

THE
University of Vermont
MEDICAL CENTER

SAVE THE DATE

All Advisor Team Meetings will be held every other month beginning in February and new this year, the meetings will be held on the same date and time each month.

Please save the date for the first three meetings of the year:

- Friday, Feb. 11, 12pm to 1pm
- Friday, April 8, 12pm to 1pm
- Friday, June 10, 12pm to 1pm

We are excited to announce that Jackie Hunter, SVP, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer with the Health Network and Marissa Coleman, VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Medical Center, will be joining our meeting on February 11th.

Please join us to find out more about the DEI work happening on a network level, at the hospital and our own Patient and Family-Centered Care Team initiatives.



continuing on down this long road of navigating life and the work we do during a pandemic. As many of you, I have had my moments of frustration with this new reality. Working with patients and families and yet, interacting with them in person very minimally, has at times left me feeling disconnected from my work. But for every moment of feeling unfulfilled, I have had a great deal of experiences that have made me feel hopeful, inspired and energized. Our advisor work has never halted throughout the past two years and our team of advisors has remained determined and committed to improving the patient and family experience, maybe even more so than when the pandemic began. Thanks to our advisors, I am going into the new year feeling encouraged and energized about the work we do and it feels as though our work to improve the care experience is more important now than ever. I look forward to making strides in 2022, and to making this year one of the best yet.

HAPPY 2022

**“The magic
in new beginnings
is truly
the most powerful
of them all.”**

JOSIYAH MARTIN

Welcome to the first edition of the Patient and Family-Centered Care Team newsletter in the new year. 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.

New Energy in the New Year

By Lisa LeBlanc, PFCC Coordinator

It's been just about two years since my colleagues and I walked out of our office at the hospital, not knowing that it would be the last time we worked together in that space. If someone had told me at that time that we would never return to our office, and that the work of our Patient/Family Advisors would be fully remote for the next two years, I wouldn't have believed it. And yet, here we are,

continuing on down this long road of navigating life and the work we do during a pandemic. As many of you, I have had my moments of frustration with this new reality. Working with patients and families and yet, interacting with them in person very minimally, has at times left me feeling disconnected from my work. But for every moment of feeling unfulfilled, I have had a great deal of experiences that have made me feel hopeful, inspired and energized. Our advisor work has never halted throughout the past two years and our team of advisors has remained determined and committed to improving the patient and family experience, maybe even more so than when the pandemic began. Thanks to our advisors, I am going into the new year feeling encouraged and energized about the work we do and it feels as though our work to improve the care experience is more important now than ever. I look forward to making strides in 2022, and to making this year one of the best yet.

Small Kindnesses

By Charlotte Safran, PFCC Coordinator

As you all know, our organization has been under duress for nearly two years. We've heard from several of you, our incredible Patient/Family Advisors, that you'd like to help or show your appreciation in some way and for that, we are so grateful. In an effort to show our gratitude and show some love, we are creating a "Wall of Kindness" for all of the staff who continue to provide an incredible patient/family experience through these difficult times. Advisors can email their notes for the "Wall Of Kindness" to Lisa or Charlotte, feel free to include a staff member name or a specific unit. We will also be asking patients and families in the main lobby at the hospital on February 14th to share their words of kindness for the wall. **Notes can be sent to Lisa.LeBlanc@uvmhealth.org & Charlotte.Safran@uvmhealth.org by February 14th.**

SMALL KINDNESSES

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs and let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you" when someone sneezes, a leftover from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying. And sometimes, when you spill lemons from your grocery bag, someone else will help you pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other. We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot, and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder, and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass. We have so little of each other, now. So far from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange. What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here, have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."

DANUSA LAMÉRIS



"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin

Listening and Learning Sessions

By Charlotte Safran, PFCC Coordinator

We value patients and families, and seek their perspective in everything we do. As such, we are acutely aware that it is imperative that we continue to explore different ways to invite, engage and learn from all patients and families. In the Fall of 2020, the Pediatric Primary Care's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee reached out to discuss how we might create an affinity group for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color) parents and caregivers.

Next steps included developing listening and learning sessions, that would be co-facilitated by myself and Stephen Graves, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant, who works in close partnership with UVMMC. Highlights from the sessions that have taken place include:

1. The invite was shared on the following social media channels: UVMCH Instagram and Facebook pages, VT Professionals of Color Network, VT Health Equity Initiative, and City of Burlington Racial Equity and Inclusion. These are important, trust-building relationships that help strengthen our connection with community partners.
2. 6 people registered for the sessions; 4 attended. All 4 participants expressed interest in attending additional sessions and in potentially being onboarded as a Patient/Family Advisors.
3. The importance of having similar discussions in an affinity group was reinforced.
4. One participant stated, "It's strange to have people take care of you [and/or your family] that don't look like you. They make plans for you, but they don't look like you..."
5. All participants expressed feeling respected and acknowledged that they felt like a part of their care team at UVM Pediatric Primary Care. The group agreed that being greeted by the front desk, having enough time for questions to be answered, and feeling heard by the provider all led to feeling respected.

Lisa and I plan to expand this work to hosting listening and learning sessions across UVMMC. We are excited to co-design the upcoming sessions with two of our UVMMC Patient/Family Advisors and will be in touch with more on this soon.

Interested in learning more? This [position paper](#) on the harmful effects of racism is a powerful testament to the importance of addressing racial disparities in health care. Another helpful reading list about the effects of racial trauma can be found [here](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We would love for our newsletter to include resources that may be of interest to our Patient/Family Advisors. And we want to hear from you! If you have resources you think others would appreciate, please send them our way.

For our podcast fans, checkout:

EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON WITH KATE BOWLER

Kate Bowler is a writer who was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer at age 35. In episode 16, Kate sits down with New York Times columnist, David Brooks. One of the topics they discuss is what Kate "wishes healthcare professionals would do instead".