

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Care

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May 2002

What Ever Happened to Those VM Midwives?

by Ann Darlington, CNM, ARNP

Some in our ARNP community have wondered what became of the Virginia Mason Nurse-Midwifery Service. There is a story here, and a lesson or two along the way.

The story is: VM began providing midwifery services in 1979. Twenty-two years later, top managers decided that they could no longer afford to provide obstetric services, and all OB providers—midwives, docs, and staff—were laid off. The midwives had tried doing more with less, increasing work hours, letting go a couple of people, but it was too little, too late. Contributing factors included the shrinking birth rate in the Seattle area, diminished compensation for OB care, no OB marketing since VM closed our birth center in '96 (and moved our birthing site to Group Health Central's birth center), and discontinuation of the belief that bringing birthing families into the system is a valuable "loss leader" for later patient care business. The bottom line saw red and we and our practice were terminated. The OB doctors and staff dispersed, and the nurse-midwives were given three extra months to wrap up our practice and explore our prospects. Our last day of employment was to be January 31st, determined to stay together as a group practice (midwives believe in that "intact" thing), we began the search for new employment.

Via a contract with VM, the midwives had for 20 years provided OB care for clients of the Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers (PSNHC). Commonly known as "the community clinics," PSNHC is a network of 15 medical, dental and school-based clinics providing care for low-income, ethnically diverse patients. The midwives hoped to continue to serve PSNHC women and families, and PSNHC maintained their commitment to nurse-midwifery as an ideal model of care for their OB patients. Further, we sought a birthing site compatible with our style of practice and readily accessible to all of our clients. We interviewed with other Seattle area hospitals, practices and clinics. PSNHC made us an offer we couldn't refuse: to employ all the CNMs in our group, to negotiate with commercial insurers so that we could continue caring for our current client base, to collaborate with Group Health so that we could remain at what we now considered "our" birth center (and thereby lessen the financial impact of VM's departure), and to help us set up our new clinic. It became very clear who our friends were and where our natural alliances lay.

Sometimes it takes a kick in the butt (like getting laid off) to get back to basics. When I think about why I wanted to be a nurse-midwife in the first place, I realize

it was to serve women, especially poor women, and to be sure a wide variety of birth options stay open to all women. I liked that American nurse-midwifery had its roots in public health nursing. I haven't liked seeing hospitals, clinics, and individual practitioners discontinue taking consumers who are covered by public funding such as Medicaid because the bottom line is too dire, and the bottom line rules. PSNHC is designated as a federally qualified health care system (providing, for example, public health nurse home visits, social worker services, and nutritionist counseling via Maternity Support Services). As such, it can take these clients and not lose its shirt trying to do so. Not to say that in today's medical and legislative arena it isn't a chronic struggle to make financial ends meet, but the will to try and the mission to serve is there. It feels like coming home again.

Speaking of home, our new clinic opened in February. We are now PSNHC Midwifery and Women's Health, and we're located in the West Building of the Group Health Central campus in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. We lost many clients in our transition from VM, but are rebuilding our practice. We can take most private insurance plans, and our past clients and contacts are finding us again and returning to our practice. Our mandate from PSNHC is to focus on building up our Medicaid numbers. What a gift to be able to say, "The doors are open! We most especially want you!" at a time when other practices' doors are shut or open but a crack to the medically underserved.

So, if you have clients or other contacts who you think might benefit from our care, we would be ever so grateful for your referrals. You could even join us in what we call our marketing effort: "Let a Midwife Take You to Lunch." We'll show you our clinic, serve you a good, cheap deli sandwich, exchange practice information with you, and tour the Family Beginnings birth center (one block away). Contact us at 206.324.1449, write to us at PSNHC Midwifery and Women's Health, 201 16th Avenue East, MS CWB-2, Seattle, WA, 98112, or email our clinic manager at Everek@psnhc.org or me at annjim david@mindspring.com. There is nothing so sweet as an NP-to-NP referral!

Except if it is discovering that, sometimes, you really can come home again. And occasionally, you can get a free lunch. Therein lie a couple of heartening lessons.

My Mother Says You Should Support ARNPs United of Washington State!

Marty Couret, NP

I was running through the house on the way back outside on a gorgeous Californian day when I passed my

mother sitting at the computer. She was crunching numbers and moving through piles of paper. Puzzled, as many fifteen-year-olds are, I asked her what she was doing. She explained that as the treasurer of her state organization, she had to tidy up some loose ends before she passed the job on to someone else. She proceeded to explain to me (an uninterested teenager) that it is important to belong to a professional organization, so that your voice is heard when it matters. Wishing she would stop, I listened as my mother added that it was also necessary to take turns running the organization.

While I was bored at the time, my mother's words stuck with me. I am sure that this is the reason that I became involved with ARNPs United of Washington State. For a long time Ron Young, Jerri Henry, Bob Smithing, and many others have been carrying the torch of ARNPs United. It is time for others to step up. Kimberly Couret has recently written a 95-page business plan to help guide ARNPs United into the future. Seasoned veterans and new nurse practitioners are needed to provide fresh perspectives to make this plan work. The time to get involved is now! ARNPs United has multiple opportunities for volunteers that can only commit to two hours a month.

Benefits to volunteering include interaction with other nurse practitioners from around the state, exposure to legislators (if helping out with the legislative committee), and the satisfaction of knowing that you are personally working to protect the rights of nurse practitioners in Washington State.

If you are interested in volunteering please call us at 253.480.1035 or email: au@nurse.org.

New Mandatory Overtime Prohibition Signed into Law

ACNP Washington Word April 2002

Governor Gary Locke signed a bill on March 22nd that prohibits mandatory overtime work for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Effective June 13th, this applies to nurses who are paid on an hourly basis and who are directly involved with patients while working at a health care facility, including hospitals, hospices, and rural health care facilities. The law was praised by state nursing groups as a means to continue safe patient care.

Medicare Allows More Biopsy Options

ACNP Washington Word April 2002

CMS announced April 15th that Medicare beneficiaries will have more options to having breast cancer diagnosed under expanded coverage (Associated Press, April 15, 2002). CMS will expand the use of image guidance to include the biopsies of some palpable lesions, or lesions that can be felt by hand. Image guidance provides

a less invasive alternative to surgical biopsy. The new benefit will be instituted later this year. For more information, visit www.cms.gov.

Medicare Coverage Authorized for Treatment of Alzheimer's

ACNP Washington Word April 2002

A major change in Medicare coverage was announced by the Bush Administration at the end of March, now authorizing Medicare coverage for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, allowing reimbursement of costs of mental health services, hospice care, or home health care (*The New York Times*, March 31, 2002). In the past many claims had been automatically denied on the assumption that treatment was futile, since it was thought that Alzheimer's patients were incapable of any medical improvement.

This reversal in federal policy is attributed to the validity of new studies that show people with Alzheimer's can often benefit from psychotherapy, physical and occupational therapy, and other services. The direct cost to Medicare is estimated to be several billion dollars annually. The government gave no public notice of the new policy, which was set forth late last year, but already some patients have received benefits that would previously have been denied.

Wanted
1200 NPs to Support
the
National NP Marketing Campaign!
Donate \$100 Today
Send Your Donation To:
PO Box 1375
Water Mill, NY 11976.
Get more information at www.nurse.net/mc

Classified Ads

Nurse Practitioner A.R.N.P

Description: Planned Parenthood of Central Washington is recruiting for Clinician candidates to provide the highest level of care to clients of our reproductive health care clinics. Busy, team-oriented environment. Full-Time 37.5 hrs/wk. Full benefit package. Requirements: Licensed Washington State Practitioner. Prescriptive authority preferred. Experience in women's health care desirable. Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing. Ability to respond sensitively to clients of all ages, lifestyles and ethnic origins and function in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner, Bi-lingual a plus.

Salary DOE
Pay Unit: Hourly

Duration: Full Time, Over 150 Days

Hours per Week: 37

Number of Openings: 1

How To Apply: To apply for this job, contact: Jodie Oquist, Human Resources, 208 N. 3rd Ave., Yakima, WA 98902, 509-248-3628, oquistj@ppcentwa.org. Employer's Job#: 2002-09

Office Space for Rent

Therapist's office available for rent in the Wallingford area of Seattle. Available May 1, 2002. If interested, please contact Dr. Elaine Gowell at 206-781-0839.

ARNP Wanted

ARNP practice opportunity available for busy Work Clinic in Tukwila, WA. Part of the Highline Health Care Community. Must have occupational medicine experience. Excellent employment package. E-mail CV and references, Attn: Gail Mumma @ HMEGAIL@aol.com or Fax 206.431.3939 or phone 206.431.0785.

CE Opportunities

Adult Drug Therapy 2002 Clinical Pharmacology Series

May 21, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. This annual update for nurses in advanced practice focuses on current recommendations in drug therapy for adults. [8 contact hrs. (6.5 clock hrs) Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145 group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

Spirituality, Health & Medicine Graduate Certificate Program

Join a diverse group of healthcare and other professionals in a stimulating ten-weekend exploration of spirituality, its role in healing, mind/body and alternative medicine, and the role that compassionate relationships play in health and health care. In a sequence of three 8-credit graduate level courses and related projects you will learn how prayer, meditation and spiritual practice influence biochemistry and health. You'll deepen your own spiritual life through study and practice of a spiritual path or religious tradition of your choice. You'll explore how quantum physics' definitions of reality, energy and matter alter our definitions of consciousness, life, death, and the role of the healer. You'll select some form of mind/body medicine to study and experience, and have low-coast access to Bastyr's Center for Natural Health. You'll study and experience how and why trusting, compassionate relationships are a major force for healing. And you'll develop a renewed sense of your values, your calling and your profession. Classes meet one Saturday and Sunday per month from September-June on Bastyr's beautiful wooded campus in Kenmore adjacent to St. Edward State Park. Participants' ages range from 24 to 70, and include physicians, chiropractors, nurses, clergy, therapists, social workers, scientists and business people. The program is interdisciplinary, the curriculum multifaceted, and powerful new friendships and collegial relationships are built. The program entails 24 graduate level credits, and CEUs may also be available for certain professions; please inquire. Tuition and fees are \$6,400 payable in three quarterly installments. Low interest educational loans available; tax credits may apply. Enrollment is limited to about 25 participants, insuring intimate group learning and time for personal shar-

ing. **Priority given to those applying by May 31, 2002; applications are accepted thereafter, on a space-available basis.** For application packet, call 425.602.3307. Visit our website: www.bastyr.edu under "Certificates." Public information meetings monthly.

Physical Assessment Course

June 10-July 27, 2002, at Planned Parenthood in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. This course provides a framework for systematic collection, interpretation, and communication of data to determine the health status of adolescents and adults. Participants learn basic skills and enhance clinical competencies in focused history-taking and directed physical examination. [32.4 contact hrs. (27 clock hrs) Entire conference: \$895. Single day: \$1195/\$110 group rate]. Recommended Course Textbook: *Bates' Guide to Physical Examination and History-Taking* by Bickley, L. (Lippincott, 1999.) To order from the UW Book Store (free shipping) call 1-877-335-7323 or (206) 543-6582. **Space is limited. Early registration is advised.** After May 24, registration for individual sessions will be accepted on a space-available basis. For further information, please see contact information below.

Providing Culturally Compassionate Care in the Pediatric Setting

June 7, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Excellence in health care means meeting the unique needs of every client. This conference provides health care providers with a model for cultural competence that can positively impact the quality of services for children and adolescents across the continuum of care. [8.7 contact hrs. (7 clock hrs) Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145 group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

Neuropsychotropic Drug Therapy 2002 Clinical Pharmacology Series

June 14, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. This annual update for nurses in advanced practice focuses on current recommendations in drug therapy for adults. [8 contact hrs. (6.5 clock hrs) Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145 group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

10th Annual Clinical Update on HIV Disease 2002

June 19-20, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. This conference is a forum for disseminating new information about HIV infection, sharing innovative treatment and prevention strategies, and exploring quality of life issues for persons living with or affected by HIV. Teaching methods include lecture, discussion and special interest roundtables. Attendance at both days meets AIDS education requirements for licensure in Washington. [15 contact hrs. (12.5 clock hrs) Entire conference: \$260 indiv/\$245 group rate. Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145 group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

Innovative Strategies for Teaching Visual Learners

June 27, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. This conference presents innovative classroom and clinical teaching strategies that assist visual learners in moving information from short-term (episodic) memory to long-term (semantic) memory through language. [8.6 contact hrs. (7 clock hrs) Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145

group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

**Is Your Patient *Drug-Seeking*?
An Ethical and Clinical Challenge in All Settings**

July 19, 2002, at Shoreline Conference Center in Seattle. Sponsored by the UW CNE. Is *drug-seeking* a problem? Misuse of prescription drugs surpasses all illegal drug usage combined. This conference is designed to enhance the ability of nurses and other healthcare professionals to assess and respond professionally to patients seeking drugs as part of their health care and to stay focused in difficult situations on providing care based on ethical principles. [8.7 contact hrs. (7 clock hrs) Single day: \$160 indiv/\$145 group rate]. For further information, please see contact information below.

University of Washington, CNE, Contact Info

Sheila Keener, BSN, RN, Continuing Nursing Education, University of Washington, Box 357260, Seattle, WA 98195-7260, 206.543.1047, fax: 206.543.6953, web: uwcne.org

Ad Information

Copy deadline is the second Tuesday of the month prior to publication. Ads may be accepted later than this on a space-available basis. Position Available Ads & Continuing Education Announcements of less than 66 words are \$45, of 66 to 130 words are \$75, and greater than 130 words are \$105. Position Available Ads are priced per insertion. Continuing Education Announcements are per offering for up to three (3) consecutive insertions. New Product Announcements per product for one insertion of 130 words or less are

\$75. Ad Inserts are \$540 for one issue. All ads are subject to space limitations and editing. Call for detailed rate information. Mail copy to *ARNP Care*, 10024 SE 240th St, #102, Kent, WA 98031. Phone 253.852.9042. Fax 253.480.0002. Email care@nurse.net.

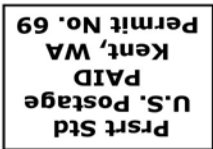
Healthy Humor

Q: What do you call a broken escalator?
A: Stairs.

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