



# THE CONVENER

*Putting People into Public Health*

Winter 2004–2005

## Words from our Executive Director

The Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center is at a crossroads. There is simply no other way to put it—we need your help. With a 48% reduction in federal funding from HRSA (the Health Resources Services Administration) this year, a projected continued reduction in funding for the next three years, and the end of categorical funding from other sources, the Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center is facing a crisis that could result in a significant change in the way we do our business.

Our business, simply put, is to support the recruitment, retention and continuing education of health care professionals in Vermont's Champlain Valley to improve access to quality health care

### Special points of interest:

- National Health Observances
- Primary Care Survey Available
- Welcome Logan Louray Samuelson Hytten
- Health Careers Spotlight—Certified Nurse-Midwife
- MVU Students Tour Fletcher Allen Health Care

for underserved populations.

CVAHEC does an excellent job in meeting the objectives of our comprehensive and vital work,

and is truly the only

organization of its kind in the Champlain Valley. No other

organization has the skill set, the internal structure, the reach and capacity to simultaneously address provider recruitment, retention and continuing education across a public health continuum. My staff of five committed professionals works diligently every day to turn our mission into a reality for the communities within the Champlain Valley. Our presence in the community results in a great deal of impact worthy of note:

#### ◆ Health Careers

No other organization has developed a comprehensive continuum of programs and services to introduce students of *all* ages (Kindergarten through Adult Learners) to health care careers and their requisite educational requirements, training needs, and potential salaries.

#### ◆ Health Care Student Education and Support

CVAHEC is the only organization in the Champlain Valley that offers a wide-ranging menu of

support services to students already enrolled in health care training programs so as to ensure a successful transition from academic center to the field.

#### ◆ Provider Education and Support

CVAHEC is one of very few organizations that provide, oversee and/or organize in-practice educational opportunities for health care providers on the most important community-related health care issues, such as Emergency Preparedness and diabetes education.

#### ◆ Primary Care Provider Distribution Oversight

CVAHEC is one of the only organizations in the Champlain Valley that maintains a comprehensive database of all the primary care providers within our region and annually surveys them to determine the

*(Continued on page 5)*



# National Health Observances

## February

- ◆ Kids Ears, Nose, Throat Health Month
- ◆ Low Vision Awareness Month
- ◆ National Children's Dental Health Month
- ◆ Wise Health Consumer Month

## March

- ◆ American Red Cross Month
- ◆ Mental Retardation Awareness Month
- ◆ National Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Month
- ◆ National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- ◆ National Eye Donor Month
- ◆ National Kidney Month
- ◆ National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month
- ◆ National Nutrition Month



- ◆ Save Your Vision Month

## April

- ◆ Cancer Control Month
- ◆ Cesarean Awareness Month
- ◆ Counseling Awareness Month
- ◆ Foot Health Awareness Month
- ◆ IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) Awareness Month
- ◆ National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- ◆ National Facial Protection Month
- ◆ National Occupational Therapy Month
- ◆ National Youth Sports Safety Month
- ◆ Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- ◆ Sports Eye Safety Month

For further information on any of these health observances, visit our website at [www.cvahec.org](http://www.cvahec.org).

## CVAHEC's Primary Care Survey Is Now Available!

Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center's Primary Care Survey is complete and available on our website at [www.cvahec.org](http://www.cvahec.org). This survey identifies the distribution of all primary care physicians, physician assistants, certified nurse midwives and nurse practitioners in the disciplines of family practice, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics and psychiatry in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

This initial report provides baseline



data for future surveys allowing for the recording of annual gains and losses in numbers and types of providers in the Champlain Valley. It may also serve as a basis for recruitment and retention efforts and continuing education activities.

The report outlines numbers and types of providers, their locations and full-time equivalencies (FTEs) along with other valuable information. In addition, comparison data is offered regarding recommendations for an adequate supply of primary

care physicians within their discipline.

To review CVAHEC's Primary Care Survey, visit our website at [www.cvahec.org](http://www.cvahec.org) and click on the link "Download the CVAHEC Primary Care Survey (PDF)."

If you have any questions or comments about the Primary Care Survey, please contact Deb Eckert, Education Resource Coordinator at (802) 527-1474 x11 or email her at [deckert@cvahec.org](mailto:deckert@cvahec.org).

## Welcome to the World—Logan Louray Samuelson Hytten!

Congratulations to CVAHEC Program Coordinator Jenney Samuelson and her husband, Kevin Hytten on the birth of their daughter Logan! Logan was born on October 21, 2004 and weighed 7 lbs. 8 ozs.

Jenney has recently returned to work from her maternity leave and is now getting back into the swing of

things.

We wish Jenney, Kevin and Logan all the best as they begin their new life together.



# Certified Nurse-Midwife

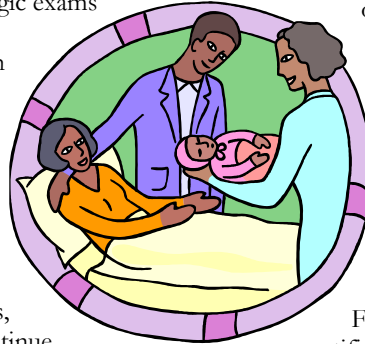
## Health Careers Spotlight—Certified Nurse-Midwife

In the Health Careers Spotlight we focus on a health career that may not be as well known, but is vitally important to the health care industry and 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](http://www.cvahec.org).

**Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs)** provide obstetric and gynecologic care to women of all ages. They perform gynecologic exams and Pap smears, prescribe medications and suggest birth

control methods, deliver babies, perform the first newborn exam, and assist new mothers with breastfeeding. CNMs consult with a physician if complications arise during pregnancy or birth. CNMs also educate patients about reproductive health and family planning.

The demand for advanced practice nurses, which includes CNMs, is expected to continue to increase over the next decade and beyond, as the need and demand for effective health care increases. Demand is expected to be particularly high in rural, inner-city and other underserved areas.



Nurse midwives typically earn a starting salary of between \$50,000 and \$65,000 per year.

For those interested in a career as a certified nurse-midwife, high school course work should include an emphasis on math and science. A

bachelors degree in nursing (BSN) and a registered nurse (RN) license are usually required before continuing on to advanced certification or a master's degree; however, there are nursing programs that enroll non-RNs with bachelor degrees in other areas of specialization. Master's programs generally take two years to complete.

For more information on a career as a certified nurse-midwife or another health career, please contact Jenney Samuelson, CVAHEC Program Coordinator at 527-1474 x14 or email her at [jsamuelson@cvahec.org](mailto:jsamuelson@cvahec.org).



## An Interview with Amy Levi, Certified Nurse-Midwife at the Claire M. Lintilhac Nurse-Midwifery Service at FAHC

*Amy Levi is the Director of the Claire M. Lintilhac Nurse-Midwifery Service at Fletcher Allen Health Care. Amy received her undergraduate degree in Nursing from Widener University in Pennsylvania. In addition, Amy completed her Master of Science in Nursing, Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing, and received her Certificate in Nurse-Midwifery at the University of Pennsylvania.*

*We recently spoke with Amy to discuss her experiences working in the field of Nurse-Midwifery.*

**Q How did you become interested in becoming a Certified Nurse-Midwife?**

**A** I am very committed to women and their health and well-being. I also believe that the health of families is supported most effectively by supporting the health of women during pregnancy and childbearing.

**Q How long have you been working in this health care field?**

**A** I have been a women's health care practitioner since 1981, and a nurse-midwife since 1986.

**Q What other career alternatives did you consider?**

**A** Nothing else, really. I started out studying nutrition, and quickly realized that I wanted to have a different kind of contact with women and their families. "Midwife" means "with woman," and I was drawn to the opportunity to attend families during birth, and to become part of the growth of a new family. There is a tremendous amount of variety in what we do, and it is satisfying on so many levels: intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.



**Q Did any person influence your decision to become a Nurse-Midwife?**

**A** I was probably influenced by the first midwife I ever met, who came to a college class I was in and talked about what she did. I then gave birth with a wonderful midwife in Arizona. After that experience, I knew what my life's work would be.

**Q What personal needs are satisfied by your job?**

**A** I love women, babies and families. I feel so incredibly fortunate to do something that I feel is important, and that is also so satisfying to me personally.

**Q In what ways has being a Nurse-Midwife changed you as a person?**

**A** Being a midwife requires tremendous amounts of patience, and I have been grateful for the opportunity to develop more patience since I have been a midwife! Also, I think my compassion has grown tremendously; being with families during such a vulnerable time in their lives has helped me realize how fortunate I have been in my life. Also, during birth, I am in complete awe of how courageous and powerful women can be.

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

**A** I am a midwife. Whether I am employed at the bedside, or teaching about childbirth and women's health, or

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Interview with Amy Levi continued...

developing policy to ensure the well-being of women and their families, I will always be a midwife. It has nothing to do with being paid for what I do...it is who I am.

### Q Describe the demands of your job...

A I work about 50 to 60 hours per week; part of that is by choice, because I am committed to ensuring that I support my profession both at my worksite, and by writing and advocating for midwifery in the educational and political arenas. Because midwifery is very people-oriented, it carries with it all the frustrations and joys of working closely with others, whether colleagues, coworkers or superiors.

### Q What is a typical day for you?

A I'm not sure if any day is typical! I sometimes see patients in the office, sometimes cover the labor and delivery area, and sometimes teach, read or write.

### Q Do you supervise the work of others?

A In my current position I am the Practice Director, which means I coordinate the activities of the other midwives with whom I work. In the birthing area, we work closely with others who are in different roles, but it is not really a supervisory relationship.

### Q What personal characteristics are desirable to be a good Nurse-Midwife?

A First and foremost, it is important to be a good listener. It is also important to be compassionate and patient. Midwives also must have the ability to tolerate the unknown and unexpected.

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

A In addition to the above, it is important to have a keen intellect and good dexterity.

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

A All kinds of people!! One of the things I like best about what I do is the variety of people with whom I get to work: physicians, administrators, nurses, other health professionals, and patients of all kinds and from all walks of life.

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

A I feel like I am making a positive contribution to people, and I get so much in return! Health care in the United States is in terrible disarray; interfacing with the disorganization of health care is frustrating. Other dissatisfactions come from the reality of needing to get paid for what I do!

### Q What requirements exist, in addition to schooling—training, experience, certification, license to become a Nurse-Midwife?

A Following baccalaureate nursing education, there is an 18-24 month educational course in midwifery education that is often at the master's level. Graduates from accredited midwifery education programs can become certified by taking an exam to enable them to be licensed by the state in which they practice.

### Q What are the career ladder possibilities in this field?

A The upward mobility in midwifery is in the direction of education, administration or public policy. There are midwives who are nursing school deans, state directors of maternal child health, and directors of obstetrical departments in the military.

### Q Can a person specialize within the field of Nurse-Midwifery? Into what areas?

A Some midwives work exclusively in specific settings with specific populations of women; some midwives identify specialty skills that they pursue (such as colposcopy or lactation consultation).

### Q What changes are occurring in this field?

A The need for midwives is always there, but health care politics and economics do not always promote the availability of positions. In many ways, midwives must still make a place for themselves at the table — hopefully that will start to improve as women assert their desire to have the option of midwifery care. I would love to have midwifery be the standard of women's health care in the United States as it is in so many other countries in the world! In Vermont, nurse-midwives perform about 19% of all vaginal births and physicians do the balance. In other developed countries, it is the opposite!

### Q How does the economy impact this field?

A People will always be having babies! Because of the aging of professional nurses, we will need younger folks to continue for us.

### Q Do you encounter any problems combining your job with your family life?

A Having to respond to a beeper is often very frustrating for family members...I have sometimes found it difficult to meet all of my family's needs while fulfilling my professional responsibilities.

### Q What advice would you give someone who is planning to enter the Nurse-Midwifery field?

A Be patient with yourself and the process of becoming a midwife. Learn as much as you can along the way by spending time with women and their families—as a doula, childbirth educator and/or lactation consultant. ■



## MVU Students Tour Fletcher Allen Health Care

They went, they saw and they learned — about careers in health care. Ninety-two students from Missisquoi Valley Union Middle School (MVU) traveled to Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC) on December 3rd to explore technology, careers and work environments in health care.

Students joined FAHC professionals for tours of the Pathology Department, Birthing Center, Radiology Department and the Cardiothoracic Surgery Unit. They had the opportunity to see the technology used in each professional's job, from microscopes to CAT scans. Students asked professionals what they liked best about their jobs in health care, what role teams play in departments, and how many years of schooling are required for their professions. "We had a lot of chances to learn new things, but the most intriguing, I think, was the Radiology Department," said MVU student Dylan Rainville. "What they do is make x-rays of people to see if they have a prob-

lem in their body."

The MVU students also took part in a health careers fair presented by a team of professionals. Each student was given a card describing the symptoms of a disease and asked to visit the appropriate health professionals involved in the diagnosis and treatment of that particular disease. For example, if they were "given" lung cancer, they visited the Laboratory Scientist, the Radiologist, Speech Language

Pathologist, and the Dietician to learn about the care they would provide to a patient with the disease.

"When we went on the field trip to Fletcher Allen, I felt glad that we were having a chance to see what people at the hospital do," added Rainville. He and his classmates are members of the MVU Firebird team and part of the Missisquoi Valley Health Careers Partnership, a collaborative project between MVU, Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center (CVAHEC), Northwestern Medical Center (NMC), Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC), and the University of Vermont (UVM) Colleges of Medicine and Nursing and Health Sciences. In October, CVAHEC was awarded a \$42,652 Adopt-A-School grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities by engaging them in continuous, cross-curriculum experiences in health careers.



**Cheryl Varin from the Cardiothoracic Surgery Unit at Fletcher Allen Health Care shows MVU students the equipment and technology used in her career.**

## Words from Our Executive Director continued...

*(Continued from page 1)*

number of full and part-time providers. This resource is of tremendous use in targeting specific providers for continuing education opportunities and for supporting the UVM Vermont AHEC Education Loan Repayment Program.

◆ **Community-based interdisciplinary training of health professions students**

CVAHEC, with a focus on underserved rural areas, exposes health professions students to underserved communities with the hopes that they will return to those communities to practice. No other organization in the Champlain Valley focuses on the recruitment of students to the most rural areas of the region.

Without doubt, the Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center is the only organization of its kind in the Champlain Valley. Our work is unique, extremely valuable, and contributes a great deal to

the continuing education of primary care providers, the recruitment of health care workforce, and the overall health and wellness for the residents of Vermont's Champlain Valley. I am asking you to make a generous charitable contribution to CVAHEC so that our work will continue to flourish. Without your generous support, the vital work we do at CVAHEC may not continue. Thank you for considering Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center in our mission so that all our neighbors can live healthier lives.





**Champlain Valley Area  
Health Education Center**

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Funding support for the Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center is provided by the University of Vermont College of Medicine through contributions from the Health Resources and Services Administration, Fletcher Allen Health Care, the University of Vermont, the State of Vermont, and local communities.

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.