Recruitment efforts at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital have met with solid success this year, bringing four new physicians – two of them primary care doctors – to the medical staff.

Joe Woodin, the Hospital’s president and CEO, is pleased at the news. “Primary care recruitment is a challenge for hospitals everywhere,” he says. “We understand that a strong staff of physicians is the foundation, the bedrock of any successful health care system – and we are committed to providing ample, high-quality medical care to the Vineyard community. Timely access to primary care, in particular, is one of our core goals – this is the gateway to health care at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, as it is at medical centers across the United States.”

**Dr. Steven E. Feder**, a board-certified pediatrician, became a permanent member of the medical staff in November, joining the pediatric office of Drs. Melanie Miller and Sonya Stevens. From 1998 until moving to the Vineyard, Dr. Feder was associated with Lincoln Medical Partners in Damariscotta, Me., and chaired the department of pediatrics at Miles Memorial Hospital. He served since 2011 as president of the Maine chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and since 2013 on the board of directors of the Maine Medical Association.

Dr. Feder, who completed his residency in pediatrics at Boston City Hospital/Boston Medical Center, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians. He has traveled to Uganda and St. Lucia as a volunteer physician, and was a founder and coach of the Boothbay Youth Football program. He was honored this year by the American Academy of Pediatrics for his efforts to reduce children’s exposure to toxic chemicals as well as his advocacy in support of the rights of transgender children. He has also been honored in Maine for his leadership in community pediatrics and in programs to address childhood obesity.

“Public health and advocacy for children and adolescents is a very important thing for me,” said Dr. Feder. “Children don’t have a voice in the voting booth.”

**Dr. David A. Halsey**, an orthopedic surgeon specializing in joint replacement, has most recently been director of the Joint Replacement Program at the University of Vermont Medical Center’s Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Center, and a professor in the Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation at the UVM College of Medicine in Burlington, Vt.

Specializing in patient-centric care and surgical risk reduction strategies, Dr. Halsey’s focus is on computer-assisted surgery, hip and knee resurfacing, minimal incision arthroplasty and reconstructive surgery of the hip and knee. One unique credential he brings to his joint replacement work is that he has been a patient himself: “I’ve had the experience of problems with an arthritic joint – my hip. After a long course, I had a successful hip replacement. So I can say to my patients, I’ve had to make the same choices you’re challenged with, and I can help you through this.”

Says Dr. Halsey, “When I’m asked about my philosophy of care, I think I can best say that it’s patient-centric. Health care is complicated, it can be scary, and for patients, I think the way I can meet their needs is by finding out what’s really important to them. When we come together as a team, orthopedics can often provide durable, long-term solutions.”

**Dr. Barbara M. Krause** joined the Hospital’s staff of primary care physicians on Sept. 1. Her specialty is internal medicine, which as she describes it, is “a family practice for adults.”

Before coming here, she had a practice for 28 years with six other doctors in Brookline, was on staff with the primary care group at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston, and taught at Harvard Medical School. She speaks of her patients as “my people,” and says, “The hardest part of the decision to come here was telling my patients I was leaving. Establishing relationships and taking care of people is what I like most about what I do.”

Dr. Krause and her husband, Glenn, have been married 25 years and have three grown children. Their new home in Vineyard Haven overlooks a place where she has cherished memories from childhood. “When I was growing up,” she recalls, “my family
Hospital Seeks Baby-Friendly Designation

At Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, the Maternity staff and members of a special committee, the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) Team, as well as volunteer community members, have been working for more than three years to win the designation of Baby-Friendly Hospital. BFHI is a global program, launched in 1991 by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund to recognize hospitals and birthing centers that offer the highest level of care for infant feeding and mother-baby bonding. The BFHI assists hospitals in giving all mothers the information, confidence, and skills necessary to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies or formula safely, and gives special recognition to hospitals that have done so.

The work of the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital team culminated on Sept. 19 and 20, when surveyors from Baby-Friendly USA, the accrediting body for the global health initiative, spent two days reviewing Hospital policy and staff education, and interviewing nurses, providers and patients. This survey is a critical step in the Hospital’s effort to demonstrate that it provides excellent evidence-based maternity care. The two-day survey went well, and Martha’s Vineyard Hospital hopes to have excellent news of a new accreditation to share in the coming months.

At the center of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative are the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, developed by a global team of experts and based on practices that have been shown to foster breastfeeding among mothers. A big part of getting ready for the Baby-Friendly survey was the Hospital team’s work to increase awareness among all MVH staff. Team members attended departmental meetings to present slide shows on the subject. They participated in orientation of new staff, and as a special incentive, the team held a free raffle whose only requirement was knowledge about the BFHI.

New Technology Enhances Lab Services

This has been a big year for investments in new technology at the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital laboratory, says lab director Lynn Mercer. The lab recently added two new state-of-the-art blood testing machines, and upgraded its Lyme disease testing equipment from an analyzer capable of six tests at a time to a machine that can test 30 samples at once.

But the headline piece of new equipment in the lab, a machine beloved by every technician who works with it, has to be the Cepheid Gene Xpert – a molecular diagnostic system whose purchase was a year in the planning. The Gene Xpert represents a generational leap forward in technology, according to Mercer: “It’s our first foray into automating microbiology.”

The Gene Xpert greatly speeds and simplifies the lab’s screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea; it’s also used in tests for the toxigenic C. difficile bacterium in stool samples, and in screening nasal specimens for Staph aureus, typically before surgery. The machine that the Gene Xpert replaces, says Mercer, “was so labor intensive – probably four to six hours for each test, that we couldn’t use it every day. This new analyzer is what we call random-access, which means you can walk up to it at any time and throw a specimen on, and it’s a 90-minute turnaround.”

The Gene Xpert uses a technique called polymerase chain reaction or PCR, which generates millions of copies of a section of DNA from a tiny specimen, yielding enough genetic material for analysis. Says Mercer: “The beauty of this testing is that it’s so specific, and so incredibly sensitive – it can respond to the tiniest amounts of something. This is the direction in which laboratory technology is moving, in the direction of microbiology: identifying these organisms at the molecular level.”

This very equipment is in use at the most advanced centers in the Partners Healthcare organization, including Massachusetts General Hospital, which Mercer sees as a great advantage. “When we standardize lab equipment across the network, if a patient goes from here to Mass General it’s easier to compare values on laboratory tests. Now, every time we make a decision about a capital expenditure, we consider what MGH is doing. I do believe it’s helpful to have the same platforms here and there.”

With each new addition of cutting-edge equipment to the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital lab, says Mercer, the services offered by her department advance on three important fronts: the range of tests available, their speed, and their precision. “This new machine is just crazy good,” she says. “It’s exciting that a small lab like ours can take advantage of technology like this, and everyone is over the moon about it. It’s such a huge advance over the equipment it replaces, the big joke around here was everyone offering to take the old analyzer on the boat and drop it between here and Woods Hole.”

Lynn Mercer loads a sample into the Cepheid Gene Xpert molecular diagnostic system. At left is Jesse Valencia, lab tech.
Crafting a Plan for the Hospital’s Future

Soon after his arrival this spring as Martha’s Vineyard Hospital’s new president and CEO, Joe Woodin called for the preparation of a Master Facility Plan to guide institutional change through the years ahead.

“Like most organizations,” he said, “we must have a long-term plan that makes sure we’re investing in our buildings, our equipment and our staff. The new building is beautiful, and yet we still have the 1929 and 1972 buildings. We also still have parking concerns around our campus. We’re not interested in paving every bit of green space around our buildings to solve the parking problem; we want the hospital to be an environment that is comfortable and warm and inviting both for staff and patients.

“We also have to look at all our equipment from the standpoint of useful life and replacement schedules, and from the standpoint of advances as new technologies emerge.”

Just weeks after Woodin’s arrival, the Hospital recruited an experienced Senior Project Manager. Emma Schumann arrived on the Vineyard on a Sunday in July and started work the next morning. By August she pulled together a Master Facility Planning team (MFP Team) which is on track to finish their work on a Master Facility Plan later this fall. Ms. Schumann previously served as a project manager in healthcare, higher education and state government, and has years of experience helping organizations work through the strategic planning process.

An 18-member MFP Team has been meeting since August 24 to review the facility, systems, needs, and desires of the organization. Their job is to compose a plan that will best serve patients, employees and the future of the organization.

The plan will consider immediate needs, and what changes should happen over 3, 7 and 10 years’ time. “The Master Facility Plan,” says Schumann, “will be our guide for decision making moving forward. It outlines the goals and direction that all future facility changes need to conform to. It is essentially a blueprint of the future growth and upkeep of the Hospital.”

Ms. Schumann recalled an early meeting of the committee, when Woodin observed that Martha’s Vineyard Hospital is a unique facility, reflecting on its fascinating history — and that no one working from a blank sheet of paper would design the campus the Hospital has today. “He is very authentic in his honesty, saying, ‘Look: you wouldn’t build things like this, but here we are, and what are we going to do to make things operationally better, for the patients and the employees? You guys know better than me — so I want your ideas about what we can do to improve things.’”

“We’re always asking, which way is best? Each step gets us closer to a goal, and there has to be a logical order to how things are done.’”

In the early weeks of this process, several central themes have emerged. “Wayfinding and signage are big issues for the Hospital,” Schumann says. For new visitors the Hospital can be a maze of entries and exits, and the MFP Team is looking at ways to rationalize this. One effort already underway will be to have a unique identifying number for every room in the entire facility. That numbering plan then lends itself to the creation of better signage.

There’s also the challenge of parking. The MFP Team’s general idea, Schumann says, is to work toward what she calls “traffic segregation” — sorting Hospital staff and delivery traffic from patient traffic. The goal is an “outside-in” plan that locates staff parking farther from the facility, making the spaces closest to services available for patients. Already this summer, she notes, the Hospital encouraged staff to park at the Portuguese-American Club and walk the 12 minutes from there to work — and dozens of employees did.

Central to the planning group’s work, Schumann says, is a focus not only on goals but on the steps needed to achieve them. “We’re always asking, which way is best? After narrowing down what our Master Facility Plan will include, the team will be deciding how to get there in incremental steps. No decision is made without an end game in mind. Each step will get us closer to the goal, and many are dependent on a preceding step, so there is often a logical order to how things have to happen.”

The MFP Team is a diverse group, by design — its 18 members include Hospital leadership, doctors, managers, and staff. “We have all kinds of people,” says Schumann. “For example, we looked for doctors who have been here a long time, but we also looked for doctors who have recently joined the organization who might have a different perspective. And we said, let’s get the facility manager, but let’s also get someone from the facility staff who has been all over the property fixing things.”

Says Schumann, “People have been really excited and engaged in our meetings.” And to anyone who thinks the planning document will just be another piece of paper to be filed away and forgotten, she says they don’t know Joe Woodin.

“Joe is the only person I’ve ever known who actually takes an organization’s strategic plan, and laminates it for every manager to keep and refer to in their office. When we get done with this Master Facility Plan, anyone who wants to propose a facility change, due to new equipment or services, or increased access will have to consider how that fits into the Plan. Because if it’s not able to be enveloped into part of that Plan, and it does not help reach the end goal, it isn’t likely to happen any time soon.”

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New Doctors Join Medical Staff

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stayed at Webb’s Campground for many years. I went to the Martha’s Vineyard Girl Scout Sailing Camp for three summers, and it was magical. I can see it from our house, across the Lagoon.

Her first impressions of Martha’s Vineyard Hospital have been positive, Dr. Krause says. “This is just a gorgeous facility. Everyone seems so proud of their hospital, and so dedicated to making things work well here. That’s something I can get into.”

Dr. Kevin N. Mabie, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon, brings his experience of more than three decades in the practice of general orthopedic surgery to the Island community.

Dr. Mabie, who received his medical degree from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Virginia Hospitals, has experience and expertise in a wide range of orthopedics and a record of promoting advances in technology that have greatly improved surgical care over the past 30 years.

Dr. Mabie has performed more than 1,000 total hip replacements and more than 1,200 total knee replacements during his career in the Fall River area, where he has been on the medical staff at Charlton Memorial Hospital and at Saint Anne’s Hospital since July 1994. He has performed more than 3,000 arthroscopic knee surgeries and hundreds of shoulder surgeries. He’s also experienced in hand, wrist and foot surgeries and in the treatment of traumatic injuries.

Says Dr. Mabie: “I like to spend time with a patient and get to know the whole person, not just the bone or joint that is bothersome. There’s a pace here at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital that allows time for that.”

The 28th annual Sullivan 5K Run/Walk, and the first annual diaper derby, was held at East Chop in Oak Bluffs on the sunny morning of Saturday, August 27, raising a record $72,000 to support Martha’s Vineyard Hospital.

The MVH Development Department is grateful to Dr. Louis W. Sullivan for his continued leadership of this event, and to the Hospital trustees, senior managers and medical staff for the support which made this the most successful race ever. And as always, the volunteers who gave their time so generously on race day made it all possible.

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