

The Health News

Keeping you informed of the latest developments, advancements, and events at BIRHC

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Sue Solle Retires after Over 15 Years

It seems like just yesterday that Sue Solle, FNP-C was excitedly loading up her vehicle with items to be moved into the new clinic building. But that was January 2004 and more than 15 years have passed since Sue left the UP to become a care provider on Beaver Island. She is planning to retire in mid-April.

Sue is the longest-serving resident Beaver Island medical provider since Dr. Russell Palmer who retired in 1952. During her years at BIRHC, (many of which she practiced alone, on call 24/7) Sue has skillfully overseen stabilization of hundreds of emergency patients, many of whom have been saved from permanent impairment or death because of her proficiency and experience. On an isolated island where weather can keep patients from being evacuated for days Sue's calm judgment has been indispensable. (On a

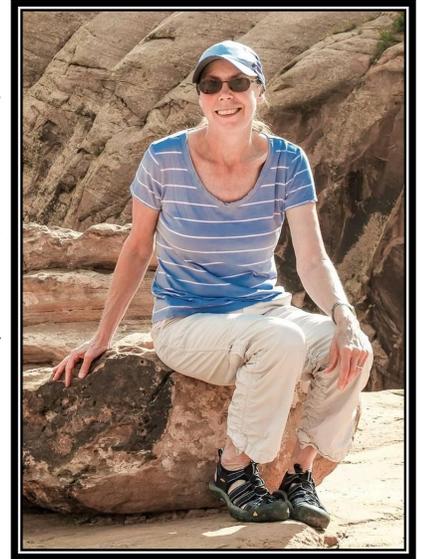
personal note, I will always be grateful for Sue's role in preserving my son's sight after an accident.)

To expand BIRHC services Sue became a certified DOT physical provider. She also made the effort to train as a hospice nurse through Munson Healthcare. Her willingness to go the extra mile, along with that of director Donna Kubic, has allowed many terminal patients and their families to receive an unforgettable gift: the comfort of compassionate, in-home palliative care. On top of that, like Donna, she has donated her hospice wages to the clinic's Good Samaritan Fund.

In addition to her outstanding medical knowledge, Sue's attention to detail and organizational skills enabled the Health Center to pass two surprise State of Michigan inspections with highest marks.

Everyone at the Health Center thanks Sue for her many years of steadfast service

and wishes her and Frank much happiness in their new life in Utah where they will have long awaited time to spend with family. (Sue wishes to retire quietly, so there will be no retirement party. Please feel free to privately express your appreciation before she and Frank move in June.) *Connie Wojan*



For over a year, the Health Center has been advertising intensively for nurse practitioners. Finding someone with the right experience who could adjust to liv-

Welcome Cecilia Peasley

ing on an isolated island and whose family members would also be comfortable with the change in life style was not easy. Last October BIRHC was very lucky to find a highly-qualified Nurse Practitioner who had everything we were looking for: **Cecilia Peasley, FNP-C**. Since her three daughters are grown, the only "family member" who needed to accept the Island was her standard poodle, Mr. Presley. Fortunately, so far it looks like Mr. Presley understands that Beaver Island is pretty close to dog heaven!

The first thing that strikes you when you meet Cecelia is her warm smile. She in-

stantly makes you feel comfortable. She believes that we are all "emotional creatures" and strives to understand all of her patients' needs. After completing undergrad work at Saginaw Valley and Michigan State University she worked at Thunder Bay Health Service in Atlanta, Michigan, and taught at Alpena Community College. She has been in family practice medicine since 1995.

Tired of the pressured pace of medical practice elsewhere, Cecelia chose to settle here because "the Island clinic is an opportunity to practice in a more idealistic,

(Continued on page 2)



Welcome Joan Matejovsky

On March 16th, BIRHC welcomed another highly qualified FNP-C, **Joan Matejovsky** who will be joined later by her husband Bill. Joan will live in the Health Center’s newly purchased Oakwood Lodge condo until she and Bill are able to find permanent housing. Joan has been an RN since 1988. She has worked in orthopedics and neurology and has 15 years of experience in emergency room and urgent care. She is certified in ACLS, PALS, and BLS. Most recently Joan worked in a pediatric office in Coldwater Michigan.

Like Cecelia, Joan is looking forward to a less ‘number-intense’ practice and the peacefulness of Beaver Island life. She has a cat, a dog, three daughters, a son, one son-in-law with one soon-to-be and a adorable grandson and is eagerly anticipating sharing Island times with all of them and, of course, Bill.

It certainly took a while but it looks like we now have an outstanding new team of professionals to serve the community! Be sure to welcome them both!

IN APPRECIATION OF SO MANY

The Beaver Island Rural Health Center would like to thank all who have responded to our Annual Appeals, supported our Endowment and Special Projects funds, and honored or memorialized loved ones by giving to the BIRHC.

Without the community’s always generous support, we could not fulfill our mission to provide--without regard for ability to pay--high quality health care to all who live on or visit Beaver Island.

IN MEMORY OF:

John and Laurene Adams, Bob Banville, Kathy Blalock, the Boyle Family, Ann and David Broder, Bill Cashman, Larry and Nancy Cull, Kevin Arlan Dennis, Franklin and Edna Douglas, Frank and Vera Dulin, Roy Elsworth, Dan Gentle, Robert Gillespie, Zach Gerganoff, Richard R. Grimm, Eleanore Hagerman, Ronald William Haggard, Henry Hill, Betty Hudgins, Bruce Kinsley, Jo McNew, Ruth Mitchell, H. Gary Morse, the O’Donnell Family, Helen Pike, Katherine Ricksgers, Dr. Richard Ries, Doris Shirik, Ken Slater, Harold E. Smith, Jim Stambaugh, Donand Joan Vyse, Bob Welke, Trudy Works.

IN HONOR OF:

BIRHC Staff, BIRHC Board of Directors, Judi Meister, Joe and Marilyn Reed, Cindy Ricksgers, Gregg Weaner, the Wojan Family.

Cecilia *(Continued from page 1)*

patient-centered fashion.” A lover of outdoor activities like biking, hiking, skiing and swimming, Cecilia says she was “overwhelmed” by the beauty of Beaver Island and the “many kindnesses” offered by Island residents. The board and staff of the Health Center couldn’t be more pleased with the excellent care Cecelia has provided to her patients in her first months here. We applaud her for taking in stride the harsh weather that has afflicted Beaver Island this winter and promise her there are much more pleasant outdoor conditions ahead.



Dr. Rick Rademacher, Dick Gross, Doug Kollar

HEALTH CENTER HOSTS FREE EYE CARE

Many thanks to the generous individuals pictured above who recently provided 22 (14 new) low income Beaver Island patients with free eye exams and glasses. These good Samaritans have been coming to the Island at their own expense once a year for 5 years to give eye care to those who would otherwise go without. Special thanks to Dr. Jeff Ritsema for organizing this service along with Dick Gross!

BIRHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don Spencer, President
 Larry Kubic, Vice President
 Diane McDonough, Secretary
 Maura Turner, Treasurer
 Bill Johnson, Director
 Jim Wojan, Director

DENTAL SERVICES TO AGAIN BE AVAILABLE AT THE HEALTH CENTER

Last September the BIRHC Board voted unanimously to spend \$40,000 of State of Michigan grant money to purchase and install new dental equipment. At that time the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and Dental Clinics North agreed to donate gently used equipment from one of their offices. Thanks to grant writer Mark Carrington and the support of HDNWM and DCN, the Delta Dental Foundation awarded BIRHC \$25,000 to subsidize the cost of the new equipment.

The process to re-open a dental clinic on the Island started in October 2017 when BIRHC Managing Director Donna Kubic began dialog with area dental professionals. In January 2018, the Health Center Board formed a dental committee to re-

search options. Led by Board Member Mark Carrington, the committee formed a working relationship with the two non-profit organizations.

The DCN clinic at the Health Center will provide comprehensive dental service to children and adults with Medicaid, Healthy Kids Dental, MI Child, Healthy Michigan Plan and other insurance plans. Payment options will include a sliding fee scale for patients on a limited income. Services will be provided by a dentist and hygienist and will include most general dentistry work such as cleanings, exams, resurfacing, extractions, fillings, impressions, etc. Specialized procedures will not be available on the island, such as endodontic services, orthodontics and oral surgery.

Last November the Beaver Island Boat Company donated shipping for the pallets of equipment that were sent over to the Island. Mark Carrington secured volunteers to help transport the equipment from the boat dock to the clinic. Patterson Dental installed the equipment over the winter and BIRHC paid for necessary electrical work. The contract terms between BIRHC, DCN and the HDNWM have been settled. All that remains to do is install computers and internet connectivity between the Beaver Island office of the DCN and its mainland locations. DCN estimates services may begin in early May. Information on how to make an appointment will be forthcoming soon.

HEALTH CENTER TO ADOPT ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

For many years the staff of the Health Center has monitored the adoption of electronic medical records at much larger doctors' offices and hospitals in our area. Until recently three factors made it very impractical for the tiny BIRHC to jump on the band wagon: extremely high costs, difficulty of use, and communication problems between different systems. Recently BIRHC learned of an opportunity to adopt electronic medical records through its billing company which specializes in small rural health clinics. BIRHC

can now subscribe to an EMR service for \$500 per month per provider, or \$12,000 per year. Luckily both of our new providers have experience in using electronic records. According to Cecelia Peasly FNP-C, many of the bugs that made the earliest versions very difficult to use have been worked out in the proposed system. She explained that **i Patient Care** would make it easier and more efficient for her to keep track of each patient's specialist reports, test results and medications. Donna and Cecilia have been assured that the **i Pa-**

tient software will integrate with that of area hospitals. So at its March 2019 meeting the BIRHC Board of Directors authorized the expenditure of up to 2 years of EMR service costs.

Because of this and other new expenses the Health Center is facing we welcome donations towards the \$24,000 cost of implementing electronic medical records for two years. A donation envelope is included in this newsletter for anyone who wishes to help us provide more efficient services to our patients.

DONATION FUNDS UPGRADES OF CRITICAL EQUIPMENT

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to a generous donor and satisfied patient who provided the funding last summer to purchase replacements for aging equipment as well as new equipment that expands the services we can offer on Beaver Island. Along with many smaller purchases, several costly investments were made as a result of this major donation.

The most important and expensive purchase was a LIFEPAK® 15 Monitor/Defibrillator, which replaces a decades-old defibrillator. The LIFEPAK® 15 is

equipped with the ability to provide physician over read of the ECG directly from the hospital, which allows for a much faster transportation off island and catheterization lab activation in the event of a critical STEMI (a heart attack with major artery blockage).

We were also able to purchase dermatology equipment for the clinic and can now offer complete routine dermatological exams and procedures in-house. BIRHC also made computer purchases/upgrades to facilitate video conferencing with Dr. John Martin when he is not on the island

and for data storage.

The remaining donation dollars are being held in a restricted account for expensive x-ray machine upgrades. The BIRHC x-ray machine is vital to the diagnosis of orthopedic problems and determining whether patients need to be transferred to the mainland for treatment. It is very old but we are waiting to upgrade until we know what will be compatible with equipment being updated at Munson Healthcare Charlevoix where many x-rays are transmitted.



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BEAVER ISLAND RURAL HEALTH CENTER

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STAFF

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 John Martin, DO
 Joan Matejovsky, FNP-c
 Ann Partridge, Service Coordinator
 Cecilia Peasley, FNP-c

VISITING PROVIDERS*

Mike Aenis, MPT
 Mark Babcock, PT, MPT
 Murray Cotter, MD
 Richard Gross
 Scott Kelly
 Doug Kroll
 Daniel Mann, MD
 Edward Newcomb, MD
 Rick Rademacher, OD
 Patrick Richmond, DPM
 Dan Taylor, MSW, CSW
 Jon VanWagnen, OD
 Aaron Wilkin, DC

** Call BIRHC at 231-448-2275 for information on scheduling an appointment with a visiting care provider.*

CONTACT US

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REGULAR APPOINTMENT HOURS

Monday through Friday: 8:30 am—5:00 pm
 Urgent patients can be seen on short notice during regular hours; call to let us know you are coming.

24-HOUR URGENT CARE AVAILABLE

Call the Health Center at 231-448-2275. Your call will be forwarded to the on-call BIRHC care provider.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Dial 911, and stay on the line....

There will be up to a 30-second delay.
 Emergency Medical Services personnel will respond.