



AppFaithHealth
Inspiring health in the High Country

AppFaithHealth *Connections Newsletter*

June 2022

Included in this newsletter:

- Hospital updates on visitation, construction, and management agreement
- Churches participate in surveys, nutrition seminars, and OASIS training
- Music therapy program offered
- Welcoming new AppFaithHealth congregational partners



From the director's desk

Greetings colleagues! I hope this spring has offered many opportunities for restoring and rejuvenating your spirits, especially outdoors. I know the COVID reprieve has allowed the healthcare system a collective “sigh” and time to catch our breaths. We so appreciate all the support we have received from faith leaders helping us get through the past two years. May the next two be much better!

We are getting questions about management changes, construction, and visitation, so here are the latest updates that I can share:

1. **Visitation Protocol.** Masks that cover nose and mouth are still required at all hospitals, outpatient clinics, and other ARHS offices (except inside hospital patients' rooms). Visitors should not come in if they have respiratory illness, fever, or cough, or if they have COVID-19 or are waiting on COVID test results. Otherwise:
 - a. Adult and pediatric patients may have two visitors at any given time. Clergy may visit in addition to the two visitors. Exceptions are often made for additional visitors, especially during comfort care situations.
 - b. Birthing Center patients may have two visitors between 7 am and 7 pm, only one overnight visitor. A doula would be allowed as a third person but should leave within one hour after delivery.
 - c. Emergency Department patients are allowed one visitor any time of day upon initial assessment, and 2 visitors once the patient is stabilized. Two parents/guardians are allowed if patients are under 18.
 - d. Inpatient Behavioral Health patients are allowed one visitor for 30 minutes, by appointment only, between 3 pm and 9 pm.
 - e. COVID patients may have one visitor at a time, between 9am and 6 pm. The visitor may switch out during this time frame. Clergy may visit in addition to the visitor. All visitors, however, **MUST** wear the personal protective equipment, including a tight-fitting surgical mask, a gown, gloves, and eye protection. The RN should be able to assist with these items. Since COVID patients can be anywhere in our hospital now, you will not necessarily know when someone is a COVID patient, except by following the instructions on the PPE caddies on the patient's room door.
2. **Management agreement.** Appalachian Regional Healthcare System's board of directors has entered into a Management Services Agreement with UNC Health. This is NOT a buy-out or an acquisition. It is an agreement that will allow ARHS to invest in services, technology, equipment and facilities that otherwise would be out of reach. One of the greatest benefits for patients and employees will be a transfer to the Epic electronic health record. This will be a more robust and integrated health record system that will allow ARHS to serve patients better. And patients will have access to the Epic MyChart patient portal, which will offer many more possibilities and information for patients to take an active role in their care. In addition to the technology improvements, through the affiliation with UNC Health, ARHS will be able to:
 - a. Expand specialty and subspecialty services such as advanced cancer care and heart and vascular services.
 - b. Access the resources of a large health system for purchasing and contracting.
 - c. Benefit from industry best practices to enhance patient care and quality, and drive consistent, successful outcomes.
 - d. Obtain resources to support talent and recruitment efforts and provide additional opportunities for professional growth and advancement for employees and providers.

3. **Construction Update.** Thank you for your patience with our noise and mess while we are expanding and upgrading our facilities. We hope you can see the progress when you drive by or need to come in. Work continues on elevators in the existing and new building, on sprucing up the existing building, and completing the patient care tower. While professionals focus on the day-to-day construction details, we are told that they are progressing ahead of schedule. “The big picture is an October completion date, at which time the [new] building will be turned over to us,” explained Maran Sigmon, vice president for system support. ARHS looks forward to being able to offer state-of-the-art technology, as well as greater comfort, to patients who need to use these facilities.

Please reach out if you have further questions or with specific ways our department can support your ministries! Peace and blessings to you all!

Rev. Melanie Childers



Churches partner for surveys, nutrition, OASIS



AppFaithHealth puts a strong emphasis on developing partnerships in the greater Boone community with the hope that those partners can bring their expertise to the table as we work together to improve health in the High Country. In this just completed spring semester AFH engaged in two partnership projects with App State.

We had four churches that participated in a project looking at nutrition needs for senior adults in each participating congregation. Advanced level nutrition and recreation management students worked with their professors, Drs. Jill Juris and Jamie Griffin, to develop an educational and informational program in each church. The assigned students met with a group of seniors and conducted a full interview to help them understand the questions, needs, and concerns that the seniors in the particular church saw as being important. Based on the gathered information those students then put together a fact based, energy driven presentation with each church. Each presentation was different and was geared specifically to the needs as expressed by the seniors in that church. The pictures above are from the nutrition presentation at Rumble.

The other project involved 10 of our faith communities doing a Congregational Health Survey. Under the leadership of Professor Brook Harmon and her student assistant Talsi Case, this survey was based on similar work Professor Harmon did in Memphis, TN. The goal of the survey is to help individual faith communities identify specific health related concerns and to then identify a top concern. It is up to each congregation to take that information and then develop a response to meeting that need. AppFaithHealth and Professor Harmon will be available to help assess the situation and develop an appropriate response. Further work on the research data may identify some common needs or concerns which we can then consider developing a joint response.

Another partnership effort was with OASIS. OASIS is a program serving Watauga and Avery Counties and works in the area of responding to domestic violence concerns by working on preventative measures as well as assisting victims of domestic violence in a variety of ways. AFH supported them by promoting a workshop they designed for faith communities and their leaders. "Putting Faith Into Action: A Compassionate Response to Sexual Assault" was developed and presented by the Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force which is one of the programs of OASIS. There were 17 local faith community leaders who attended and actively participated. There are plans in the works for a potential follow-up to this workshop.

We are grateful for all of our community partners and look forward to continuing to work with them.



Music therapy program offered

From time to time we will be reporting on exciting ideas, developments or opportunities arising from our participating faith communities. This story comes to us from Rumble Presbyterian Church in Blowing Rock which is one of our longer standing participants in AppFaithHealth. Anne Tarbutton is the AFH volunteer for the Rumble congregation and works closely with Pastor Kathy Beach to help the church be fully engaged with AFH.

Anne contacted us early this year with the developing idea of offering a group for senior adults which uses music therapeutically to promote wellness, improve memory,

and increase socialization among senior adults. Anne approached the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network with the idea for this pilot program and they agreed to provide a grant to be used in promoting and launching the group. AppFaithHealth agreed to promote and encourage our churches to participate because of the unique nature of the program and its potential value for promoting better health and wellness among senior adults. The Music Therapy Department at App State is providing the musical expertise. This is a true community partnership and the idea would not be hard to replicate in any church that wants to give it a shot.

The program, which is in its trial run, meets once a month at Rumble. It was launched in April of this year and is off to a great start. Because it is in its trial run it is open to anyone from our AppFaithHealth churches to come out and participate. The remaining dates scheduled at this point are June 30, July 28, August 25 and September 29. It runs from 10:30 a.m.–12 noon on those dates and there will be light snacks available. If you have questions about the program feel free to call Anne Tarbutton at 770-301-4127. For those who want to sign-up please call Larry Lawhon, the AppFaithHealth Connector, at 540-551-0410.

Thanks to Anne and the Rumble Presbyterian Church for including AFH in this exciting and creative way of promoting better health. What ideas for addressing health related needs are percolating in your faith community and how can AFH help develop those ideas? AFH is a partnership between Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, local faith communities of all types, and various community based partners. We look forward to continuing to work with you.



Welcome to New AFH Faith Communities

Since AppFaithHealth got restarted last year we have had three new faith communities to join us. First we welcome **Rutherwood Baptist** located in the Deep Gap community of eastern Watauga County. Tim Dockery is their pastor and will soon be celebrating his first anniversary at Rutherwood. Next we welcome **Mt Vernon Baptist** located on Bamboo Road. Todd Houston is the senior Pastor who works closely with Associate Pastor Bud Russell in leading and caring for the congregation. Finally we're glad to have the **Campbell Memorial Chapel** join us. They are located in the Powder Horn Mountain neighborhood in the Triplett area of eastern Watauga County. Steve Nickel is their pastor. Each of these congregations have joined us at Tier 3 so we look forward to partnering not only in caring for their members but also in reaching out into the community. We are now at 28 churches enrolled in AppFaithHealth, most of which are in Watauga County, and are working on increasing our presence in Avery County.

AppFaithHealth is a partnership between Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, local congregations, and community health partners working together to inspire better health in the high country. Contact us at Melanie Childers, mchilders@apprhs.org, 828.266.1178, or Larry Lawhon, llawhon@apprhs.org, 540.551.0410.