

Growing Psychiatric Access for Growing Minds



■ Imagine your child is experiencing a mental health crisis and the first appointment you can get with a child psychiatrist is eight months away. That's the dire reality in Vermont, and that's what motivated Dr. Greta Spottswood to help establish CHCB's Child Psychiatry Consultation Clinic in 2018. At the time, the program was intended to reduce the state-wide waitlist for children with urgent psychiatric needs. While successful, the program as it existed then was unable to grow broadly without creating another waitlist situation.

Thankfully, an anonymous funder reached out to CHCB through the Vermont Community Foundation to express their interest in supporting access to timely mental health work. This was the seed that blossomed into CHCB's new Vermont Child Psychiatry Access Program (VT-CPAP) which will enable us to sustainably

provide rapid consultative support to all PCPs around the state. With this wind in our sails, CHCB soon found a number of partner agencies willing to lend support and newly available HRSA funding gained the program more support through additional stakeholders. The VT Department of Mental Health (DMH) is very

“Supporting primary care providers to catch major mental illness early in younger patients to prevent hospitalization is especially rewarding.” — Dr. Greta Spottswood, CPAP Medical Director

supportive of scalable, effective interventions for kids, one of which is different ways mental health can be integrated into primary care. The VT Child Health Improvement Program and Division of Maternal and Child Health who work closely with pediatricians have also been

valuable partners. “The extent of these partnerships has been really valuable in shaping CPAP and making for a more impactful future in mental health care for children in Vermont,” Dr. Spottswood shares.

“Because of the many groups who are eager to have a better system in Vermont, I'm able to better learn from

them so this program will be a lot stronger and more useful as it grows,” Dr. Spottswood says of her work. “Supporting primary care providers to catch major mental illness early in younger patients and treating it effectively to prevent hospitalization is especially rewarding.”

A Note from Jeff

■ Spring in Vermont always brings a sense of hopefulness and renewal. Following two very difficult years, we are more excited than ever to experience longer, warmer days filled with promise. I am so proud of our team at the Community Health Centers, who leaned in to care for our community during a pandemic. They have worked hard, and often at great personal sacrifice, to meet the needs of our community. I am heartened that this spring will bring a lessening of urgent community need that will allow our staff to return to what we have been doing successfully for the past 50 years: provide outstanding integrated primary care for ALL!

The work in front of us will shift from providing an emergent response to the pandemic, to pursuing our

mission by increasing access to vital health care services. In May, we will be opening our newest practice in Essex, one of the fastest growing communities in our area. Later in the year, we will bring an onsite pharmacy to our Riverside practice, and dental services to the Champlain Islands. With renewed energy and focus, we are so looking forward to the opportunities that 2022 will bring.



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— 

Jeff McKee, PsyD
CEO

Congressionally Directed Spending Funds to CHCB Dental Centers will Expand to

■ When CHCB opened the doors on the Champlain Islands Health Center (CIHC) in 2016, the community need for a local dental practice was immediately clear. While funding to meet this need has been evasive, earlier this year, Sen. Patrick Leahy's office presented a golden opportunity to apply for \$1M in congressionally directed spending for rural health service expansions. These funds will be utilized to install a complete Champlain Islands Dental Center with five operatories built within existing space in the building's lower level. "Everyone has glowing things to say about the potential and need to add dental to the services already offered at CIHC," says CHCB Dental Director, Elicia Thompson, DDS. "I

welcome this additional dental center as another opportunity to shed light on what we do, and how we see community needs and try to address them."

The local senior community and youth are the two demographics hardest hit by a lack of local dental services. With the Bayview Crossing senior living apartments being constructed directly behind the Champlain Islands Health Center, it ensures residents literally have dental care right in their back yard. "The fact that housing is coming will create a win/win for the retirement community there in so many ways," Dr. Thompson says of the buildings' proximity.

Additionally, CHCB's experience

operating a School-Based Dental program in Burlington will enable us to utilize this expertise to help meet the dental needs of children enrolled in the Champlain Island School District. "Creating relationships like we have with the Burlington School District will help us get that program up-and-running."

Unlike the Burlington School-Based program, the Islands model will transport students from their schools to CIHC through partnership with the same organization helping to establish Bayview Crossing - Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (C.I.D.E.R.). "Creating a program where we can assign some time on the schedule to transfer kids from school over to the dental center

Grateful for Neighbors Like These

■ When Louis Godin first learned about the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) model of care and its proven ability to transition chronically unhoused individuals into a stable living situation through affordable housing vouchers and case management support, he was inspired to act. It was 2015 and CHCB's PSH Program at Beacon Apartments was just opening around the corner from his home in South Burlington's Orchard neighborhood. "As a neighborhood, there was a want to do something collaboratively to welcome our new neighbors," Godin says about the group's origin. Coordinating comes naturally to Louis, a professional event planner and the driving force behind Friends of Beacon.

Each year since, Louis and a handful



Louis Godin (r) and two other Friends of Beacon sort donations.

of neighbors have come together to collect donations of toiletries, hygiene items, laundry soap and other items for the folks at Beacon. They cultivate donations by posting online and by going door-to-door with flyers to the 140+ Orchard households. In the seven years that they've been holding this annual donation drive, Friends of Beacon have raised around ten thousand pounds of tangible goods for Beacon Apartments and

"Giving back to the community feels good and helps you feel like you're part of something."

— Louis Godin, Donor

our community partners at Feeding Chittenden.

"Giving back to the community feels good and helps you feel like you're part of something. Bringing a smile and kindness to people at a time when we all need it so much benefits everyone," Godin shares. "Volunteering gives a different perspective and helps with your own mental health."

Visit www.nhnproject.org to learn more about Friends of Beacon's efforts and how you can help!

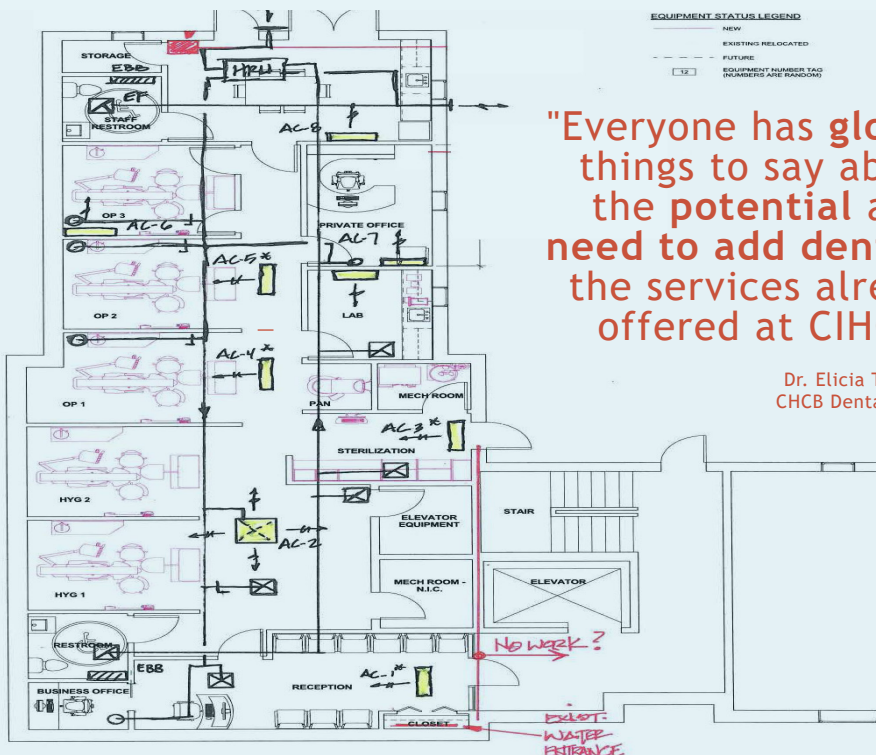
Bring Dental Center to the Champlain Islands

the Only County Without a Local Practice

is such an ideal situation, helping many parents who are lacking in transportation or the flexibility to take time off from work to bring their children to appointments," Dr. Thompson shares, though the dental program's relationship to education doesn't end there. "Having this location will free up space to offer a training site for General Practice Dental Residents, making us a supportive educator to the next generation of dentists."

Funding will be officially released later this year, with plans for construction to begin in early 2023. Thank you, Senator Leahy, for helping bring healthy smiles to the Champlain Islands!

Current layout for CIHC Dental Center



"Everyone has glowing things to say about the potential and need to add dental to the services already offered at CIHC."

Dr. Elicia Thompson
CHCB Dental Director



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