



For Immediate Release

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Valley Regional Hospital (VRH) is pleased to introduce and welcome Dr. Joshua Rudner, DO to Valley Regional Hospital. Dr. Rudner joined VRH as the Emergency Department and EMS Medical Director in November, 2019. Dr. Rudner received his B.A. from Bowdoin College and graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. He subsequently completed his Emergency Medicine residency training at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA where he also served as Chief Resident. Following residency, Dr. Rudner stayed at Jefferson to complete a fellowship in medical education and continued to work as a member of the hospital's clinical faculty through 2018. Most recently, prior to joining the team at Valley, Dr. Rudner was an Emergency Medicine physician for LRGHealthcare working in Laconia and Franklin, NH.

Dr. Rudner spoke with VRH to explain more about his position, especially during COVID.

VRH: Why did you choose VRH? What attracted you to this opportunity?

Dr. Rudner: It was an opportunity to shape and improve quality emergency care for rural and underserved populations as well as develop a collaborative regional model for care with partners in the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health system. It's allowed me to continue developing my leadership skills while continuing my work as an educator.

VRH: What is your overall healthcare philosophy - especially as it relates to emergency medicine?

Dr. Rudner: First and foremost, always identify and stabilize any emergent conditions. After that, strive to evaluate the whole patient and reasons behind their visit. Work hard to consider these multiple physiologic and psychosocial factors when providing the best recommendations for immediate and ongoing care. The ultimate goal is to optimize the health and well-being of every individual and the community at large.

VRH: What are your thoughts on COVID - and your time at VRH during this pandemic?

Dr. Rudner: It's been dramatic in the sense that it's been life-altering for all of us – no matter what you do for work or where you live. For us at Valley Regional, being such a small hospital, there was a potential to be easily overwhelmed. That said, it gave us the chance to come together and develop a health-system wide emergency response and surge plan. Fortunately, we haven't had to put this plan in place because of the low degree of outbreak in our area. I had the privilege of serving as the Co-Incident Commander, which has allowed me to take part in planning and communication during this time. It was an organizational-wide team effort, and that was awesome to see! For me, it was striking both how potentially challenging it could become, but also how great the response at VRH was, as well as in the broader community. We received an incredible outpouring of support – we received donations of masks, food, kind messages. It says a lot about the community we work and live in.

VRH: We often hear that patients are afraid to keep their appointments or to be seen in the Emergency Department, even if they are experiencing health issues because of COVID. What are your thoughts around this?

Dr. Rudner: This is definitely a real issue. So much so that we had a drastic drop-off in patient volume in the early weeks of the pandemic. As an emergency provider, it was scary for me to experience, because I know people are still having strokes, heart attacks, and other emergent health issues. We have done, and continue to do, a tremendous amount of work relative to safety in the Emergency Department, and at VRH as a whole. If you feel you are sick and need to be seen, we want you to come in and be treated – and we want you to feel comfortable doing so. This is so important! We have been fortunate to have access to adequate PPE for our staff and patients, which combined with increased cleaning, patient flow and other safety measures, allows us to feel confident about the safety of our department and VRH overall. If you are sick, please don't wait – come and be seen. We want to take care of you!

VRH: Anything else you would like the community to know about you?

Dr. Rudner: I have a personal interest in wilderness medicine and direct a wilderness medicine course in Colorado, which attracts medical students from all over the country. I grew up in New England (Boston area) and really love living in this part of the world and spending as much time outside as possible.

Valley Regional Healthcare

Valley Regional Healthcare provides essential healthcare services to our region through our critical-access hospital, and primary and specialty care clinics. For more than 125 years, our hospital has adapted to serve the many and diverse health care needs of the region. We serve families and individuals in the Sullivan County region to help them stay healthy and thriving. For more information about Valley Regional Healthcare and its services, visit www.VRH.org.