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Putting People into Public Health

Summer 2005

A Day in the Life of a **MEDQUEST** Student

The day starts early for Yetha Lumumba, a senior at Essex High School. It's 8:30 a.m. on a sunny Wednesday morning and he's in a car on the way to Northwestern Medical Center (NMC) in St. Albans. He has a 9:00 a.m. appointment with Jim Larose, the Respiratory Therapy Manager at NMC. The reason for his early morning visit – Yetha is one of 16 students participating in the weeklong 2005 MedQuest Health Careers Exploration Program. Instead of spending his day at the beach or playing sports with his friends, Yetha is meeting with Mr. Larose to determine if respiratory therapy is a career that

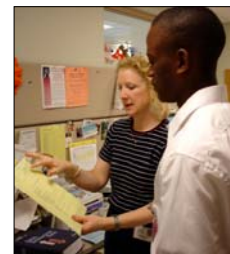


seen and the difficulties that may be encountered. “The field of healthcare is not for the faint of heart,” Larose tells Yetha. “You are oftentimes dealing with bodily fluids and you never know what type of situation you will come into.”

The tour is wrapped up with a demonstration of some of the high-tech equipment that a respiratory therapist might use. As Yetha spins the dials and presses buttons on one of the machines, his eyes light up. “I like work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. I like to work with machinery.”



It's now 10:30 a.m. and Larose escorts Yetha to the Pharmacy Department at NMC where Yetha is introduced to Judy Nasca, Registered Pharmacist. Judy takes Yetha on a tour of the pharmacy and explains to him a typical day, outlining the duties that a pharmacist performs and explaining the education that is needed to pursue a pharmacy career.



Yetha explains his interest in this area, “My family moved to the United States from the Democratic Republic of Congo. When I lived there I worked in a pharmacy and it interested me. I like to work in a friendly atmosphere and do things for other people. I am interested in becoming a Pharmacist because I like to work with plants, animals and physical materials.”

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he is interested in pursuing after graduation from high school. “I became interested in a career in health when I was in the 6th grade,” says Yetha. “I enjoyed learning about humans, animals, and plants. I wanted to know about how they function, and how they grow and reproduce. I wanted to know how to figure out what plants can be used for treatment and how we can find cures for human sickness.” Yetha spends 90 minutes with Larose touring the NMC Respiratory Therapy Department, the Emergency Department, and the Intensive Care Unit. He highlights for Yetha the tasks that a respiratory therapist performs in each of these areas. He also tries to paint for Yetha a picture of what a typical day may be like—the types of patients that may be

A Day in the Life of a MedQuest Student continued

(Continued from page 1)

It's now noon and Yetha returns to UVM for the "faculty lunch." Here professors from the University of Vermont (UVM) College of Medicine, UVM School of Social



Work, and UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences offer MedQuest students the chance to ask questions and hear first-hand from faculty what pursuing an education in a healthcare field involves.

After lunch it's time for Planned Recreation. Today it's a game of MedQuest Jeopardy prepared by the MedQuest staff.. The MedQuest program is staffed by



first year medical and health science graduate students, who are paid for their time with funding provided by the Freeman Foundation.

Natasha Frederick, Danielle Williams, and Noah Diminick are the first year medical students staffing this year's program. They commit to two weeks, the week before and the week of camp, and they live with the students in a UVM residence hall, eat with them in the dining halls, and shepherd them around campus and to their shadowing experiences. Perhaps most importantly, the staff are role models who offer on-site mentoring to the students.

"The students have an amazing transformation during the program," states one of the Assistant Directors. "I started out just wanting to work with kids and get them excited about medicine, but its become much more than that. I have made great connections with sixteen incredible young adults."

Another notes, "I am amazed at the type of cool stuff the students get to see. There were many times I thought how cool it would be to see the stuff myself. I had no opportunities like that in high school, and very few in college. Many of the



things they see or learn about I have not yet been exposed to in medical school."

After a tight contest, with a lot of good-natured teasing between the teams, the game is done. It's 3:00 p.m. and time for the group to attend a presentation on physical therapy and sports medicine at the Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC) Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation Center. Kristopher Ware, Lead Physical Therapist, leads the students in a discussion of what physical therapy is.

He then has them get up and try out some of the evaluation tools that physical therapists use, such as goniometers (an instrument for measuring angles) and digital muscle testers.



Yetha offers his thoughts on the physical therapy presentation, "I liked it. It seems like good and active work. There are a lot of fun things to do and you mostly deal with people and give them instructions on how to stay in shape and take care of their body."

It's now 5:00 p.m. and time for the students to go back to UVM for dinner. After, students are engaged in another planned activity. Tonight it's the first of a two-night American Red Cross First Aid and CPR course. Students then finish the day by engaging in a group discussion that offers them the chance to debrief and process all they've seen and heard. It's also the time to ask the staff any lingering questions they might still have about the day's experiences.

Yetha reflects on his day, "After shadowing with Jim Larose in Respiratory Therapy, I think that I am very interested in that career. I really appreciate how they work. It's a job that requires very good teamwork and I like it because it doesn't take too many years of school to become a respiratory therapist."

As far as becoming a pharmacist, Yetha discovered that maybe this is not the career for him, "I am not as interested in being a pharmacist because they do not deal much with patients. There is more computer work than I expected."

Tomorrow, Yetha and the other students will get up and start another day of exploring the field of healthcare to help them decide how they may spend the rest of their lives.

MEDQUEST 2005 Health Careers Exploration Program

Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for collaborating with us on MedQuest 2005. We could not have done it without your help!



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Helen Feltovich, MD
Heide Fritz, RN
Jennifer Galante, OTR/L
Carlie Geer, MS, RD
Jan Gellis, MD
Sheila Gencarelli
Pamela Gibson, MD
Sandra Giroux, MT
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Carol Green, NP
Marc Greenblatt, MD

Mark Hamlin, MD
Ruth Heimann, MD
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Alan Homans, MD
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Roya Mansoorani, MD
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Marjorie Meyer, MD
Donna Millay, MD
Peter Moses, MD
Judy Nasca, RPH
Joseph Nasca, MD
William Paganelli, MD
Laurinda Poirier, CDE
Charles Powden, MT
Mary Ritter, NP
Bill Roberts, MD
Barbara Rouleau, NP
Daniel Ryan, DDS
Joseph Salomone, MD
Kim Sargent
Ellen Schaefer
Janet Schwarz
Charles Seleen, DDS
Evelyn Sikorski, CSW
Catherine Smith
David Stanley, DMD
Monica Sullivan, MT
Carol Thayer, MD
Frances Todd, RN, MSN
Wini Trotman
Jessi Valentine, EMT
Marilyn VanDeWeert, RN
Dennis Vane, MD
Kristopher Ware

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Northwestern Medical Center
Respiratory Therapy
Northwestern Medical Center
Surgical Services
RehabGYM, Maple Tree Place
University of Vermont Rescue
Visiting Nurse Association

The Four Things That Matter Most

More than 60 people turned out at the St. Albans Town Education Center on the evening of June 30 to learn about “The Four Things That Matter Most” from the book’s author and nationally recognized expert on palliative care, Dr. Ira Byock.

The talk and book signing by Dr. Byock was sponsored by Palliative Care Pathways, a community-wide, multidisciplinary team working to promote the idea of caring well for one another through the end of life.

Although Dr. Byock’s message has been derived from his years of experience in hospice and palliative care, the ideas presented through his book and his talk are more about living well without regrets, rather than about death and dying.

For more information on Dr. Byock’s message, visit www.TheFourThings.org. For more information on the work of Palliative Care Pathways, please call Olivia Weed at 524-8479. If you would like to purchase a copy of Dr. Byock’s book, please call Lucy Dupont, NMC Nurse Educator at 524-8468.



Words From Our Executive Director

Greetings! It is with pleasure that I introduce myself to you as the new Executive Director of the Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center (CVAHEC). As I begin my work with CVAHEC, I look forward to learning about the communities we serve, their ongoing and emerging needs and to pursuing the ambitious and worthy goals of our organization.

Most recently, I directed a non-profit, elder service organization, on New Hampshire’s seacoast, that supports community-based opportunities for frail seniors and their family caregivers. Previously, and following receipt of my master’s degree in audiology, I worked for many years developing and supporting community elder abuse prevention and intervention programs.



Consistent with CVAHEC’s mission, I possess a strong and long-standing commitment to providing health and social service access to underserved populations.

I considered many factors while deciding whether to accept this position. In particular, two things about CVAHEC turned out to be irresistible. I was impressed with the staff’s intelligence, creativity and dedication to the work each does to support CVAHEC’s core mission to improve access to quality health care for the underserved populations of our four county region in northwestern Vermont. The synergy that I saw possible with staff was very exciting to me. This commitment, combined with the critical need for CVAHEC’s programs that support the cultivation, recruitment,

retention, and continuing education of health care professionals in our area, was what sold me. With four days at CVAHEC now under my belt, I can tell you that I believe I made the right choice.

Much of the work we do at CVAHEC is accomplished in partnership with other community providers and educators. Whether it is supporting local public health education and health access initiatives, enhancing the quality and supply of Vermont’s health care workforce or providing support for health care professionals to best meet the needs of their clients, we realize how critical these collaborative relationships are to meeting CVAHEC’s goals.

I look forward to meeting all of you as we work together to pursue our common goals. I hope that you enjoy the rest of the summer.

Fran J. Joseph

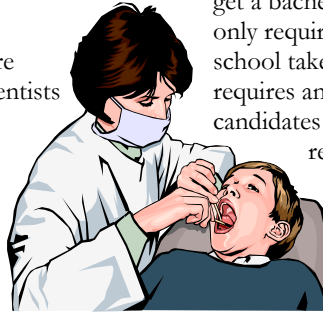
Dentist

Health Careers Spotlight—Dentist

In the Health Careers Spotlight we focus on a health career that is currently facing a shortage. The information in this article is compiled from the Health Careers Directory available on our web site at www.cvahec.org.

Dentists are mouth specialists. Besides providing oral exams and filling cavities, dentists are licensed to prescribe medications and other forms of treatment. They screen patients for cancers and disorders of the jaw and bones around the face.

Dentistry also makes use of high tech equipment to help people keep or restore proper oral health. A big part of what dentists do is focused on prevention—actually helping people decrease their need for dental care. They use preventive procedures such as fluoride treatments, and they teach their patients how to take good care of their gums and teeth to avoid problems between checkups.



Most dentists are general practitioners; however, some dentists choose to practice in an area of specialty.

For those interested in a career as a dentist, high school and undergraduate course work should focus on math and science. Most dental students get a bachelors degree first, though some dental schools only require two years of college before admission. Dental school takes four years to complete. Specialization usually requires an additional two to four years of training. Lastly, candidates must pass a standard national exam and a regional exam in the area where they wish to practice.

For more information on a career as a dentist or another health career, please contact CVAHEC at 527-1474.



An Interview with David Congalton, DDS, Dentist at Richford Health Center

David Congalton, DDS is a general dentist at Richford Health Center. David received his Bachelor of Science from Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He then attended Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska where he received his Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree. David then completed his General Practice Dental Residency at the University of Vermont.

We recently spoke with David to discuss his experiences working in the field of Dentistry.



Q How did you become interested in becoming a Dentist?

A Exploring career options while in college, a dentist I knew thought I'd be a great dentist—so I looked into it more closely.

Q How long have you been working as a Dentist?

A Five years now.

Q What other career alternatives did you consider?

A Carpentry. I have always enjoyed tinkering with tools and machines.

Q Did any person influence your decision to become a Dentist?

A Yes—Dr. Morgan, a dentist in Colorado. He is the one who suggested to me a career in dentistry.

Q What personal needs are satisfied by your occupation?

A I can see the difference immediately. If someone comes in with a pain or a cosmetic issue, I can usually help them

and within an hour I can see the problem resolved.

Q If you could have chosen any occupation (no limits) what would it be?

A I always wanted to learn to build wooden boats. It seemed like an uncertain future so I decided I would reserve that for later in life.

Q If you didn't have to work, would you anyway? If not, what would you

do?

A Yes, I would work. Maybe not full time. After a day at the office, I always come home tired, but I always feel like I made a difference for my patients. I always want to be a contributing part of the community.

Q Describe the demands of your job...

A Practicing general dentistry is hard work. We work 32-40 hours per week. Dentistry is not an exact science, we often have to problem-solve as we go, while at the same time staying on schedule. Not only do we have nervous patients to deal with, but oftentimes there are staff issues. So as a dentist we wear several different hats.

Q What is a typical day for you?

A First thing in the morning we review charts with the lab assistants, and discuss each patients' treatment for that day. We prepare lab work and be sure all supplies that were ordered for the cases have arrived. Once patients start arriving I will typically work between two rooms with two

(Continued on page 6)

Interview with David Congalton continued...

(Continued from page 5)

assistants and in between I'll check patients that are in with the two hygienists. In addition, there are always emergencies that need to be seen, so we are constantly looking for a place to put them.

Q Do you supervise the work of others?

A I typically oversee all aspects of clinical work. We have two hygienists, three assistants, and a receptionist. Because I am ultimately responsible for all treatment provided, I oversee all work with patients carefully. When you are the owner of the practice, you have to oversee the financials at the end of the day too.

Q What personal characteristics are desirable to be a good Dentist?

A You need to be task-oriented, thorough, patient, compassionate, caring, generous, hardworking, and generally likeable.

Q What special knowledge and skill does a person in this job need?

A You need some degree of dexterity. Hand-eye coordination and problem-solving skills are a must. In some respects you are called upon to be an artist. In this cosmetic age people often want a certain look and you have to be able to achieve that for them.

Q What kind of people do you work with? Coworkers, clients, patients...?

A Generally we work with patients of all types. We have patients that are easy to work with and some that make us wonder why we ever entered this profession. Like I said, you have to really like people. The dentist is usually the owner and the boss so everyone else is the staff. A dental office can have anywhere from one to twenty employees.

Q What do you like best about your career and what aspects of being a Dentist cause the most frustration?

A I like that people really appreciate the work we do (usually when it's done). It feels good to provide something that, no matter what, everyone needs. The most stressful part is managing staff. And the overhead of running an office is very expensive.

Q What high school classes should be taken to prepare for this health career?

A Science. You need to take as much as you can.

Q What requirements exist, in addition to schooling—training, experience, certification, license to become a Dentist?

A When you graduate from dental school, you receive your DDS (doctor of dental surgery), then you can go on

and specialize or you can go right into practice as a general dentist. The only obstacle to practice is getting your license. We have to take licensure examinations for the state we want to practice in. These exams are not easy, but once licensed, that's it—no more tests.



Q What are the career ladder possibilities in this field?

A You come out at the top. You may start out working for someone, but eventually you will own your own practice.

Q Can a person specialize within the field of Dentistry? Into what areas?

A You can become any of the following specialists:

- ◆ Oral Surgeon—4-6 years of residency. Do surgery in the head and neck areas, place dental implants and extract wisdom teeth.
- ◆ Orthodontist—3 years residency. Straighten teeth.
- ◆ Endodontist—2-3 years residency. Do complex root canals.
- ◆ Pediatric Dentist—2-3 years of residency. Specialize in treating small patients. Often work on children in the hospital setting.
- ◆ Periodontist—2-3 years of residency. Specialize in the gums and tissues around the teeth.
- ◆ Prosthodontist—2-3 years of residency. They specialize in making fixed and removable appliances for the mouth and face.

Q How does the economy impact Dentistry?

A It doesn't affect us too much. People never stop drinking soda and eating candy.

Q What other occupations are related to Dentistry?

A Dental hygienists, dental assistants, office managers, and dental lab techs.

Q Can a person work flexible hours?

A You can do anything you want. Work one day or six days a week. We can always find work and you will be paid well.

Q What advice would you give someone who is planning to enter the Dentistry field?

A Do well in school. Getting into dental school is competitive. You should take science classes early on and see if you like them, as you will take all of them if you go through dental school. You need to have a strong work ethic, it's not an easy, laid-back profession. ■

Vermont Cultural Competency Resource Book Available from CVAHEC



The Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center is pleased to announce that we have the Vermont Cultural Competency Resource Manuals available again!

This resource book covers a multitude of areas related to cultural competency. A very limited supply of books is available, on a first-come, first-served basis, to area health and social service providers. The books are \$50 each, which covers the cost of production.

Topics covered in the book include:

- ◆ Local resources
- ◆ General cultural competency information/background

- ◆ Working with refugees and immigrants
- ◆ Working with interpreters
- ◆ Information and background on diverse populations including those from Bosnia, Somalia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Congo, China, Korea, Liberia, Sudan, and Vietnam, as well as African-Americans, the Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing, Gays, Lesbians, Transgenders, Bisexuals, the Homeless, Migrants, Native Americans and Women.



Please contact Deb Eckert, CVAHEC Education Resource Coordinator to request a copy at (802) 527-1474 x11 or email her at deckert@cvahec.org.

Supporting Providers...Recent CVAHEC Events

Deb Eckert, Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center's Education Resource Coordinator has been busy recently attending events in our region.

UVM Cultural Awareness Day

On May 18, 2005 Deb attended the 2005 UVM Cultural Awareness Day at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

This event offered speakers on various topics related to cultural competency in healthcare in Vermont, including the Somali Bantu population, healthcare for refugee and immigrant children, and the cultural aspects of teen

driving.

In addition to attending the presentations, Deb staffed a table that represented CVAHEC's cultural competency work and offered resources such as books, videos, and bibliographies related to cultural competency. She also highlighted some of the other programs that the statewide



AHEC program provides, such as loan repayment.

Family Practice Review Course "Vermont Day"

On June 9, 2005, Deb attended the Family Practice Review Course "Vermont Day" at the Sheraton Conference Center.

"Vermont Day" was attended by family physicians from around the state. The UVM AHEC Program Office offered a table representing the statewide AHEC system and highlighting the loan repayment program and cultural competency work. All interested providers received two different cultural competency books.

CVAHEC Helps Bring Health Information to You



On May 11, 2005, CVAHEC and Northeastern Vermont AHEC (NEVAHEC) collaborated to provide the course "Using the Computer and Internet for Health Information." This course was offered in two locations that day and was part of NEVAHEC's annual LNA Continuing Education Series. The goals of this class were to demonstrate how to find and evaluate online health information.

On June 3, and June 14, 2005 CVAHEC Education Resource Coordinator Deb Eckert offered the course "Searching the Web for Health Information." These two sessions were part of the Visiting Nurses Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties In-service Training for nurses and administrators. The goals of this class were to demonstrate how to locate and evaluate online health information, as well as to provide an introduction to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Database.



**Champlain Valley Area
Health Education Center**

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152 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478

Phone: 802-527-1474
Fax: 802-527-1632

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Vermont's AHEC Program is a statewide network of the Northeastern VT AHEC, the Champlain Valley AHEC, the Southern Vermont AHEC, and the UVM College of Medicine.