training individually, learners lack the exposure to the team component of providing interdisciplinary, patient-centered care. The simulation software provides the ability to program scenarios to challenge the clinical team's performance.



Northern Maine Medical Center was named a **TOP 20 HOSPITAL** by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) for a second consecutive year for achieving success in overall performance based on a composite rating from eight indices of strength: inpatient market share, outpatient market share, quality, outcomes, patient perspectives, costs, charges and financial stability.



Patients shouldn't have to choose between paying for their medications and buying food. The reality, though, is that some people are faced with very difficult choices when it comes to the high cost of medications. Some patients delay filling their prescriptions or they may choose to take only a partial dose because of cost constraints; some may not take the medication at all, placing them at greater risk for harm.

With a full time Patient Financial Advocate (PFA) on board, Northern Maine Medical Center is able to help more patients find much needed assistance for those who are struggling with healthcare expenses.

Vinal Boyington

Vinal Boyington, a 68 year old gentleman dealing with pain from Gout, was not taking his medication because of the high cost. PFA, Crystal Condo said, "When I met with Mr. Boyington and he told me that he only took his Gout medications when he couldn't stand the pain any longer, I knew I had to find a way to help him." The patient had admitted that he was only taking the medication when the pain was unbearable.

With the ability to access resources, Condo filed a grant application to cover the cost of his medication. The grant provides financial support so that he is now able to obtain the medication and experience a higher quality of life with less pain. Working with the PFA, additional assistance was identified to reduce other healthcare expenses such as doctor's office copays, lab work and radiology, bringing his total overall savings to approximately \$4,706 annually.

Jeannette Parent

It started when Jeannette Parent saw her provider, Nurse Practitioner, Debra McGlaughlin, for the treatment of a respiratory condition. In order to manage her condition, she required treatment with high cost inhalers. Mrs. Parent was struggling with the cost of the medication and her health insurance plan. Ms. McGlaughlin contacted one of the hospital's Patient Financial Advocates who met with Mrs. Parent. With the guidance from the PFA, Mrs. Parent was able to benefit from annual cost savings for prescriptions and insurance premiums, reducing her total annual healthcare expenses to \$2,345.

"Crystal called to tell me that I qualified for assistance and one thing led to another. Without my inhalers, I can't breathe. I thank God that I was able to get assistance."

- Jeannette Parent, Madawaska

"It is the best feeling in the world to have a patient walk out of my office knowing that they will be able to afford their medication and not have to make sacrifices or skip taking their medications because of the cost."

- Crystal Condo, Patient Financial Advocate

Financial Report

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

As a hospital and provider of healthcare, Northern Maine Medical Center (NMMC) has a critical role in the health and wellness of the residents it serves. Additionally, as one of the area's major employers, NMMC unquestionably impacts the social and economic strength of the region. The healthcare sector is the largest source of employment in the state of Maine, a critical component of Maine's economy. In Aroostook County, healthcare jobs make up 19% of the workforce with the average wage at 17% higher than the average for all industries in the state, with hospital workers earning wages that are 45% higher than the average worker in the state.*

In 2018, Northern Maine Medical Center pumped \$119,980,761 into the local economy. The money earned by 403 employees is spent on groceries, clothing, mortgage payments, rent and many other expenditures. These dollars generate \$92,208,294 in total economic activity for the local economy. NMMC spends money on the goods and services needed to provide healthcare, for example, medical supplies, electricity for the buildings, and food for patients. Funds spent to buy goods and services flow from the hospital to vendors and then ripple throughout the local economy for a total direct and indirect impact of \$21,161,196.

*Maine Rural Health Profiles, A Statewide View of Rural Health; Muskie School of Public Service, Maine Rural Health Research Center; September 2016

NMMC IMPACT ON JOBS & ECONOMY

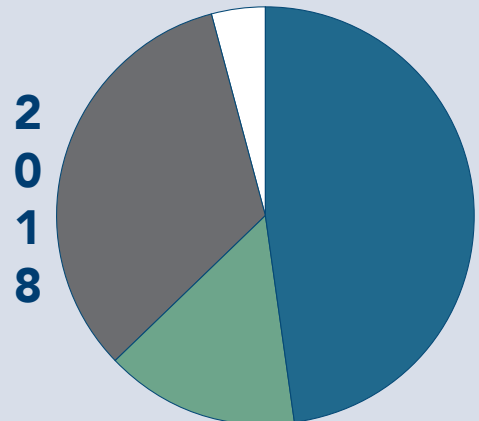
	2017	2018
Jobs	965	978
ECONOMIC IMPACT		
Payroll	\$88,765,143	\$92,208,294
Supply purchases	\$17,444,419	\$21,161,196
Capital Spending	\$ 5,396,663	\$6,611,271
Total Impact	\$111,606,225	\$119,980,761



PAYER MIX & CHARITY CARE/ BAD DEBT

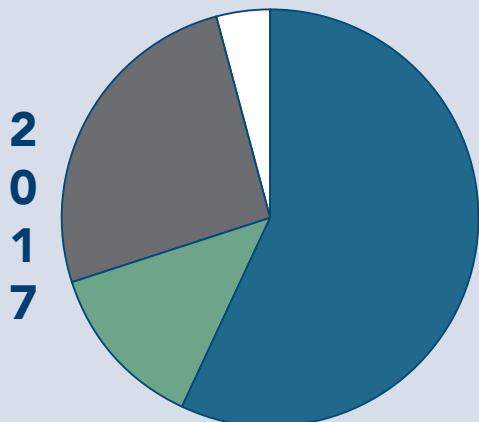
In 2018, Northern Maine Medical Center provided \$805,000 in free care to those who qualified and absorbed over \$2,240,000 in care for which payment did not cover the full cost.

PAYER MIX



2018

- Medicare 48%
- Commercial 33%
- Medicaid 15%
- Self-Pay 4%



2017

- Medicare 57%
- Commercial 26%
- Medicaid 13%
- Self-Pay 4%

2-YEAR COMPARISON

	2017	2018
Bad Debt	\$1,782,000	\$2,240,000
Charity Care	\$729,000	\$805,000
Capital Expenditures	\$2,101,000	\$2,892,000
# of full time employees	397	403
Wages and benefits	\$32,633,000	\$33,867,000

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff



In 2007, Bernadette Pelletier received the news that no one ever wants to hear -she learned she had breast cancer. With her strength of character and positive attitude, despite the significant hurdles of cancer treatment, she overcame the ordeal and has been cancer-free for nearly ten years. But, short one month from the ten year cancer-free mark, she went through a period of déjà vu, when she received the diagnosis of breast cancer for a second time. How could that be she asked? To add to the situation, a mere three months after she received the news, her husband, David, was diagnosed with a lymphoma. At first, they wondered, "How can we possibly get through this at the same time?" At age 64 and 65 respectively, Bern and Dave have a full and productive life, enjoying their children and grandchildren and they are active members in their community. They were determined to keep a positive attitude and do what had to be done to resume their lives.

Both made conscious decisions to continue working to maintain structure in their lives while they underwent treatment. They agreed that it was best not to make big changes while going through marked alterations in their daily routines. The challenges, however, were not only with their health but also, the financial burden that comes with such a diagnosis. Faced with travel from Fort Kent to Boston, and other places, they were confronted with thousands of dollars of uncovered expenses, quickly taking a toll on their finances; and not to mention the cost for medications which were not initially covered by their health insurance provider. Being familiar with The Paradis Cancer Fund, they applied for support which they are quick to admit made a big difference in reducing their travel expenses. They also worked tirelessly to ensure they were receiving the maximum health insurance coverage; both were necessary to help manage the astronomical cost of medications and treatment. Bern said, "You have to be your own advocate –question everything and scrutinize insurance coverage."

Similar to the forty-two other families sponsored by the Edgar J. Paradis Cancer Fund in 2018, the Pelletiers are grateful for the assistance. They survived the challenges by learning not to sweat the small stuff. For Bern, because she tested positive for the BRCA1 gene, she is at much higher risk to develop cancer again. Knowing this, she is adamant about her preference to know everything and then to deal with the answers rather than be left with the unknown. They take it one day at a time and they are thankful, that for the most part, they do not usually have their down days at the same time.

To learn more about the Cancer Fund and how you can provide support, go to www.paradiscancerfund.org.

The Fund in 2018

(fiscal year ending April)

Cumulative families helped through 4/30/18	1,502
Families assisted in 2018	43
Cumulative aid provided through 4/30/18	\$1,093,000
2018 Outright donations	\$162,000
2018 Major Fundraisers	\$19,000
2018 Paid Out to Local Families	\$85,000

*All dollar amounts provided rounded to nearest \$1,000.



Choosing the Path Less Traveled

In keeping with the original hospital charter, Northern Maine Medical Center (NMMC) is breaking away from the national trend to discontinue maternity services. Low volume, financial challenges, and training needs, along with recruitment and retention barriers, have created a difficult journey, but one that NMMC plans to overcome. Faced with the same challenges as others across the state and across the country, of steadily declining births, NMMC is being proactive to determine what it takes to make the maternity service flourish and continue to serve women and their families close to home.

A detailed strategic plan has been created to guide NMMC to stay in line with the original charter of the founding members of the hospital. Strategies include:

- A survey of women to determine maternity care expectations

- The addition of a state-of-the-art wireless fetal monitoring system for labor and delivery
- The addition of OB/GYN specialists to the provider team
- The recruitment and hire of a new Family Practice provider, Dr. Alexandra Roberts, who will be joining the OB Team in August of 2019
- The creation of a Simulation Lab which supports ongoing training utilizing state-of-the-art computer software modules to create lifelike scenarios
- The allocation of other resources for ongoing training at all levels
- Personalized home visits

Champions of Innovation

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE OF PROVIDER RECRUITMENT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

Being a healthcare provider in a rural community hospital has many rewards, and conversely, many challenges. Consider this statistic—about 20% of the US population lives in rural areas yet only 9% of physicians practice there. Many choose the practice of primary care in a rural setting for the satisfaction and the ability to treat patients with a holistic approach and for the love of community.

In recent years, medical staff satisfaction surveys have revealed opportunities to support providers to experience more fulfillment and joy in their chosen profession. With rising reports of burnout, Northern Maine Medical Center (NMMC) leadership took the lead to address the situation. One strategy in particular addresses provider involvement in academia and ongoing learning and collegiality through a partnership with the Frank H. Netter School of Medicine (SOM) at Quinnipiac University in New Haven, Connecticut.

Traci Marquis-Eydman, MD, Associate Professor of Medical Services and Director of the Medical Student Home at the Netter SOM and born and raised in Fort Kent, Maine, said the issue of the lack of rural primary care in the country became highly evident to her when she attended a national conference for medical educators in 2016. Disheartened to learn about the inequity of primary care resources in rural communities across the country, Marquis-Eydman reached out to NMMC and set out to change the statistics.



Left to right – Traci Marquis-Eydman MD, Associate Professor of Medical Sciences, Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine, Quinnipiac University; Michael Sullivan, MD, NMMC Chief Medical Officer; Nicole Marquis, BSN, RN, NMMC Director of Nursing; Peter J. Sirois, NMMC President & CEO

With plenty of data suggesting that medical students who are exposed to rural medicine during their training, and/or who graduate from rural residencies, are three times more likely to practice in rural areas than those who train in urban programs, it became a win-win situation for NMMC and the SOM. Dr. Kristin Hartt, then president of the medical staff, took the lead on the partnership with the SOM. With the full support of NMMC leadership, she was instrumental in developing the fourth year elective rotation in rural healthcare. Early in the process, it became evident that the intent was to go the next step and work with the SOM to develop a Longitudinal Integrated Curriculum for third year students, a much more resource intensive program, where the rotation is one year in duration and contains six key clinical areas each led by NMMC providers who serve as faculty, leading the third year experience in rural northern Maine.

THE PROVIDER TEAM



Dr. Michael Sullivan
Inpatient



Dr. James Harris
Inpatient



Dr. Kissonie Bair
Outpatient



Left to right –John Joseph, MD demonstrating the proper application of a splint on a patient in the ED with medical students –Zachary Freedman & Elliot Fox.

The addition of Netter students to NMMC serves a crucial role in the recruitment and retention of medical personnel and a notable improvement in job satisfaction has already been observed. NMMC’s staff now serves as faculty, mentors and coaches who expose the students to outpatient practices in both Fort Kent and Madawaska thus supporting the intended outcome of job satisfaction and physician retention in the St. John Valley. This is critical in an era of increased risk of physician burnout. It is further hoped that students will choose to practice medicine in Maine thus helping to reduce physician workforce shortages in the state.



Medical student, Miriam Nathan teaching at the Madawaska High School on the topic of teen depression & anxiety.

Like many rural areas, NMMC faces staff recruitment challenges and benefits greatly from an affiliation with an academic institution. Medical students infuse new life and vigor to the staff and the organization which benefits patients. The Program also benefits NMMC by offering the opportunity for its doctors to teach, positively impacting retention of current physicians.



Dr. Kristin Hartt
Obstetrics



Dr. Mark Overton
Psychiatry



Dr. David Coffman
General Surgery

2018 Donor Recognition

The renovation and expansion of the Operating Room, the largest project in Northern Maine Medical Center's history, is moving forward in 2019. With the authorization from the Board of Trustees, plans have been moving ahead for breaking ground in the Spring of 2019. The four story addition will benefit our patients in so many ways.

First and foremost, the project will address the space needs for the state-of-the-art technology used on the third floor in the Operating Room. In addition, a central, efficient space will welcome patients and family members and guide them to their destination, whether it is surgery or endoscopy.

The second level will create a therapeutic space for the adult and adolescent psychiatry unit patients in the form of an indoor gymnasium to provide an area for physical activity, an important aspect of the treatment plan.

On the first level, the footprint for the laboratory will be changed to be adjacent to the radiology department with one common reception area, making it more convenient for patients.

The ground level will provide space to update the main kitchen and cafeteria. The revised floor plan will offer efficiencies which will enable longer business hours to serve employees and the public.

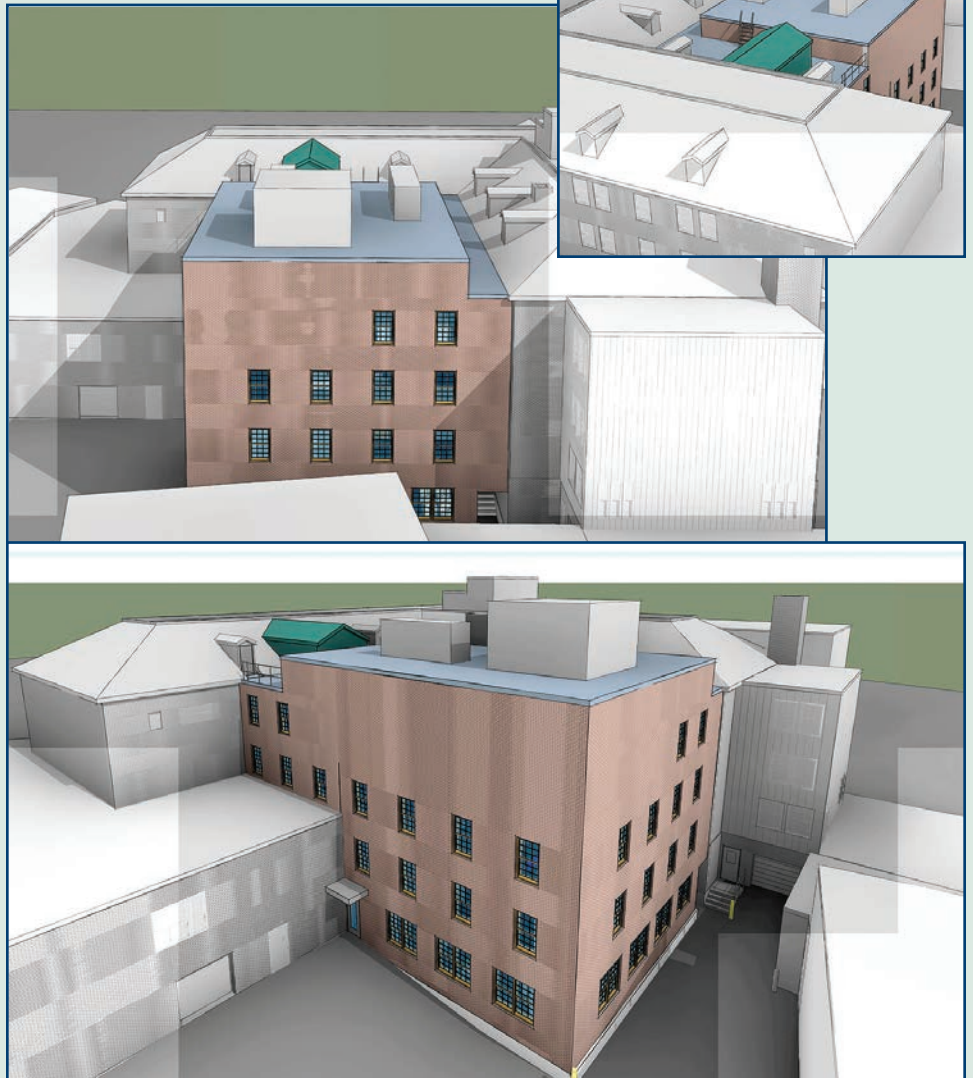
A critical component of the structure, which will be an asset for all levels, is a dedicated elevator for patient use only. This will ensure privacy and confidentiality when patients are transported to and from clinical areas.

DONORS

Gil and Amy Blier
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Roy Auto Parts, Inc.
Mitchell P. Sammons
Jamil Simon
Peter and Nola Sirois
Daniel and Rollande Vaillancourt

Final plans for the new Operating Room at NMMC.



Testament to Transparency

Making it easy for patients to provide frank feedback about their experience is fundamental to achieving meaningful improvements in healthcare safety and quality. A number of processes continue to be implemented to facilitate this communication in order to engage more members of the public in the evaluation of our services.

Ensuring greater transparency for the public is a driving force to better understand what patients expect in a health-care encounter.

Traditionally, in the healthcare industry, committees are not open to the public due to confidentiality reasons and the sensitive nature of the material discussed. Northern Maine Medical Center has chosen to break from the ranks and change the makeup of the Performance Improvement Committee in order to support transparency initiatives and seek firsthand input from the public. With an obsession to constantly learn how things can be done better, two public members were invited to be at the ground level for reviewing clinical and nonclinical performance data.



"We can see the hospital staff is taking it seriously and that this hospital is going places and doing great things."

- Carl Theriault

"It is impressive to see the accountability and transparency of employees when they report on quality monitoring at the meetings."

- Rebecca Caron



Honoring Service

“Dan is an individual who is well respected for his integrity and strong business values. As a loyal trustee, he did not waiver from his focus on what was best for the community and the people of the St. John Valley. The quality of care provided to our patients and the financial strength of Northern Maine Medical Center were always his top priorities.”

— Peter J. Sirois, President and CEO

RETIRING MEMBER OF THE NMMC
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OVER TWO DECADES OF SERVICE

DANIEL VAILLANCOURT

In 1995, Dan Vaillancourt, having been approached by Mel Labbe, joined what was then a twenty-seven member Board of Trustees at Northern Maine Medical Center. Mr. Vaillancourt said his answer was immediate, as he felt strongly about serving his community. “I have always felt strongly that Northern Maine Medical Center and the University of Maine at Fort Kent were both institutions that we need to support, not only because of their economic importance, but because of the importance in what they provide to the community.” He went on to serve two five year terms then after a two year break, he returned to serve eleven more years. In total, Mr. Vaillancourt served the people of the St. John Valley with unsurpassed passion and commitment for twenty-one years, five of those years he served as Board Chair.

On behalf of the entire organization, NMMC is grateful for Mr. Vaillancourt’s twenty-one years of support and leadership.



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