Don’t miss a new feature, our Frequently Asked Questions section at the end of the issue. When questions come up, we will use the FAQs as a resource to help provide information that might be helpful for all of our advisors. Have a question that you would love to see featured in an upcoming issue of The Advisor, please send them our way at PFCC@uvmhealth.org.

As noted in our New Advisor Orientation, “patient and family-centered care is an evolution”. We appreciate your questions and look forward to evolving and growing together!

We recognize that the partnership between our patients, their families and our hospital staff play such an important role in improving the patient and family experience, and we’d like to use this newsletter to highlight and celebrate those contributions.

Publication in Journal of Patient Experience
By Lisa LeBlanc, PFCC Coordinator
We want to congratulate our Advisors, Andrea Desautels, Kathy Leahy and Kate Purcell, for their incredible work teaming up with 15 resident physicians as part of an active learning quality improvement (QI) curriculum. Not only was this a meaningful experience for both the residents and the advisors, but the end result was a published paper on this work in the Journal of Patient Experience. Click here to read the published paper entitled, Partnering With Patients in a Quality Improvement Curriculum for Internal Medicine Residents.

All involved in this work greatly appreciated the partnership with our Advisors and their contributions to the work. Amanda Kennedy, who serves as the Quality Scholar in the Department of Medicine and is the primary coordinator between the QI curriculum and our Advisors, expresses her gratitude by saying, “Working with Andrea, Kate, and Kathy as Patient and Family Advisors in our Quality Improvement (QI) curriculum for Medicine Residents has been an incredibly positive experience. These Patient and Family Advisors are truly partners in our work, actively participating alongside faculty mentors and physician residents at each of our 10 curriculum sessions. They help the residents see the patient perspective through our class discussions and by contributing to specific QI tools, such as process flow diagrams and 5 Why analyses. Sometimes just one thought during a discussion is enough to send the residents down a path of promoting and embracing patient experience. There is no doubt this QI curriculum is greatly improved by the diverse backgrounds and lived experiences of our Patient and Family Advisors!”

Congratulations to Andrea, Kathy and Kate and the entire team, on this outstanding achievement!

The Power of a Story
By Lisa LeBlanc, PFCC Coordinator
As part of the Patient Safety Awareness Week activities taking place at the medical center from March 15 - 19, staff and advisors had the opportunity to participate in a special zoom event. The event featured Sorrel King, whose daughter Josie died 20 years ago as a result of medical error. Determined to honor her daughter’s memory, Sorrel created the Josie King Foundation. She travels the country sharing her message in hopes that Josie’s story will inspire change, creating a better, safer health care industry for us all. Advisors were moved by how powerful Josie’s story was and were reminded by the impact a patient or family member can have by sharing their story.
Advisor Snapshot
A glimpse into the lives of our incredible team of Patient/Family Advisors!
Name: Chelsea Schmoll, UVMCH Advisor and member of the NICU Advisory Council
What brought you to this role? “I simply wanted to help people have better experiences than I had, and to be a change in an area of my life where I needed some closure.”
Describe the funniest or most rare thing you’ve learned while in a council or project meeting. “I was on a committee with the midwife who delivered my baby so that was kind of fun!”
What is your favorite Springtime activity? “Wow, is it Spring already?! I love going outside for walks with my kids, enjoying the warmer weather and observing the new flower blooms.”
The sky is the limit: what is your dream PFCC project? “My dream project would probably be to have patient and family advisors who were there all of the time in the hospital to be able to guide and help families as the needs arise. It would be great to actually be able to physically be in the NICU and talk with the parents to see if they need any help at that time.”

Better Together: Expanding the Continuum of Care through Peer Support for NICU Families
By Charlotte Safran, PFCC Coordinator
We know peer support matters. Beginning in September, 2019, UVMCH Advisors actively engaged in researching and discussing the value of developing a coordinated and accessible peer support program for our patients and families. The synergy between the goals of the iNICQ Discharge Planning Project and the interest of NICU Patient/Family Advisors made the NICU and NeoMed Clinic the natural setting to pilot this peer support program.

The development of the NICU peer support program was guided by a discussion with NICU Advisors aimed at answering the following question:

What do we hope to provide parents/caregivers whose child(ren) have received care at UVM Children’s Hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit?

- Acknowledge shared experience and provide an opportunity to validate feelings.
- Provide non-clinical support. It takes mental and emotional energy for families to ask questions; less so when they are speaking to someone who has ‘been there’ before.
- Share with parents/caregivers available community resources such as: parent-child centers, support groups (for example, Dad’s Guild), service agencies (for example, Vermont Family Network).
- Encourage and reinforce the importance of being an active part of their child(ren)’s healthcare team.

The dedication of our NICU Patient/Family Advisory Council and NICU leadership proved to be a solid foundation for the commitment to, and implementation of, this program. The NICU Peer Support Program pilot officially launched on February 14th. For more information, please feel free to reach out to: charlotte.safran@uvmhealth.org

FAQS! YOU ASK, WE LISTEN (AND DO OUR BEST TO ANSWER!)

- “I’ve been part of this project for over a year, and it has been a wonderful experience. As we move to the next phase of the project, I wonder if the perspective from a different Advisor might be valuable. Should I take myself off of this team? How do I know when it’s the ‘right’ time to do so?”
- “I am really enjoying my current Advisor assignments, but have heard about a few other committees I’d like to join. When might I have the opportunity to do so? Are there ‘committee term limits’?”

As the Patient and Family-Centered Care program continues to grow across our organization, so, too, do the interesting opportunities, projects, and committees in which Advisors are involved! We know it can be tricky to balance capacity and interest, and we are committed to evolving our practice to support Advisors in managing that balance. If you find yourself on a committee for a long time, and think it may be best to ‘free up’ your time for a new project, let us know! We can work with you and the committee to transition to having another Advisor voice at the table. The PFCC team also encourages you to reach out to us if you want to stay on a project, and think an additional Advisor perspective would be beneficial. Additionally, if you have a specific interest in a certain committee but weren’t chosen to participate, let us know! We may be able to find (or keep our eyes out) for another, similar opportunity that also piques your interest.