

# Network News

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## Hudson Headwaters Ranked as Fourth Best Health Center in the Nation!

Hudson Headwaters has been named a **National Quality Leader** by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a federal agency that oversees the community health center program across the country.

"These awards go to health centers across the nation, that meet strict measures for quality in the delivery of care," said Cyndi Reynolds, Vice President for Transformation and Clinical Quality. "We were recognized as being a National Quality Leader, and we were ranked as the fourth best health center in the country out of more than 1300."

*"The really great thing about this recognition," Reynolds said, "is that it reflects the work everyone at Hudson Headwaters does every day to make quality a priority."*

Only seven of New York State's 62 community health centers achieved recognition as National Quality Leaders, and only 70 did so in the entire country. The recognition includes an award of \$279,701 to be used for additional quality improvements.

"The really great thing about this recognition," Reynolds said, "is that it reflects the work everyone at Hudson Headwaters does every day to make quality a priority. It is our staff's dedication to providing superior patient care



which results in our ability to achieve this level of recognition."

### HOW WE WERE CHOSEN

To qualify for this award, Hudson Headwaters surpassed national quality benchmarks for chronic disease management, preventive care, and perinatal/prenatal care. Reynolds noted that Hudson Headwaters had done well in the previous two years. However, the funds awarded to Hudson Headwaters this year, which were based on 2015 quality data, were significantly higher. Hudson Headwaters received the 4th largest award in the New York State and the 14th largest in the nation.

"Achieving high quality of care starts with having the ability to collect and study data, and implement improvement strategies based on your findings," Reynolds said. Hudson Headwaters began using electronic medical records in 2009. "Over the course of the last several years we have gone from identifying our opportunities for improvement to being a National Quality Leader," Reynolds said.

Hudson Headwaters also received award funds for reporting clinical measures for patients using electronic medical records, demonstrating improvements in one or more clinical measures, and having the highest clinical performance compared to their health center peers. 



## Hudson Headwaters to Offer Traveling Program for Children's Dental Care

Hudson Headwaters Health Network has received an annual grant of \$350,000 to improve dental care for children. The grant is one of 23 awarded in New York State by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration within Health and Human Services.

The funds will be used to establish a traveling program to bring preventive services to local schools, Head Start locations and Hudson Headwaters' health centers in seven communities. These include the Essex County towns of Moriah and Ticonderoga; the Warren County towns of Queensbury and Warrensburg and the city of Glens Falls, and the Washington County town of Fort Edward and village of Hudson Falls.

"This award will enable us to significantly increase dental services to youngsters with a focus on prevention for children ages pre-school through the 5th grade," said John Rugge, MD. "We are thrilled to be working with local schools and Head Start. By bringing dental services directly to children, we will lessen the travel burden for families in the region."

The dental team will consist of a hygienist and dental assistant who will travel to the locations where they will set up portable equipment including dental tables. Their activities will include a full oral health assessment and education on the importance of oral health. Treatments will include cleanings, fluoride program and sealants. Children who need additional treatment, including filling

cavities and other restorative work, will be referred to a dentist of their parent's choice, Hudson Headwaters' dental center in Warrensburg, or one of two private practices in the city of Glens Falls (Pediatric Dental Group of New York and Loren Baim, DDS).

### **PART OF A NATIONAL EFFORT**

The grant award was part of \$156 million going to community health centers across the nation to improve oral health.

"Oral health is an important part of our overall physical health and well-being," said Sylvia M. Burwell, Secretary of Health and Human Services. Oral health problems can be a sign of illness elsewhere in the body. Additionally, lack of access to preventive and routine dental care for underserved populations can result in dental conditions requiring more costly emergency dental treatment.

Hudson Headwaters applied for the grant because of its knowledge of the health care needs of area children, as the contracted school medical director for twelve school districts providing onsite physicals, policy development and medical coverage at sporting events. Hudson Headwaters is also the main source of patient referrals from the school health programs.

"Providing preventive and educational services to children before they develop poor oral health habits will help them avoid serious problems as adults," Rugge said. 



### 12th Annual Care for Kids 5K Raises Funds for Pediatric Care

On a cool morning on the last day of July, more than 400 people showed up for the 12th running of the Hudson Headwaters Care for Kids 5k Run and Fitness Walk. The course, which takes people along the Schroon River, was covered in just over 18 minutes by the winner, John Walmsley of North Carolina. A team of 27 Hudson Headwaters' staff participated as well. The event raises funds for Hudson Headwaters' pediatric program. Past events have underwritten a teen fitness program in Warrensburg, and pediatric behavioral health.

### Renovating Women's Health Facility

Hudson Headwaters will undertake a \$1.4 million renovation of its women's health facility located at 90 South Street in Glens Falls. The renovations will include upgrades to the interior as well as creating additional parking. Hudson Headwaters' North Country OB/GYN practice currently occupies one floor of the three-story building. The practice will be expanding its staff and scope of services. Interior renovations are expected to begin in 2017, while parking upgrades are scheduled to begin this fall.



Staff volunteers help make Community Day a success.

### Community Day Draws Hundreds to West Mountain Health Services

Several hundred people turned out for Hudson Headwaters' first-ever Community Day in Queensbury on a Saturday in early August. The event featured food, ice cream, bouncy bounce, tours of our newest health center, and booths with health information and more from Hudson Headwaters and other local not-for-profits.

Hudson Headwaters operates two health centers at the West Mountain Health Services location, which also includes its administrative headquarters. Building 2, which opened at the beginning of year, is dedicated to primary care, including behavioral health and lab services. Building 1 offers specialty services including infectious disease, neurology, nephrology, orthopedics, podiatry and rheumatology. "These two facilities are vital to the health care of the region, together logging more than 26,500 patient visits in the first six months of this year," Dr. Ruggie said.

### Network Hires Neurologist

Neurologist Dr. Erik Istre, MD has joined the Hudson Headwaters medical staff, and is available to patients at West Mountain Health Services (Building 1) in Queensbury, and at the Warrensburg Health Center. "This our first time offering neurology services to our patients," said Dr. John Rugge, CEO of Hudson Headwaters. "We are pleased to welcome Dr. Istre to our medical staff, and proud to have someone with such rigorous academic achievements and friendly approach."



Erik Istre, MD

Dr. Istre is a highly qualified specialist in the field of neurology and neuropsychiatry, having trained in the basic sciences at Loyola University Chicago, Stritch School of Medicine in addition to clinical training at Albany Medical College and UMass Memorial Medical Center.



Left to right: Garry Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, John Rugge, MD, NYS Senator Elizabeth "Betty" Little, Network board member Celine Paquette, Diana Scalise, vice president, University of Vermont Health Network, Maurice Racine, MD, Tom Murphy, president of Glens Falls National Bank, and Town of Champlain Supervisor, Larry Barcomb.

### Ground Broken for New Health Center in Champlain

More than 50 people were on hand on August 9th for the groundbreaking ceremony for the replacement health center Hudson Headwaters is building in Champlain, NY. The new 25,916 square-foot building will replace Hudson Headwaters' North Country Family Health facility. "We've waited a long time for this momentous occasion," said Celine Paquette, member of the Hudson Headwaters board in addressing the attendees. "This project will enhance medical services to all the towns in the North Country and in Clinton County," said Larry Barcomb, supervisor of the town of Champlain.



Staff at the Indian Lake Health Center with their new sign

### New Signs Mark Hudson Headwaters' Center

Hudson Headwaters is upgrading and standardizing the signs outside its health centers. As of press time, three of Hudson Headwaters 17 health centers had received the new signs, with the rest slated to be installed in the coming weeks. "We want anyone driving past one of our health centers to know that it's part of Hudson Headwaters," said Tom Lyons, Director of Network Development.

### Riding For Hudson Headwaters



More than 60 bicyclists showed up for the third annual "Ride for the Well of It," a charity bicycling event held on Saturday June 25th. The event, which took place under ideal blue skies, featured riding options of 17, 30, and 50 miles.

### Community Champions Honored at Point O'Pines

More than 300 people packed Jimbo's club at Point O'Pines to help Hudson Headwaters honor 2016 Community champions, Kristine Duffy, EdD, president of SUNY Adirondack and Tom Murphy, president and CEO of Glens Falls National Bank. Each received a signed Dan Way photo to commemorate this recognition.



Tom Murphy and Kristine Duffy, EdD

# ON THE *Personal Side*

John Ruge, MD

*“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”*

—Benjamin Franklin



It's no secret that Hudson Headwaters is experiencing a surge of growth. Our projects – from building a replacement health center in Champlain to renovating 90 South Street in Glens Falls for our OB/GYN patients – have been widely reported in the media. Earlier this year, we opened our 17th health center on the West Mountain Health Services campus (Building 2), just off Corinth Road in Queensbury. And as we go to press we're finishing renovations to Building 1 at West Mountain Health Services to accommodate our palliative care program—a program that is itself only in its third year.

While construction is easy to see, Hudson Headwaters is also experiencing dramatic growth in the services we provide. In the past couple of years we've added rheumatology, vascular care, and neurology. The way we deliver primary care, our core service from the beginning, has expanded to include a care management staff of 34 who offer ongoing support to patients who need extra care – whether it's people with chronic diseases just out of the hospital or moms needing extra help caring for their infants. In addition, we've further integrated our behavioral health therapists with our primary care providers in ground-breaking ways.

Last month, we went live with a new website which includes patient-friendly features such as being able to see wait times for urgent care in Warrensburg and Glens Falls. Patients who need urgent care can now reserve their place in line from the website and receive text messages to let them know when it's time to check in.

We're also well along in establishing a new medical education program, having accepted three medical students from the University of Vermont Medical College, beginning next spring. These students will stay with us for a year and follow a panel of patients through all health services they

need to get the full experience of serving as a professional medical provider. This new program is in addition to a program we have had with Albany Medical College for 20 years.

The training of medical students and family medicine residents is part of Hudson Headwaters' long-term strategy to grow its own physicians, in part because recruiting is so difficult and expensive. We know that physicians generally settle near where they train.

## WHAT ABOUT QUALITY?

With all this going on, it's fair to ask how the heck we're managing this? Is the quality of our care keeping pace with our rate of expansion and evolving care delivery methods? From my perspective, and from our patients' (we survey continuously), we're doing great. But the real measure of what we do is how we measure up against national standards—for example, in comparison to other community health centers across the nation. We may be changing quickly, but our commitment to continuously improving the quality of our care is paying off. We recently learned that we have been rated by federal authorities as a National Quality Leader—one of 70 of the 1,330 Federally Qualified Health Centers across the country. And it gets better: among those 70 centers, Hudson Headwaters ranked fourth. Number four in the nation. It's not just our providers, of course. Our performance reflects the work of everyone at the Network, from our nurses, to our information technologists, to the people who staff the front desk.

We've grown to serve more than 1,000 people a day, and we've gotten better at the same time. I couldn't be more proud—proud for our staff, proud for our patients, proud for all who do so much to support us. 🏥

## CONSIDER HUDSON HEADWATERS FOR AN AFTER-LIFE GIFT

We hope that you will consider continuing your support of Hudson Headwaters in your estate plan. The gift you leave toward local health care will help tens of thousands of people for decades to come.



## Hudson Headwaters Receives \$55,000 Grant from Stewart's and Dake Family

Stewart's Shops and the Dake Family Foundations have donated \$55,000 to Hudson Headwaters Health Network to acquire hand-held ultrasound devices that are used to help diagnose patient conditions.

"Stewart's and the Dake family are committed to strengthening all our shops' communities," said Susan Dake, President of the Stewart's Foundation. "Hudson Headwaters brings excellent care and medical innovations to the North Country. We are happy to support this new program."

"We're deeply grateful to Stewart's and the Dake family for supporting us in our efforts to improve patient care," said Dr. David Slingerland, vice president for strategy. He said that the new devices will also be part of Hudson Headwaters' training of third-year medical students.

Dubbed as "the stethoscope of the future," the handheld ultrasound does not replace the stethoscope as much as it adds a powerful tool to increase a physician's ability to diagnose conditions and communicate with patients. Two Hudson Headwaters' physicians have been testing the new technology since March.

Slingerland said that hand-held ultrasound devices have been used successfully with cardiac and obstetric patients. "We're applying it to the primary care setting where it is proving to have wide application. This grant will allow us to expand the number of physicians who will have training for and access to this type of technology—both for our current group of physicians but also future providers who will be working with us as students. "

The use of handheld ultrasound devices will be limited initially to Hudson Headwaters' two urgent care centers, the Health Center on Broad Street and the Warrensburg Health Center, and primary care services at our West Mountain Health Services primary care facility (Building 2).

"This is a highly useful tool that enables primary care providers to directly visualize organs and systems, and to use these observations to guide clinical decision making," Slingerland said. It can also demonstrate to patients the effects of their condition (i.e. someone with untreated hypertension can see the thickening of their own heart wall).

