FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND THE CEO

Since our last letter to you in 2014, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital has begun work on two major initiatives that will add depth and breadth to the range of our services to the Island community. We are converting the Hospital’s former billing offices, known to everyone as the Red House, to a crisis stabilization unit which will be spearheaded by Martha’s Vineyard Community Services in close collaboration with our Emergency Department. And in the former Emergency Room of the Hospital’s 1972 wing, we are building a new walk-in clinic to address the need for convenient access to noncritical care. We are very excited about these two important additions to our delivery of care.

Our formal mission statement speaks of “Providing or arranging for the provision of” healthcare – an acknowledgment that a small rural facility like ours cannot offer every specialized service of a large urban teaching hospital like our affiliates in Boston. But in fact, thanks to our new physical plant, advances in telemedicine and a strategic partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital now offers a growing list of new services on the Island. Services such as urogynecology, infusion therapy, pain management and cardiac ICD clinics that a short time ago would have required a trip to Boston, can now all be done right here at home.

Meanwhile, the miles of computer cable and months of programming work involved in the creation of paperless medical records are beginning to pay off in a big way, as Martha’s Vineyard Hospital can now mine its own data for opportunities to improve the quality of our service. In the delivery of healthcare there really are no unimportant details – and now that our data is digital rather than buried in rooms full of paper records, we can begin to uncover efficiencies and deficiencies in our delivery of care and share with our providers meaningful ways to improve.

We are pleased to report that the financial health of Martha’s Vineyard Hospital remains strong. However, the continued red ink at Windemere, our independent living and skilled nursing care facility, remains a challenge for us. Despite Windemere’s five-star rating and award winning care, the state’s reimbursements for the care of our seniors continues to fall far short of the actual costs. We are working with the Commonwealth on two fronts: to show how important having a nursing home here on the Island is for local families, and to show that the so-called “Island factor” has a very real and burdensome effect on our cost of living. We remain confident that in the end the state will come to fully appreciate the wisdom and value of ensuring Windemere is always here to serve the residents of Martha’s Vineyard.

Finally, we’re proud to announce that Martha’s Vineyard Hospital was again named as one of the top 100 critical care hospitals in the United States by Ivantage Health Analytics. Additionally, and even more humbling, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid just released a new rating system for all hospitals that awarded MVH 5 out of a possible 5 stars. This places our island hospital in the top 7% of all 3,553 hospitals in the country. This accomplishment is made all the more impressive when you consider the challenges that seasonality brings to the delivery of our care. Ramping up our staff and services to serve well over 100,000 residents from 18,000 for three months of every year without missing a beat, is no easy task but one that our health providers and support staff do each and every year – and they do it exceptionally well. We are very lucky and thankful to have such a dedicated and professional team at MVH.

However, we remain far from satisfied. We are determined to press forward, exploring every opportunity to further improve the quality, availability and delivery of our care. We owe the Vineyard community that so generously supports and sustains this institution, nothing less.

Thank you again for your support and for entrusting us with your care.

Timothy D. Sweet
Chairman of the Board

Timothy J. Walsh
President & CEO
FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND THE CEO

Dear Hospital Supporters,

What a winter! Among the snowiest on record for the Vineyard. Yet despite the weather, it was business as usual at the Hospital. When snow made travel nearly impossible, physicians, nurses and other support personnel spent the night to ensure that all of our patients were able to be cared for – a testament to the culture of quality care that is at the core of our mission.

Since I last wrote to you, we have been working diligently to further our goals related to quality improvement. Coordination of care and the patient experience has been a major focus. We have been transitioning to a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model. Developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, this approach recognizes that revitalizing the nation’s primary care system is foundational to achieving high-quality, accessible and efficient healthcare for all. The PCMH is a promising model that can transform an organization by improving the delivery of primary care and as a result, also improve quality, safety, efficiency and the effectiveness of our healthcare system.

Here are just some of the highlights of the past year:

• Martha’s Vineyard Hospital was recognized as a five-star facility by Medicare on the government’s Hospital Compare website www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare. Nationally, of the 3,553 hospitals included in the review, 251 hospitals received an overall rating of five stars. In Massachusetts, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital was one of just three hospitals that received the five-star rating.

• We now offer 3D mammography thanks to a very generous donor and a very supportive community. The new unit makes a greater distinction between healthy and abnormal tissue, which means earlier cancer diagnosis and fewer false positives requiring unnecessary callbacks.

• The Surgical Department was able to purchase a laparoscopic trainer thanks to another generous donor. The trainer aids in teaching surgical assistants new techniques that help them support the surgical team during more complex laparoscopic procedures.

• The Anesthesia Department developed tele-ICU services in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital to give us the ability to provide further critical care to medically complicated patients.

• The Emergency Department now employs medical scribes – trained medical information staff who specialize in charting physician-patient encounters in real-time during exams. This process reduces paperwork for our physicians, freeing them up to spend more time with their patients.

And our work continues...

My thanks to all of the Hospital’s staff for their efforts and dedication to caring for the Vineyard community and our visitors. And my thanks to all of you for your generous support and for joining with us to make our Island hospital the best it can be.

Have a safe and happy summer.

Pieter M. Pil, MD, PhD

FROM THE CHIEF OF THE MEDICAL STAFF

Dear Hospital Supporters,

What a winter! Among the snowiest on record for the Vineyard. Yet despite the weather, it was business as usual at the Hospital. When snow made travel nearly impossible, physicians, nurses and other support personnel spent the night to ensure that all of our patients were able to be cared for – a testament to the culture of quality care that is at the core of our mission.

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Have a safe and happy summer.

Pieter M. Pil, MD, PhD
Natasha Hartmann, Mammography Department supervisor and technologist, at left and Tina Maloney, Director of Diagnostic Imaging, with the new 3D tomosynthesis unit.
A campaign to bring state-of-the-art 3D mammography to Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, begun last fall, came to a happy conclusion in January with a single generous gift of $400,000 from Shelley and Allan Holt of Chilmark and Washington, D.C.

This May, a new Selenia Dimensions mammography system from Hologic went into service in the Hospital’s imaging department, bringing an accuracy to breast screenings that previously was available only with a trip to the medical centers of Boston.

The campaign to bring this service to the Vineyard was already winning broad support when Tim Sweet, chairman of the Hospital board, received a call from Mrs. Holt offering to pay for a new 3D tomosynthesis machine with a single check. “Allan and Shelley had already given generously to the construction of the new Hospital,” says Mr. Sweet, “and now they were offering to help again. We can’t thank them enough.”

Digital tomosynthesis is a revolutionary new imaging method, producing a three-dimensional view that helps radiologists study breast tissue with a detail never available to them before. Dr. Deborah Hall, a longtime radiologist at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, still remembers her first experience with this new technology. “The very first 3D images I saw were amazing,” she says. “This means earlier cancer diagnoses and fewer false positives requiring fewer call-backs, reducing patient stress and anxiety.”

Explaining the thinking behind their generosity, Mrs. Holt said, “Now the women of Martha’s Vineyard have access, without leaving the Island, to the latest and best mammography equipment for the detection of breast cancer.”

For Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, the Holts’ gift has had a double benefit. Vineyard women are now enjoying the availability of the latest in diagnostic technology, and the supporters who had already given some $250,000 toward the 3D tomosynthesis machine have agreed to redirect those funds toward a Philips Heart Monitoring system for the Hospital. The new system allows for the transmission of a patient’s vital signs, in real time, into the electronic medical record.

Says Tim Walsh, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital’s president and CEO: “I am so grateful to Shelley and Allan Holt and all of our contributors who joined in support of this effort. Thanks to them, we far surpassed all our hopes.”
Martha’s Vineyard Hospital is pleased to welcome Dr. Sonya Stevens who joined with Dr. Melanie Miller to provide patient-centered pediatric and adolescent care at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital on July 1st.

With Dr. Stevens onboard, the Hospital now has one unified pediatric practice with two doctors, operating five days a week and during select weekend clinics.

Dr. Sonya Stevens has been coming to the Island to spend time with her extended family here for her whole life. She and her family moved here full-time in June 2014, and as of July 1st this year, she cemented that move by becoming a full-time member of the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital medical staff.

Dr. Stevens, a board-certified pediatrician, is a graduate of Brown University and the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco. She completed her pediatric residency training at Yale-New Haven Hospital, practiced from 1998-2001 in Brookline, and most recently has been with Post Road Pediatrics in Sudbury from 2001 through June 2015.

Joining the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital staff, Dr. Stevens says, is something she and her family have been talking about for years. “We have many family ties on the Island,” she says. Her two grandmothers, Mary Stevens and Virginia Besse, were founders of Featherstone Center for the Arts in Oak Bluffs. She’s also related to the Vose and Lovewell families in Edgartown, and her great-uncle is Reverend Alden Besse of Vineyard Haven.

Her family’s transition from Sudbury to Island life has been everything she hoped it would be, Dr. Stevens says. She and her husband, who works for the international firm Genzyme, have four children – two of them enrolled at the Tisbury School. “We knew it would be a relatively easy transition,” she says, “because we’ve been spending so much time here for years. Our kids have a lot of friends who are Islanders.” The Vineyard, she adds, is a perfect setting for some of her favorite recreational activities: she’s an avid runner and enjoys sailing and sailboat racing with her family.

For an appointment please call: 508-693-3732
Office hours are:
Monday, Thursday & Friday 7:30am – 4:00pm      Tuesday & Wednesday 7:30am – 7:00pm
Select Saturday clinics from 9:00am 12:00pm  (patients should call the office for urgent appointments)
To parents of children without a current primary care provider, you are encouraged to call: 508-693-3732.

HOSPITAL HOSTS 20th HEALTH FAIR

Hundreds of Vineyarders took time to attend the 20th Annual Health Fair this March. Hosted by Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, the event drew a record number of providers who offered up demonstrations, screenings and information at no cost to the participants.

Fair goers were able to get hearing, glaucoma, asthma, body mass index, melanoma, cholesterol and blood pressure screenings; attended seminars on the importance of childhood vaccinations and the hospital’s Baby-Friendly initiative, and learned how to sign up for Patient Gateway, a secure and convenient way to access personal medical records and connect with your doctor’s office. Three hundred attendees received free copies of Laurie David’s new book, “The Family Cooks.”
When Dr. Daniel Pesch came to Martha’s Vineyard Hospital in 2010 from a position as chairman of the OB/GYN department at a large Chicago hospital, he began referring many of his Island patients to Dr. Neeraj Kohli, medical director of Boston Urogyn. Dr. Pesch’s patients gave glowing reports of their experience with Dr. Kohli and a professional friendship was born.

“My patients have gotten excellent care from Neeraj,” says Dr. Pesch. “He’s so capable – I’ve had nothing but good comments from patients who’ve come back from seeing him.” In fact, says Dr. Pesch, “We’ve been sending so many patients up to Boston, we finally decided: maybe it’s worth bringing him down here.”

That’s just what Martha’s Vineyard Hospital has done, launching a new urogynecology clinic in May that brings Dr. Kohli to the Island for two days each month – doing procedures on Thursdays and seeing patients on Fridays.

Dr. Kohli is a nationally recognized surgeon in the emerging sub-specialty of urogynecology. He founded, and for eight years headed, the Division of Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. A Fellow of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology since 2004, he is an assistant professor of OB/GYN at Harvard Medical School, has written dozens of articles in scholarly medical journals, and has been invited to lecture at medical centers and universities across the United States.

Urogynecology, he says, is such a new and rapidly evolving specialty that even its name isn’t entirely settled:

“We concentrate on conditions of the pelvic floor, which most gynecologists and urologists may not be familiar with. These include overactive bladder; urinary incontinence and pelvic prolapse; fecal incontinence, pelvic pain syndromes, urinary tract infections, post-mesh complications and fistulas.”

Most of the conditions Dr. Kohli treats are chronic and worsen over time. “As Dan sent me more patients,” says Dr. Kohli, “and got positive feedback from them, we realized there was an under-served community here on the Vineyard.”

Dr. Kohli says the vast majority of the procedures he performs can be done under local IV sedation on an outpatient basis with excellent results. This makes urogynecology an ideal service to be bringing to the Island, where patients can so easily go home after an appointment at the Hospital.

Dr. Kohli makes a few central points in explaining his medical sub-specialty: “First of all, most of these conditions are not a normal part of aging – you shouldn’t have to suffer with them. Second, the vast majority of these conditions can safely and effectively be treated. Finally, we have a range of treatment options from very conservative to a little more aggressive. Our complication rate is less than 5 percent, and our success rate for treatment is probably in the 85 percent range.”
IN PURSUIT OF QUALITY, DETAILS ARE KEY

Bedside stools for doctors, pneumatic tires for nurses’ carts, silent latches on hundreds of cabinets— all these are signs that Martha’s Vineyard Hospital is on a mission to improve the quality of the patient’s experience.

Hospital management and staff are breaking down the details of every transaction from the moment of admission to the doctor’s final entry of summary information into the medical record after a patient’s discharge. Two tools have made this comprehensive new effort possible, says Timothy Walsh, Hospital president and CEO: survey reports from patients and data mined from the Hospital’s own new electronic records system.

The patient survey data comes to the Hospital from Press Ganey, a consulting firm which works with more than 10,000 health care institutions across the country. Press Ganey’s reports drill down into the minutest aspects of the patient’s experience, from the helpfulness of the first person who spoke with them on arrival, to waiting times at each stage of their care, the courtesy of doctors and nurses, the quality of the pain control they received and the home care guidance they were given on their departure.

This Hospital-wide effort is expanding on a dramatically successful push to improve service in the Emergency Department. “Now,” says Mr. Walsh, “our ED is outperforming 98 percent of the hospitals that Press Ganey surveys in the United States.”

Crunching the minutiae of the patient experience and finding opportunities for improvement is challenging work. But with the detailed reports provided by Press Ganey, Mr. Walsh says, the entire Hospital staff has embraced the effort.

“There’s a huge investment of time involved when you set out to understand exactly what the process is and then understand how to make it better,” says Mr. Walsh. All told, it took Hospital managers and staff the better part of two months to craft strategies that have improved the hand-off of a patient who visits the ED and is then admitted to an inpatient bed. Doctors who oversee admissions to the inpatient care unit are now expected to write orders within 60 minutes—and this timeframe will be shortened to 30 minutes when the staff becomes familiar with the process.

Turning their attention to the inpatient unit, the Hospital’s quality improvement team found complaints from some patients about noise during their stay. Brainstorming followed, and now the cabinets in every Hospital room—some 300 of them—have silent latches. Now, every cart that rolls through the inpatient unit is fitted with quiet, pneumatic tires. The Hospital now has its own decibel meter, says Mr. Walsh, and is looking closely for still more ways to quiet things down.

No patient who could see how obsessively Martha’s Vineyard Hospital management and staff pore over these Press Ganey surveys would ever again wonder whether they’re worth filling out. Staff go over them, line by line, and the summaries are posted in break rooms. “People take a lot of pride here,” says Mr. Walsh, “when they see their survey scores improving.”

For doctors, something as simple as taking the time to sit down and speak with a patient at eye level can make all the difference in our patient’s satisfaction with the hospital experience. This spring, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital purchased stools for every room so the doctors can do just that.

Another line of the Press Ganey survey suggested that the Hospital could do better communicating with patients about their medications. “The Pharmacy had signs made for every room that say if you have a question about your new medications, just call us and a pharmacist will be happy to talk with you,” says Mr. Walsh.

The success of this intense focus on quality at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital is even beginning to draw attention from other hospitals across the country, Mr. Walsh is proud to report: “We’re getting calls from Press Ganey saying there’s a critical access hospital in Missouri that would like to talk to the staff member who worked on this quality improvement project for you.”

Says Tim Sweet, chairman of the Hospital board: “Incremental, constant quality improvement is what we’re doing here. What we’ve been able to do with tools like the Press Ganey survey is get the focus smaller and smaller—and the results are larger and larger. These little things really do make all the difference in the world.

“This is about people being willing to admit, although it might sound funny, that we are a service industry, and we need to act accordingly. All the little things we can do to make someone feel comfortable and feel watched over—they’re important.”

(Right) Tiffany Vanderhoop and son, Carl Widdiss.
Each December, a tree at the Hospital is lit with hundreds of lights, each one donated by an individual in honor or in memory of a loved one. We are deeply grateful to all those who helped to light the tree in 2014 when it was dedicated in loving memory of our co-worker Stacy Viera.

IN MEMORY
Ian C. Araujo
Benjamin A. Araujo
Dorothy Bangs
Stuart and Dorothy Bangs
Diana Bardwell
Fritz Bardwell
Maxine Bardwell
Thomas Bardwell Sr.
Dorothy W. Barker
Linda Ben David
Paul Bergeron
June A. Bosworth
Bob Bows Sr.
James Broast
Robert Buchanan
Jack Cameron
Al Carpenter
Dorothy and George Cassell
Sheila Chisholm
Chopper, Fritz and Chipper
Albert Ciampa
Ann Ciampa
Carol C. Clark
Neil Collins
Russell Combra
Nancy A. Corwin
Patricia Costa
- My dear sister
Deceased Members
- MV Antiques Club
Arthur B. Dickson
Priscilla M. Dickson
Charles Drake
Nicholas Drake
Sally W. Dunkley
Michael Fallon
Lorna Flanders
Pat Flanders
Barbara Flynn
William Flynn
Robert Gelotte
Edward F. Grant
Pat Gregory
Alice Hafner
William “Bill” Hanna
Judy Hatt
Joanna Horgan
Ray and Myra Houle
Sam Jackson
Amalie and Jack Kane
Dorothy E. Kelley
Robert W. Kelley
Frederick W. Kingsley
Joyce and Walter Kistler
Nancy Luedeman

IN MEMORY
Jean Marc Levesque
Connie Lima
Richie Madeiras
Charles Mahoney
Julienne Marshall - My dear sister
Kathy Manning Maseda
Sam and Virginia McCormick
Danny Meader
Dr. Kaye Moody
David Munn
Agatha Nagy
Joe Nunes
Raymond E. Olendzenski Sgt
Darla Patriacca
Emma Pizzella
Nicholas Pizzella
Mannie Viera
Sarah Viera
Mary D. Viera
Miriam Walker
Jolanne Warman
John S. Wilbur, Jr.
Rose Williams

IN HONOR
Pat and Kerry Alley
Joseph Butynski
Mary Butynski
Dr. Malcolm Dunkley
Norma Gaudreau
Pat Gregory
Ebb Haerta

SUPPORTERS
Carol and Rick Humphrey
Dr. John Lamb
Dr. Lewis Lipsey
Christopher S. Look, Jr.
David R. Look
William L. Look
Betsy Marshall
Bob Murphy
MVH Volunteers
My Family
David Rhoderick, Jr.
Jonathan Rhoderick
Lara Romeo
Windermere Volunteers
Katy Yolton

Stacy Viera’s family lit the tree in her memory.
HOSPITAL AND WINDEMERE HONOR VOLUNTEERS

On April 15, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital and Windemere honored the many volunteers who work with both organizations to ensure patients and residents have the best possible day. In just the past year, our volunteers have completed over 10,000 hours of service.

This year, Jonathan Alden was honored as Volunteer of the Year. A volunteer for seven years, he has logged 1,250 hours of service. Known for his kind and gentle way with both residents and staff, Jonathan leads activity programs, helps with outings and enjoys taking residents out to the garden for lunch.

PATIENT GATEWAY: IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Since March, Martha’s Vineyard Hospital has been making it easier than ever to connect with your doctor’s office and track your own medical information, whenever and wherever you need it.

Patient Gateway, a new service developed by Partners HealthCare, lets you manage your own health online – renewing prescriptions, requesting referrals to specialists, and accessing reliable health and wellness information, all securely and at your own convenience.

Hundreds of people served by Martha’s Vineyard Hospital have already enrolled and created personal accounts, giving them online access to information like test results, summaries of their medications, allergies, immunizations, and the ability to request an appointments. Patient Gateway is an easy and secure way to ask your care team basic, non-urgent questions and to receive an answer without repeated calls. The Gateway’s summaries of your personal health information are available and easy to share with other caregivers, even when you travel far from the Vineyard.

Patient Gateway is built on the idea that better-informed patients are better partners in the management of their own health care. The service is compatible with iPhones and tablet computers, as well as PCs and Macintosh computers. Enrolling is easy – it starts with a call to your doctor’s office to receive your Medical Record number, then a visit to Patientgateway.partners.org where you’ll click on Enroll to create your secure personal account.
Contributions of $50,000 to $99,999
Anonymous (1)
James B. Corcoran Trust
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Stephen C. Luce Charitable Foundation

Contributions of $25,000 to $49,999
Louise, Sven & Anna Betty Carlson Fund
The Goff Family Foundation
Gertrude M. Goff
Mimi & Peter Haas Fund
J.M. Huber Corporation
Ms. Via Lambros
Permanent Endowment for Martha’s Vineyard — Mayhew-Nevin Fund
The New York Community Trust

Contributions of $10,000 to $24,999
Mr. & Mrs. Steven W. Barnes
Agnes R. Butler Trust
Mr. & Mrs. Michael C. Caruso
Brad & Dorothy Church Trust
Marcia Mulford Cini & William Lee Cini
Community Foundation of New Jersey
Dr. Lois de Menil & Dr. Georges de Menil
The ELMS Foundation
Fairfield County Community Foundation
Belinda Eichler
The Families of Michael & George Eberstadt

Contributions of $5,000 to $9,999
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Susan & Robert Bishop
Mr. & Mrs. Richard M. Brown
Karen & Brian Conway
Thea Duell & Peter Cook
Cronig’s Markets & Healthy Additions
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Mrs. Frances I. Dennison
Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Doyle
Louie & Ralph Dweck
The Families of Michael & George Eberstadt
Belinda Eichler
Fairfield County Community Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Fink
Ms. Lee Morgan & Mr. James O. Fishbeek
Jennifer Caldwell & John Fisher
Mr. Ralph C. Franklin
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Mr. & Mrs. James R. Swartz
& The Swartz Foundation
The Swordspoint Foundation
The Tow Foundation
Vanguard Charitable
Vineyard Propane
Mr. & Mrs. William Wrigley, Jr.

Contributions of $2,500 to $4,999
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ABM Healthcare Support Services
The Aoyo Charitable Foundation
Bardwell Electronics
Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan
Mrs. Eileen O. Brown
Rosemary & Michael Bulkin
Cape Cod Healthcare
Cigna
Columbia Construction Company
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan D. Durst
Ebersol-Saint James Family Trust
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Betsy & Andrew Forrester
Patsy & Stu Gentsch
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Deborah Hancock & Hancock Real Estate
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Isenberg Family Charitable Trust
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Dr. Karen Casper & Dr. Pieter Pil
Diane M. & H. John Riley
Mr. & Mrs. Edward C. Rorer
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas L. Sacks

Contributions of $1,000 to $2,499
Anonymous (6)
AGFA Health Care
Marsha & Patrick Ahearn
Mrs. Caroline B. Akins
Liz Rose & Cindy Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Antonelli
Ms. Leslie K. Williams
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The Boston Foundation
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Ryna G. Cohen
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Carol & Ronald Conte
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Gene & John Ferguson
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FM Global Foundation
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Ms. Mary Gillette
Beth & Marc Goldberg
Mr. & Mrs. Edward T. Goodman
Harriett & David Gowell
Kay M. & William E. Griffin
Dr. Timothy E. Guiney
Elizabeth & Lee Guitar
Sarah & Geoffrey Kund
Marian R. Halperin
Contributions of $500 to $999
Anonymous (2)  
3M
John C. Anderson
Evelyn & David Auerbach
Baltimore Community Foundation
Elaine Phourides & Dana Bangs
Cheryl & Max Batzer
Paul F. Doherty & David A. Behnke
Ms. Marguerite H. Benson
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The Boneyard
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The Honorable Ann W. Brown & Don A. Brown
Dr. & Mrs. Ewart F. Brown, Jr.
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Lillian Whitney
Mary Ellen Yakeley
Dear Friends,

When I graduated from medical school in 1967, the chief of medicine at the State University of New York wished us all “an illness requiring hospitalization – and a full recovery.” He wanted each of us to know what it’s like to be a patient, to experience the fears and uncertainties, the vulnerability and the dependence a patient has on his physicians.

As I practiced medicine at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital from 1976 to 2003, I often remembered his wish as I cared for my patients. I finally got my professor’s wish in the summer of 2014, when I suddenly developed a leg infection after returning from a kayaking trip in Idaho. My physician, Pieter Pil, admitted me to Martha's Vineyard Hospital – and my initiation as a patient began.

I was very sick – even fearing at one point that I might lose my leg.

Dr. Pil immediately started me on potent antibiotics and then contacted his infectious disease colleagues at Mass General who provided guidance with my treatment. After one week, with only limited improvement in my condition, Dr. Pil arranged for my transfer to Mass General so that the specialists could evaluate my condition in person.

My transfer to MGH was seamless: all my medical records including my x-rays were immediately available to the specialists in Boston. It was a great example of the perfect integration of medical care across the system. This was very reassuring to me as a seriously ill patient. I spent a full week at MGH before I was well enough to return to the Island to complete my recovery at home.

Here at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, I experienced care in almost every department – radiology, ultrasound, the lab, physical therapy and the operating room. Everyone I interacted with confirmed I was in good hands. Even the cafeteria staff was thoughtful and helpful, bringing an extra meal every day so my wife could join me for supper.

I came away from my experience feeling grateful for my professor’s wish of many years ago – but more grateful still for the competent and high quality care, resources, and the simple kindness I experienced during my stay at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital.

Compassion is one of the most important things a physician can bring to the work of caring for patients. Being on the receiving end really drove that home. I hope you’ll be generous in your support of the MVH Annual Fund this summer, so our community will be able to continue to experience this exemplary care, right here at home, for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Jacobs

Michael Jacobs came to the Island in 1976 beginning an association with Martha’s Vineyard Hospital which continued for 38 years. In 1987, Dr. Jacobs established the Vineyard Medical Services walk-in clinic, where he practiced until last year. He continues to write and teach on the subject of marine emergency medicine. Dr. Jacobs resides in West Tisbury with his wife, Genevieve Jacobs.