

Community CONNECTION



A joint
publication
of Volunteers
in Medicine
of Monroe
County and the
Bloomington
Hospital
Foundation

VOL 3, ISSUE 14: NOV 2016

VIM's Dental Clinic Works Miracles

(excerpt from Bloom Magazine, August/September 2016 issue, by Stephanie von Hirschberg, www.magbloom.com)

The patient, a 42 year old man, came to VIM in desperation. He had a raging toothache and a mouthful of black stumps where his teeth had rotten away. But pain wasn't his only worry. His employer had warned that he would lose his job – which involved contact with the public – unless he got his teeth fixed. He had no insurance and could not afford treatment.

One of the VIM dentists, Dr. Park Firebaugh quickly went to work. Weeks later, after a course of antibiotics and multiple extractions, the patient received a set of upper dentures – which VIM paid for with funding from the local 100+ Women Who Care organization.



Satisfied dentures patient.

“We handed him a mirror when he put the dentures in for the first time,” said Dr. Firebaugh. “He started crying. His entire face changed. Earlier, it was sunken in. The difference was unbelievable.”

When Dr. Stephen Pritchard did a recent dental assessment on a newly employed landscaper in his early 20's, he immediately saw that the young man did not brush his teeth regularly. They were covered in plaque. Pritchard launched into his oral hygiene pitch, handing the patient a mirror so he could watch as the plaque was scraped away. “He saw the film come off his teeth, like the peeling of an orange,” says Pritchard. “It was gross.” But the patient, who turned out to have eight cavities, got the message.

In addition to funding from 100+ Women Who Care for equipment, supplies and dentures, the City of Bloomington's Jack Hopkins Social Services funding helped to pay for 2016 salaries of the new dental team. We are fundraising for 2017 dental support.



VIM dental team enjoying an evening at Griffy Lake. From l to r: Chris Hoak ,volunteer retired nurse, Dr. Steve Pritchard, Maylin Palma, dental assistant, Dr. Park Firebaugh, Jan Firebaugh, dental hygienist.

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*Dear VIM Staff and
Volunteers,*

*Thanks for everything!
All the smiles and
encouragement, doctor
appointments and
advice. Your countless
hours of work (seen
and unseen) are much
appreciated! Thank you
to everyone! Enjoy your
holidays!*

”

[Patient Card]

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Falling through the Cracks – and Landing Gently



At the end of September “Juan” thought he was dying. Terrified, having great difficulty breathing, he went to the hospital emergency department where he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure caused by kidney failure. Juan was admitted.

Juan at his regular visits, supply his medications, provide health education for him and his family, and pay for his frequent labs.

During Juan’s September hospital admission, he received dialysis several times over the course of three days. During his admission, we frantically tried, again, to find options for his long-term dialysis. Once again we exhausted all of our ideas and options with no success.

Juan was discharged from the hospital with the plan that when he next went into kidney failure he should go to the Emergency Department for emergency dialysis – an expensive proposition.

But let’s begin at the beginning.

About a year ago Juan, a 62 year old Latino man, was diagnosed with kidney disease. He lives with his wife, adult daughter and two grandchildren. He works long hours as a janitor in a local hotel. He and his wife speak no English. They are the nicest people one could ever hope to meet.

After the diagnosis the VIM clinic staff went into action. Maritza Alvarez, VIM bilingual nurse, scheduled a family visit at VIM to teach the family about kidney disease and what it meant for their day-to-day lives. Ozzy deSantiago, bilingual VIM Medical Assistant, began making regular home visits to make sure the family adopted a “kidney-friendly” lifestyle through diet and exercise. Ozzy attended all of their visits to the nephrologist to ensure the family understood what was said and knew how to comply with the treatment plan. Ed Hinds, VIM pharmacist, also visited Juan and his family in their home to teach them how Juan needed to take his medications.

Juan came to VIM every week to attend a renal clinic and be examined by nurse practitioner, Sung Park. Maritza also met with Juan and his wife regularly, as well as made follow up phone calls in-between visits. Fortunately, with the help of our compassionate medical team, Juan maintained a fairly stable level of health for many months.

Unfortunately, about six months ago, Juan was given the bad news that his kidney disease had worsened and he would need dialysis, possibly up to three times per week, or he would eventually die. Dialysis is hugely expensive and with minimum wage work Juan said he was unable to have treatment. And this is where Juan began to fall through the cracks.

VIM staff members, Shelley Sallee and Jo Hargesheimer, researched his options for dialysis only to discover that, because he is undocumented, he is not eligible for charity care from either of the two local dialysis centers or any of the state and national kidney organizations.

As we were researching options, Dr. Frank Boateng, Juan’s nephrologist at IU Health Southern IN Physicians agreed to provide his services for Juan at no charge. VIM continued to treat

At the point of this writing, we have been seeing Juan almost daily since his admission in order to monitor his labs and determine when he next needs dialysis. His labs are slowly, but steadily rising, indicating that he will need dialysis in the near future.

In the meantime, Ozzy helped Juan to apply for Emergency Medicaid, since Juan neither reads nor writes. Kathy Bennett, Director of Integrated Care Management for IU Health Bloomington, worked tirelessly through hospital channels to help find a solution for Juan as well.

The happy result is that IUH Bloomington wrote off all charges for the operating room for Dr. Vasquez to perform surgery, which he also donated, to place a catheter for dialysis. The Bloomington Anesthesia P.C. donated the anesthesia services for the surgery, and IUH Bloomington, with tremendous generosity, will donate Juan’s ongoing and long-term dialysis.

We are grateful and so very relieved that the medical team involved with Juan’s care has pulled together and found a solution that will allow him to live a normal life. At VIM, we believe that healthcare is a human right, not a privilege based on income or citizenship.

Still, we recognize that not all individuals are so fortunate. Those of us working at VIM are acutely aware of the health inequities in our national healthcare system and we treat the many individuals that fall through the cracks every day – cracks that are wide, dividing citizens and non-citizens, the rich and the poor.

VIM has been and will long continue to be the safety-net medical clinic serving individuals in Monroe and Owen Counties that fall through the cracks for any number of reasons. VIM is proud to serve this need and so very grateful to our partners, most notably IUH Bloomington, for finding solutions to save lives.

Nancy E. Richman, Ph.D., MPA
Executive Director

VIM to Adopt Electronic Medical Record / Electronic Dental Record

Our world has been radically transformed by digital technology – smart phones, iPads, iPods, laptops, tablets, and various other web-enabled devices have transformed our daily lives and the way we communicate. Medicine is an information-rich enterprise. Within a healthcare setting a seamless flow of information created by electronic medical records can transform the way care is delivered.



An electronic medical record (EMR) is a digital version of a paper chart that contains all of a patient's medical history and information (labs, exam results, medications) gathered in each visit. When healthcare providers have access to complete and accurate health information, patients receive better medical care. EMRs can reduce errors, improve patient safety, and support better patient outcomes. While adoption of an EMR requires significant staff time, these costs are outweighed by the critical benefits of improved quality and safety of patient care.

It's time for the VIM clinic to join the digital world and we plan to implement an EMR before the end of 2017. While the benefits of an EMR are many, four primary goals have propelled this decision.

- 1. Improve patient care and safety.** An EMR not only ensures a legible record, but also makes it easier for providers to consider all aspects of a patient's condition by having complete information at their finger-tips. An EMR provides built-in safeguards against such potential issues as prescribing medications that could interact with allergies or other medications.
- 2. Improve operational efficiency.** An EMR will streamline the patient check-in process as well as eliminate volunteer time spent looking for lost charts resulting in happier patients and volunteers alike. Having information follow the patient during the course of their visit to the clinic eliminates the need for duplicate data entry.
- 3. Improved ability to capture data.** An EMR can also improve population health outcomes by making it easier for VIM to collect standardized, systematic data that, then, can be leveraged for quality improvement and prevention activities.
- 4. Integration of medical and dental records.** If possible, we would prefer a system that fully integrates a patient's medical and dental records. This enables providers to consider a patient from a holistic view, including one combined medication list, one combined problem list, streamlined cross-referrals, and so forth.

Fundraising Update

VIM is grateful for the tremendous community support that makes our life-saving work possible. In addition to generous donations from individuals and local businesses, during 2016, VIM was awarded grants from the Martin Luther King Commission, Psi Iota Society, Trinity Episcopal Church, Jack Hopkins Social Services, and the Monroe County Health Department.

In addition, VIM is a United Way partner agency and also receives allocations from Monroe and Owen County governments and the IN State Department of Health.

Since VIM's inception, the Bloomington Hospital Foundation (BHF) has provided VIM with fundraising support, gift administration, accounting, NAP credits, and investment support. We appreciate the Foundation's partnership.



Holiday Wish List

- Printer paper
- Paper cutter
- Small Dixie cups
- Quart ziploc baggies
- Paper lunch bags
- Jumbo paper clips
- 9-volt and AA batteries
- 2ft x 3ft bulletin board

Donated supplies help us help others!

Please call
333.4001

Visit the VIM Clinic!

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Bloomington, IN 47403



Contacting VIM by phone:
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Thank You Smithville!

For nearly 10 years, Smithville Fiber has donated internet services worth nearly \$50,000 to VIM. This very generous donation has allowed the clinic to enjoy high-speed internet connections enabling our use of several cloud-based applications. "VIM is an important service to our community. Smithville Fiber is proud to be a part of the great medical care available to those who cannot afford it." (Cullen McCarty, Executive Vice President, Smithville Communications, Inc.)

VIM is very grateful to our friends at Smithville Fiber!



Volunteers
in Medicine
OF MONROE COUNTY