

North Country Healthcare Building Innovative Healthcare Model

Affiliation Celebrates Accomplishments and Departure of Two Founding Members

Littleton: North Country Healthcare, an affiliation of four northern New Hampshire critical access hospitals, announced today that two of its founding fathers would be departing. Peter Gosline, interim CAO of Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, and Scott Howe, CEO of Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster, will leave their positions at the end of August.

“Peter and Scott have been instrumental in the development of North Country Healthcare and have worked diligently as we build a new innovative healthcare network,” said Warren West, CEO of North Country Healthcare. “We celebrate their dedicated service to their communities and thank them for securing quality healthcare in northern New Hampshire for years to come. We also commemorate their tireless efforts and years of service leading Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital and Weeks Medical Center, respectively.”

North Country Healthcare serves as the parent organization for Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital and Weeks Medical Center as well as Androscoggin Valley Hospital in Berlin and Littleton Regional Healthcare in Littleton. The goal of the four-hospital affiliation is to develop a highly coordinated healthcare network that will improve quality, increase efficiencies, and lower the cost of healthcare delivery in the North Country.

“Self determination is important in the changing healthcare landscape,” says Scott Howe. “The North Country Healthcare affiliation will allow our partner hospitals to stand up for ourselves and survive the rough terrain of the healthcare marketplace. It will also help us preserve access to high-quality, personal, and affordable healthcare for all residents of our region. It’s been my pleasure to work at Weeks for 22 years and also help establish North Country Healthcare. The future of healthcare in the North Country will be determined here because of the affiliation and secure its future.”

“It’s been an honor and privilege to work with passionate people who invest in making our community an even better place to live and work,” said Peter Gosline. “I am proud of the work we’ve done together at UCVH and I am grateful to have been part of the development of North Country Healthcare. This affiliation will have positive impact for our region’s future by reducing costs, improving the health outcomes of our residents and visitors, and keeping excellent healthcare local.”

The goal of North Country Healthcare is to coordinate the activities of the four affiliate hospitals in the areas of planning, administration, purchasing, human resources, marketing, finance, and contracting in order to maintain access to high quality, affordable health care throughout the North Country. This arrangement maintains the four independently governed hospitals as critical access hospitals providing care in their local communities. The four hospitals retain their names, their individual boards of trustees, and control of their assets and charitable endowments.

North Country Healthcare's plan for 2016-2017 includes working on insurance standardization with all four hospitals, developing operating and capital budgets and an infrastructure to reduce costs and improve quality, creating a providers advisory council, establishing a staff development plan to enhance recruitment and staff education, instituting a regional referral system for medical services, and building centers of excellence for specialty medical services.

To help carry out this plan, new presidents have been announced at all four affiliation hospitals. Scott Colby, formerly of Minuteman Health, will head Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital. Michael Lee, formerly of Adirondack Health, will lead Weeks Medical Center. Michael Peterson, formerly of Sebecook Valley Health, took charge of Androscoggin Valley Hospital in late 2015. Littleton Regional Healthcare has appointed Nick Braccino, the hospital's former CFO, as its interim president during the search for a new president. Each new president brings special skills in insurance management and regulation, human resources and recruitment, business growth and accountable care, and finance. The new presidents will report to Warren West, former CEO of Littleton Regional Healthcare, and current CEO of North Country Healthcare.

"North Country Healthcare is the right organization at the right time," West said. "We're here to change the healthcare landscape for the better by taking charge of healthcare in our own region. Effective, quality, affordable healthcare is possible even in rural areas like the North Country. We're proud of our region and want to show the nation how to do healthcare right. The success of North Country Healthcare will be a model for other hospitals nationally."

For more information about North Country Healthcare and its affiliate hospitals, please visit the following:

North Country Healthcare: NorthCountryHealthcare.org.

Androscoggin Valley Hospital: Avhnh.org

Littleton Regional Healthcare: LittletonHealthcare.org

Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital: Ucvh.org

Weeks Medical Center: WeeksMedical.org

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