The Patient Navigator — Helping Patients Connect the Dots

In February 2009, Deborah Reynolds was feeling miserable ... she was exhausted, had no energy and was having difficulty breathing. She knew it was more than just the midwinter blahs. Reluctantly, she went to the emergency department at Samaritan Hospital. Soon after, she received the overwhelming news — a diagnosis of breast cancer. And, it was stage four.

“By the time I received the diagnosis, I was so sick I couldn’t deal with anything,” said the West Sand Lake resident.

Enter Barbara McHale, patient navigator in Samaritan Hospital’s Cancer Treatment Center.

Barb, an oncology-certified registered nurse, has served as a patient navigator at Samaritan since 2006. In that role, she is responsible for streamlining and coordinating the entire, often complex diagnosis-treatment-follow-up process for cancer patients.

“I work with patients dealing with breast, colorectal, lung, and head and neck cancers,” said Barb who has worked in the field of oncology care for 32 years. “Patient navigation is something that is very much needed in order to provide comprehensive patient-centered care. The patient navigator ‘connects all the dots’ ... taking care of coordinating the patient’s medical care, but doing so much more,” she added.

For example, Barb helps patients in need of financial assistance or who might require community support, such as help with transportation, assistance with nutritional needs or even help with communication. “It’s very reassuring and comforting to the patient to have one contact person for everything.”

“I don’t know what I would have done without my patient navigator, Barb,” noted Deborah. “She did everything that needed to be done, like working with the insurance company, and scheduling doctor’s appointments and tests. All those complicated and frustrating details were taken care of and all I needed to do was get better.”

Two months after her diagnosis, Deborah’s medical oncologist, Dr. Sergio Biguzzi at the Cancer Treatment Center, decided she was strong enough for chemotherapy, and last October she underwent surgery with Dr. Gregory Field.

Yet, just when things were looking up, Deborah’s husband lost his job, which meant the family had no income ... and no health insurance.

“Thank goodness for Barb and the hospital’s patient accounting department which immediately helped me complete forms for Medicaid coverage,” said Deborah. “I would never have been able to cope without their help and support ... in fact, ALL the staff at Samaritan have been absolutely great,” she added. “They have all gone above and beyond what is expected, including a special ‘care package’ that they presented to me during the Christmas holidays!”

As for Barb, she considers every day a holiday ... especially when she sees the impact that she can make on patients’ lives.

In fact, last July, a 60-year-old woman was referred to Barb with a malignant breast tumor. The woman was adamant about not having any treatment — whatsoever. Barb remained very accepting and understanding, and assured her that it was her decision to make.

“But, that didn’t stop me from calling her every week or two throughout the rest of the summer and into the fall to find out how she was feeling and to provide her with information about treatment,” noted Barb.

Little by little, that patient began asking questions and finally, on December 22, underwent breast surgery. Earlier this year, she completed a round of chemotherapy and is doing well.

“That’s what patient navigation is all about ... now this lovely woman has a chance of survival — and I helped make that happen,” Barb said. “It’s very rewarding.”
Dear Friends,

After a long, cold winter, spring has finally arrived and with it comes thoughts of new beginnings. After a difficult 2009, the economy has started to recover. Thank you so much for your generous donations during those challenging times ... they were very much appreciated. In fact, in this issue, we recognize those who supported us through our 2009 Annual Drive, as well as the many Northeast Health staff members who gave to our 2009 Annual Employee Fund Drive.

I hope you read our cover story about the Patient Navigation Program at Samaritan’s Cancer Treatment Center. This unique program, which helps patients and families ‘navigate’ their way through a frightening diagnosis of cancer, is in need of your support. Or, perhaps you will look through the items on our Wish List (page 3) and see if there is something you would like to fund. Items funded by donors help us purchase much-needed equipment and frees up dollars for other capital equipment purchases.

Remember, YOU decide where you want your contribution to go ... be it a program or fund at Samaritan Hospital or Albany Memorial Hospital, or to one of our Eddy affiliates. Let me assure you that whatever you give or have given to Northeast Health will remain in the area you have designated. You are the “decision maker” as to where your money goes.

As always, thank you for considering a gift through the Northeast Health Foundation. For those of you who are already donors, thank you for your generosity and for the enormous impact you have on the lives of our patients and residents!

Best wishes,

Planned Giving

Guaranteed income for you ... for life. Then, support for what you believe in and care about, to go exactly where you direct: The Eddy, Albany Memorial Hospital or Samaritan Hospital.

Charitable Gift Annuities

Benefits include:

- high income for life, with much of it tax free, increasing your effective after-tax yield
- charitable tax deduction now, and then, after a full life, your annuity will benefit the charitable purpose that you have designated at the affiliate you direct at Northeast Health
- your annual income rate, locked in for life, is based on your present age. Examples: if you are 80-years-old, your income rate is 7.1 percent; if you are 85-years-old, your income rate is 8.1 percent. If you are 90, your rate is 9.5 percent.
- a portion of your income is tax free; this is especially valuable when compared to income from interest or dividends that may be fully taxable.

We would be happy to share a personalized example with you and your financial advisor. Contact Larry Barnet, Silvia Edmonds or Karl Cote at the Northeast Health Foundation, (518) 274-0190.

Bequests

Benefactors have made a profound impact on our community by including The Eddy, Albany Memorial or Samaritan in their estate plans. Large gifts and small have changed healthcare forever. In fact, The Eddy is named for one such family.

Here is sample estate planning wording you can discuss with your attorney:

**Outright Bequest:** I give [stated dollar amount or stated share of my estate] to the Northeast Health Foundation to be used for [stated affiliate.]

**Gift to Restricted Endowment Fund for the Benefit of Individual Affiliate:**
I give [stated dollar amount or stated share of my estate] to Northeast Health Foundation to be held and administered by the Foundation as a restricted fund for the benefit of the following affiliate: [stated affiliate.]
Why a Wish List?

The Eddy, Albany Memorial Hospital and Samaritan Hospital maintain capital budgets to purchase much-needed equipment. Every item from the wish list that the Northeast Health Foundation is able to provide, is one less strain on our not-for-profit budget.

**Eddy Visiting Nurse Association**

**GPS for clinical staff**

(to increase travel efficiency) $300 each

Systems that can accommodate multiple destinations and provide the quickest overall route are needed, since staff covers five counties.

**Temporal thermometers** $150 each

Temporal thermometers improve infection control by allowing staff to take temperatures by rubbing the unit across the forehead, rather than using oral thermometers.

**Glucometers** $15 each or $150/10

For patients without glucometers or whose glucometers do not work. Glucometers help staff assess the patient’s blood sugar level.

**Patient scale, pill boxes, calendar to organize medical appointments and to record measurements, and chronic illness teaching packages** $50 each

**Sponsorship for staff education** $150 for a local seminar $2,000 for a national clinical conference

**Bariatric patient scales** $300 each

**Nutritional supplements** $1,500

For patients whose insurance does not cover what our dietitians recommend, and who would not be able to afford expensive formulas without assistance.

**CD/DVD players for the Integrative Wellness room/exam rooms** $700 (7 at $100/each)

**Chemotherapy count**

Beaded bracelets $2,250 (15 at $150/each)

**IPOD touch devices** $1,600 (4 at $400/each)

Disposable ear buds to go with IPODs (each patient to have their own set) $1,000 (100 at $10/each)

Lending library bookshelf $4,000

“Living Well with Cancer” cooking class (to be held in 2011) $5,000

“Expression Through Art” class (to be held in 2011) $3,000

**Nursing Education Fund** $10,000 annually

All medical oncology nurses have achieved national certification; we would like to assist in their continued pursuit of clinical cancer care delivery excellence by supporting their educational endeavors.

**Women’s Health Center at Samaritan Hospital**

Breast self-exam Sensa touch gloves $4,000

Lymphedema support and education panel $3,000

Two small flat-screen TVs for waiting area in exam room $4,000

**Gala 2010**

Gala 2010 - Jewels in the Night, held on January 16, was an overwhelming success with nearly 600 individuals attending and more than $127,000 raised! Proceeds from the event benefit the Albany Memorial Hospital emergency department and the Samaritan Hospital Cancer Treatment Center’s patient navigator program.

L to r, Norman Dascher with Founder’s Award recipients Anthony P. Tartaglia, MD; John J. O’Bryan, MD; Sarah L. Elmendorf, MD; Leslie Goldstein, MD, FACP; and Gennaro A. Daniels, MD.

Standing l to r, Jim Reeks, Susie Reeks, Risa Reed and Jane Hennes. Seated l to r, James Reed and Bob Hennes.
The results are in ... the 2009 Employee Fund Drive raised $181,755 with a 39 percent participation rate across the Northeast Health network!

According to Cheryl Rankey, Northeast Health Foundation’s director of annual fund and special constituencies, “We are especially pleased that the Northeast Health Employee Crisis Fund received $28,000 in designations, truly reflecting the campaign’s theme of ‘people helping people.’” The newly established fund provides confidential, emergency financial assistance for staff members who face unusual and severe financial strain due to a sudden, unforeseen crisis.

In addition to the crisis fund, the fund drive raised $17,413 for Eddy Village Green which will be matched by Spencer and Pat Standish for a total of $34,826; the Charity Care Fund received $11,500 in support. The employees at Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital raised nearly $39,000, most of which supported the Patient Needs Scholarship Fund at Sunnyview.

The Employee Fund Drive was established in 2006 to provide employees with an opportunity to demonstrate financial support for Northeast Health through a charitable donation. Since then, employees have contributed nearly $600,000 to help support a variety of programs and services across the network.

“Thank you to our employees for making the 2009 Northeast Health Employee Fund Drive an outstanding success,” stated Cheryl. “Your participation exemplifies your commitment to Northeast Health and helps make a difference in the lives of so many people.”

Together, the Employees of Northeast Health Make a Difference!
Employee Fund Drive (continued)

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Spring 2010 • 5
Employee Fund Drive (continued)


Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary
Makes an Impact

On January 21, Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary held its annual lunch and election of officers, with special guest speaker, Jessica Layton of WNYT-Chan
nel 13. Auxiliary President Patricia O’Brien presented Norman Dascher, chief executive officer of the patient care division, with a check in the amount of $25,000, the final payment of its $120,000 pledge to Samaritan’s Master Facility Plan. Funds were raised by auxiliary members through Samaritan’s “Corner Shop” and various vendor sales throughout the year.
Northeast Health Foundation 2009 Donors

This list reflects cumulative giving for 2009 in the form of outright gifts and pledge payments. Pledges are not recognized in the listing. While we make every effort to correctly acknowledge your support, if we have made an error, please contact us at (518) 274-0190.

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The Northeast Health Foundation is pleased to announce recently elected board members:

David Haviland, retired vice president for institute advancement at RPI, spent his career there earning three degrees and serving as a member of the architecture faculty, director of the Center for Architectural Research, associate dean of architecture, vice president for student life, and vice president for institute advancement. His community involvement includes the Howard and Bush Foundation, Rensselaer Newman Foundation, The Arts Center of the Capital Region and Troy Savings Bank Music Hall Association.

Michael Wolff, MD, FACP, board-certified in internal medicine and geriatric medicine, received a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University and his medical degree from SUNY at Buffalo. He completed an internship and residency at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, and a clinical fellowship in geriatrics at Harvard Medical School. Long associated with The Eddy and Northeast Health, Dr. Wolff concentrates on the provision of geriatric health services and has engaged in numerous research projects involving Alzheimer’s disease, long-term care and health delivery systems for the elderly.

David C. Coletti, MD, is board-certified in general surgery. He received his medical degree from University of Vermont School of Medicine and completed his residency at Fletcher Allen Health Care. He is in private practice in Troy.

In addition, the foundation recently announced four ex-officio board members, representing our hospital auxiliaries and alumni associations:

Patricia O’Brien, president of Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary, is a retired teacher and active volunteer at Samaritan, Cohoes Music Hall and Literacy Volunteers of Greater Rensselaer County.

Deborah Pero serves as president of Albany Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, as well as gift shop manager. She is an active volunteer, fundraiser and community leader in Albany.

Joy Aloan, president of Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, worked at Samaritan Hospital for many years in a variety of nursing leadership roles, before transferring to Northeast Health MIS department as a clinical analyst.

Valorie Olmer, president of Memorial Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association, served as a bedside nurse for more than 20 years. More recently, she has been doing case management and currently is employed by Aetna.

Medical Assistance Fund to Aid Nurse Alumni

Northeast Health Foundation has been designated the administrator of the Medical Assistance Fund, formerly called the Sick Fund, established with donations to Memorial Hospital Nurses Alumni Association by the families of Henry Sage, Effie Keayes Banks and Julia O. Wells. The fund was originally intended for Memorial Hospital nursing alumni to receive discounted medical care. Over the years, the Medical Assistance Fund has grown and evolved so that an eligible alumnus can receive a stipend of $325 per inpatient stay for up to two inpatient stays per calendar year.

Cuisine Magic 2010

On March 7, the Hilton Garden Inn in Troy was the scene of Cuisine Magic 2010. The annual culinary extravaganza celebrated its 17th year with a record attendance of 425 individuals. Thirteen area chefs tempted attendees’ palates with delicious appetizers, entrees and desserts. Nearly $49,000 was raised to benefit Eddy Visiting Nurse Association’s volunteer and paraprofessional career ladder programs.

Congressman Paul D. Tonko, honorary chair, Angela Yu, media relations manager for Northeast Health, and mistress of ceremonies, Liz Bishop of CBS 6 News, enjoy themselves at the March 7 event.
Tribute Gifts

Families often ask us for wording for contributions IN MEMORY OF a special person. Their loved one may have been a volunteer, a patient or a resident with an Eddy facility, Albany Memorial Hospital or Samaritan Hospital.

You could say:

“In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in memory of (individual’s name) to (the affiliate that is meaningful to the family), in care of Northeast Health Foundation, 2224 Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY 12180.”

Calendar Corner

Mark your calendar for these upcoming Northeast Health Foundation events:

River of Life
To benefit Eddy Alzheimer’s Services
Wednesday, September 22, 2010
Aboard the Captain JP

For more information, please call the Northeast Health Foundation, 274-0190, or register online at www.NortheastHealth.com.