NEW CITIZENS ENRICH MVHS CULTURE

A look at two MVHS employees’ journeys to US Citizenship.

By Taylor Watson, Intern | See Page 4
The Mohawk Valley Health System is the right place for your heart. As a tertiary care hospital, we provide state of the art cardiac care to patients throughout Central New York; everything from heart attack intervention to open-heart surgery, all at the St. Elizabeth Campus. We partner with experienced local physicians at the forefront of their fields to ensure that your heart receives the best care possible, from diagnosis to rehabilitation. Our surgeons, cardiologists and specially trained nursing and rehabilitation staff bring the highest level of care to you and your loved ones, close to home.

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Pictured on cover: Mohammad Alsaad (left), who recently became a US citizen, and coworker Abo Alshaikagasem load a laundry truck at the St. Luke’s Campus.
NEW CITIZENS ENRICH MVHS CULTURE

A look at two MVHS employees’ journeys to US citizenship

BY TAYLOR WATSON, INTERN
Mohammad Alsaad doesn't want to be rich – he just wants to help people.

"I try to do anything to help this country," he said. "They gave me a new life, so they deserve something good from me."

Alsaad, 31, was born in Iraq, but war and hostility led him and his family to decide to move to the United States. They spent almost five years living in a tent, and, in 2009, they began the interview process to move overseas. In October 2010, Alsaad, along with his wife, daughter, sister, brother and parents, arrived in the US to their new life.

Alsaad began working for the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) in 2015. He is now a linen service associate. Though he has had opportunities to work elsewhere, he doesn't want that, he said.

"Anybody who works in the hospital, that means you're trying to help people, to save people," Alsaad said.

Alsaad added that Kathy Styf, Environmental Services operations manager; Juan Gonzalez, senior tech for Environmental Services; Jeff Lynch, Environmental Services manager; and Tim Teachout, Environmental Services manager; have always been helpful and kind.

"Here," Alsaad said, "people support us, always."

I learned from other people, from my neighbors," Alsaad said. "You know, a lot of people are good and they help."

This spring, Alsaad became a US citizen. Cathy Callanan, Sodexo general manager, and Jennifer Humphrey, Hospitality and Environmental Services administrative assistant, attended the naturalization ceremony, which Alsaad said he appreciated. They are always encouraging him, he said.

Alsaad added that Kathy Styf, Environmental Services operations manager; Juan Gonzalez, senior tech for Environmental Services; Jeff Lynch, Environmental Services manager; and Tim Teachout, Environmental Services manager; have always been helpful and kind.

"Here," Alsaad said, "people support us, always."

Tha Pyu also immigrated to the US and has been singing since she was 7 years old. She's performed in Canada, Thailand and Burma. She learned to play guitar and took piano classes.

She dreams of having a career as a professional singer.

"Music makes my life happy," Pyu said. "When you feel lonely or whatever you're doing, music is always there. I can't live without music."

Pyu grew up in Burma, but her parents eventually decided they wanted to move to the United States to build a better life in a place where she could pursue her dreams.

Now an employee of MVHS, Pyu, 28, is working toward her goals.

On June 15, Pyu became a US citizen. The process takes a while, she said, but it was worth it.

"It feels like I let something heavy off of my body," Pyu said of becoming a citizen. "I feel fresh, I feel free. I'm so happy."

Pyu and her family spent some time in a refugee camp before arriving in the US in 2007.

"It was perfect when we got here; they had everything to help us – food, an apartment," Pyu said.

But none of them knew how to speak English. Pyu and her family went to MVRCR, where she studied for three months. She was then hired to work in housekeeping at a local resort, where she furthered her English language skills.

After a few years, she discovered an opening in environmental services at MVHS. Pyu was nervous, she said, but she filled out the application on her own and was thrilled when she received a phone call inviting her to an interview. She was hired at MVHS in July 2015.

"I'm so happy," she said about getting the job on her own. "I did it by myself. I didn't need anybody's help to fill out the application or to drive me. Now I support myself and my family."

Pyu said she recommends that other people apply to work at the hospital because she enjoys her job and loves the people she works with. She is known among coworkers and patients as the girl who is always singing, she said.

"I'm singing all of the time, everybody knows that," Pyu said. "I want to follow my dream. I want to sing everywhere. I want to travel the world singing."
Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) celebrated National Adult Day Health Care Services Week in September. ADHC is a medical model program, operated under the supervision of a registered nurse. The program provides comprehensive healthcare with therapeutic social, educational and recreational activities. The comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach provided by the program leads to stabilization of chronic health conditions and reduced incidence of costly physician and emergency room visits, so that individuals can remain in their own homes.

Jeff Bernier of Clinton, New York, a registrant of the program, says that the people are what he enjoys most about ADHC.

“It’s like being with family when I come here,” said Bernier. “People that I grew up with are here and I enjoy being social. I would just be watching TV if I were at home.”

ADHC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Registrant Jim Williams of Deansboro says what has kept the program going for so long is its friendly and caring staff.

“The nurses are very interactive and there are lots of outings and planned activities,” said Williams.

One of the featured collaborative programs that ADHC uses alongside St. Luke’s Home is the “It’s Never 2 Late” program, an interactive technology program designed to maintain brain function. This joins the many impressive programs ADHC features including music therapy, pet therapy, visits from the zoo mobile, gaming, weekly outings, picnics and arts and crafts. What makes this program even more unique is that the registrants themselves are asked to approve and contribute to the activities calendar.

Visit www.mvhealthsystem.org/adhc for more information about ADHC at MVHS.

MVHS Celebrates National Adult Day Health Care Week

BY MILLIE CONDON
New technology improves patient safety, streamlines care and puts MVHS a step ahead of most organizations.

St. Elizabeth Laboratory
Invests in Mobile Care Phlebotomy Units

ERIC WATSON, INTERN

E quipped with a tablet, scanner and printer, phlebotomists at the St. Elizabeth Laboratory are leading the way with their use of innovative technology.

In 2008, the staff at the St. Elizabeth Laboratory began looking for ways to improve their technology, said Christel Bastian, Laboratory Information System (LIS) coordinator. After a few years of research, Chris Goldman, director of Laboratory Services, put in a proposal for mobile care phlebotomy equipment to the St. Elizabeth Medical Center (SEMC) Foundation, which then raised funding through the 2015 golf tournament.

The mobile care kit includes individual tablets that enable phlebotomists to view which patients have orders, what level of priority they are and what room they are in, instead of relying on a dispatcher. Phlebotomists then travel to the room, scan the patient's bracelet to identify him or her, perform a blood draw, print and label at the bedside.

“They can see live on the tablet who is doing what,” said Caitlin Fitzpatrick, lead lab assistant. “The communication is better and easier.”

The technology improves patient safety and is as a time-saver. Phlebotomists are able to reach patients more quickly, so lab results reach the doctor at a faster rate, too, Walters said.

The tablets, scanners and printers travel on carts – another addition to the department. The new carts have compartments for various items, including lockable needle drawers. The upgrade is also in tune with infection prevention efforts, as all equipment is simple to wipe down, the staff said.

Andrea LaGatta, SEMC Foundation director of development, said the Foundation was eager to help the lab improve safety and efficiency.

“The SEMC Foundation recognized the need for this equipment to help address patient safety and was committed to raise the necessary funds to purchase this technology,” she said. “Together with the support of our generous donors, we are impacting the care our staff can provide our patients.”

The lab received the technology in April and an implementation period followed. They worked out issues such as wi-fi connectivity problems, the need for specific label paper and familiarizing staff with the technology, said Bastian, who helped build the software for the project.

Nicole Supachana, Laboratory Services inpatient supervisor, noted that some were hesitant about the change in procedure.

“There was pushback from some employees because it was new – it’s a change,” she said. “But they eventually adopted the practice and some of the biggest naysayers were the first to embrace it.”

Patients are also taking note of the mobile care phlebotomy carts, Fitzpatrick said.

“They’ll say, ‘Oh look at this fancy thing,’” Fitzpatrick said. “And it looks more professional. The carts are quiet, so they make less of a clamor when you’re making rounds at 3 a.m.”

Supachana said that, while innovative healthcare technology is a trend, many laboratories don’t have the technology. SEMC is a step ahead, with many thanks to the Foundation, she said.

“We want to express our appreciation and thankfulness to our community for the support toward the Foundation and supporting MVHS and this project,” Walters said. “And to anybody who assisted in the build of this project.”

There are currently six carts, but they are looking to expand the technology to additional staff in other departments in the future, she said. ✪
MVHS INTRODUCES DA VINCI® SURGICAL SYSTEM

MVHS invests in new, minimally invasive technology.

BY AJ WISWELL

Jeffrey Sekula, MD, (left) and Daniel R. Welchons, MD, (right), of AMP Urology in New Hartford perform procedures using the da Vinci® Si™ Surgical System at the St. Elizabeth Campus of MVHS.
In May 2017, Jeffrey Sekula, MD, and Daniel R. Welchons, MD, area urologists, performed the first surgeries using the da Vinci® Si™ Surgical System at MVHS. The recently acquired system was designed with the goal of further advancing the technology used in minimally invasive surgery.

“We are thrilled to offer this technology here in the Mohawk Valley at the St. Elizabeth Campus,” said Charles Williams, MHA, director of operations, PeriOperative Services at MVHS. “The da Vinci System gives our patients the potential for shorter hospital stays, fewer complications, less need for narcotic pain medicine, smaller incisions and faster recovery times.”

During all da Vinci procedures, the surgeon is 100 percent in control of the robotic-assisted system, which translates his or her hand movements into smaller, more precise movements of tiny instruments inside the patient’s body. The system’s 3D-HD vision system provides surgeons a highly magnified view, virtually extending their eyes and hands during surgery.

MVHS has invested one million dollars for technology, equipment, surgical suite renovation and training to provide additional surgical options for our community. Surgeons at MVHS are currently using the system for multi-quadrant urological, gynecological and ear, nose and throat surgery. The health system has plans to expand the program to include other types of minimally invasive surgery in the future.

Physicians at MVHS who perform procedures using the daVinci System include Prabhat Ahluwalia, MD; Fayez Chahfe, MD; Jeffrey Sekula, MD and Daniel R. Welchons, MD. Visit www.mvhealthsystem.org/davinci for more information on the da Vinci Si System at MVHS.

“We are thrilled to offer this technology here in the Mohawk Valley.”

- Charles Williams, MHA, director of operations, PeriOperative Services

**KEY FEATURES OF THE DA VINCI® SI™ SURGICAL SYSTEM**

- A new, overhead instrument arm designed to facilitate anatomical access from virtually any position.
- New endoscopy technology that creates a simpler, more compact design with improved definition and clarity.
- The ability to attach the endoscope to any arm, providing flexibility for visualizing the surgical site.
- Smaller, thinner arms with newly designed joints that offer a greater range of motion than ever before.
- Longer instrument shafts designed to give surgeons greater operative reach.

The tiny da Vinci instruments enable surgeons to make very precise movements with smaller incisions, giving patients the potential for shorter hospital stays and faster recovery times.
Deborah Casler, MS, OTR/L, an occupational therapist in the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (IRU) at MVHS has been with the system for 35 years. She has served for the last 11 years as an occupational therapist and has enjoyed every moment of it. Casler’s passion for intensive rehabilitation therapy stems from personal experience; her father had three strokes. Helping him through his illness made her want to work with patients overcoming similar struggles.

“A motivated patient is a successful patient in the IRU,” said Casler. Patients on the IRU receive 180 minutes of combined occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy, five days a week. They are kept busy on Saturdays, as well.

“We definitely have a robust and involved program,” said Casler. We also like to make our patients feel at home while they’re with us.”

The IRU has a dining room where patients have the option of eating together, a sun room and plenty of social activities.

“Our unit is like one big family and we welcome our patients as part of that,” noted Casler. “We try to make everyone feel at home and we try to make the therapy sessions as fun as possible while using evidence-based practices. All of the departments including nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, discharge planning, dietary and housekeeping communicate with each other and plan for the best possible outcomes and comfort for our patients. It’s a team effort!”

For more information about the IRU, call 315-624-5400 or visit us online at www.mvhealthsystem.org/acute-rehab.
In their day-to-day roles, physicians have the ability and potential to provide leadership to their colleagues and vision for the organizations in which they work and for the profession as a whole. MVHS felt it was important to cultivate that leadership potential for the betterment of the patients as well as the organization. In order to accomplish this, MVHS began a six-part physician leadership development learning series for select members of the MVHS medical staff. The first class took place on September 6, 2017.

The learning series was designed to help MVHS physicians understand and implement leadership practices that help serve our community better and improve the quality of care and services to patients and their families.

“We selected this first group of physicians based on their important role within MVHS and the leadership abilities they’ve already demonstrated,” said Michael F. Trevisani, MD, MBA, CPE, FASCRS, FACHE, senior vice president/chief medical officer for MVHS. “We need effective, influential physician leaders to help us ensure MVHS is the best place for our neighbors, friends and families to receive care in Central New York ... or anywhere. I feel this learning series will help us get there.”

Each two-hour session covers the following topics:
• Leadership and Management: Theory and application
• Emotional Intelligence: Building relationships for improved results
• Finance and Healthcare Reform: The transition from volume to value-based purchasing
• Achieving Optimum Care: During rapid change and at any other time
• The Patient Experience: What is the real goal here?
• Daily Management: Surviving the daily routines and challenges.

Gradsates of the program will receive continuing medical education (CME) credits and will be invited to participate in a second-year curriculum at a more advanced knowledge and skill level. The Physician Leadership Academy will also invite a second group of physicians in 2018 to participate in the learning series.

“We have a great design team of physicians and experts in education and organizational development,” said Derrick Suehs, EdD, assistant vice president Quality and Outcome Management for MVHS. “I think we have something very exciting and helpful for our physician partners and ourselves.”
MVHS EXPANDS NUMBER OF PRIVATE ROOMS

Private rooms provide a more healing and therapeutic environment.

BY CAITLIN MCCANN

Newly renovated private room at the St. Elizabeth Campus. Renovations at the St. Elizabeth and St. Luke’s campuses have resulted in 79 new private patient rooms.
VHS began the affiliation between Faxton St. Luke’s Healthcare (FSLH) and St. Elizabeth Medical Center (SEMC) in 2014. Since that time, the two organizations have been working diligently to identify and implement quality and efficiency improvements. One of those efforts includes work with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Triple Aim. The IHI Triple Aim framework has new designs for care that promote: improving the patient experience, improving the health of populations and reducing the cost of care.

In April 2017, MVHS was awarded a $300 million grant from New York State to support the construction of a new hospital in downtown Utica. This provided the opportunity to design and build a new integrated healthcare campus. However, the new hospital is not estimated to be completed until 2022 and MVHS wants to achieve the Triple Aim framework for our patients now.

To support patients in our current facilities, the MVHS nursing teams and support staff have found additional ways to improve patient safety and satisfaction. MVHS has re-configured nursing units at both the St. Elizabeth and St. Luke’s campuses and increased the number of private patient rooms.

“When looking at the outcomes of patients in single-patient rooms versus multiple-occupancy rooms in acute care environments, single rooms offer better infection control, improved fall prevention and have greater therapeutic impacts on the patients,” said Linda McCormack-Miller, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, senior vice president/chief nursing officer for MVHS. “We felt it was important to bring these benefits, to the best of our ability, to our patients today.”

This initiative began in early June with the conversion of Unit 3C at the St. Elizabeth Campus to all private rooms, adding 15 private rooms to the nine that already existed on that unit and bringing the total to 24. In July and August semi-private rooms at the St. Luke’s Campus were converted into private rooms, resulting in 48 additional private rooms. At the time of publication, an additional 48 semi-private rooms are planned to be converted into private rooms at the St. Elizabeth Campus, increasing the number of private rooms available from 99 to 178 across the system.

“These changes will have a positive impact on the care and satisfaction of our patients and I’m looking forward to receiving feedback from patients as well as our staff,” McCormack-Miller said. “The incredible teamwork of the staff and providers made these moves possible. We still have flexibility on each unit to increase to semi-private accommodations for those periodic increases in census and the conversions are not anticipated to change staffing plans already in place on the units.

“Trends in healthcare are moving toward treating patients in outpatient facilities and preventing hospitalization. The success of this movement has freed up beds in our inpatient facilities and allowed for the conversion to private rooms. As always, we will continue to look at ways to improve the patient experience throughout the system.”
Starfish Stories
Sharing Stories of Excellence

Starfish Stories are about caregivers, protectors, companions and champions. They acknowledge special, and sometimes life-changing, moments that make a difference for our patients, residents, their families and our coworkers. The following stories are about those individuals and teams who inspire us to always do our best.

AC 3 West Staff at the St. Luke’s Campus
Submitted by Lois Ann Cushman,
New Hartford Medical Office.

I received a call from a former patient, Kathleen Bauer, who wanted to recognize a nurse named Kassandra at St. Luke’s AC 3 west, for her outstanding care. The patient reports that she had been in the hospital four times recently and would still be in there without this nurse going out of her way to help. Kassandra spoke with the hospitalist on behalf of the patient and they were able to provide the right treatment so she could start feeling better. The patient also reports the hospitalist was very caring.

Emergency Department and Neuro/Peds Unit Staff at the St. Elizabeth Campus
Submitted by a grateful patient.

On 8/22/2017 I woke up very sick; my daughter brought me to the St. Elizabeth Emergency Department. I want to say thank you to the nurse who admitted me very fast and to all the ED staff. It is so comforting to know we have a place to go and know they treated me like family. After that, I was admitted on Peds-371. Everybody was nice, polite and helpful but the nurse, Sam, was the best. He went the extra mile with his job. You can see he loves what he does. He did not know that I have been working for the hospital since 2002. He needs to know that he is a big asset for our hospital. He made me feel like I was on a cruise! Whatever he did, he explained, even lunch, meds, when he took me to MRI. He gave me a tour of our hospital and explained where we were, what was on my left and right side. It was so nice to meet this young nurse. Please let him know somehow that he does an excellent job with so much passion for nursing.

2C and Cath Lab Staff at the St. Elizabeth Campus
Submitted by a grateful patient.

I would like to commend the staff at the St. Elizabeth Campus for the superb service they gave my mother-in-law on the cardiac cath floor... Everyone our family encountered was pleasant and caring and provided exceptional support and assistance. Everyone we interacted with was friendly, took the time to add a personal touch and was approachable. Staff was on a first-name basis, efficiently carried out their duties and quickly responded to call bells and requests. She received great care with a smile.

I could easily recommend these people for recognition or promotion: Barb, the head nurse; nurses Susan, Jolene and Kim, and those on the night shift; aides who were always available; case managers Nikki and Regina. My family and I say “thank you” to all who made my mother-in-law’s hospital stay as comfortable and pleasant as possible.
MEDICAL LIBRARIAN HONORED NATIONALLY

Halyna Liszczynskyj, director of Library Services at the St. Elizabeth Campus, received two awards at the 2017 Medical Library Association (MLA) annual conference in Seattle, Washington, at the end of May. She received an award for being a co-author on a poster on solo librarianship presented at the conference. Titled Solo Librarians: Demographics, Duties, Needs and Challenges, the poster was recognized by the Professional Development Award Committee in the Hospital Libraries Section of the MLA. She also received an Exemplary Service Award from the Hospital Libraries Section and her name was added to its Scroll of Exemplary Service.

WALTERS COMPLETES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Michelle Walters, business manager of the St. Elizabeth Laboratory, recently completed the Leadership Mohawk Valley (LMV) program. LMV is a 10-month program that prepares a group of people to become leaders in the community and to shape its future. The program provides experience in group dynamics, team leadership, presentation skills and professional and personal growth. The LMV program enables participants to broaden their perspectives and confront the issues at large to gain a fresh, clear outlook of the community.

SLEEP DISORDERS CENTER RECEIVES REACCREDITATION

The MVHS Sleep Disorders Center has received its five-year reaccreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM). The MVHS Sleep Disorders Center was the first sleep center in the Greater Utica-Mohawk Valley area to earn this distinction, dating back to 1997. The MVHS Sleep Disorders Center is uniquely equipped to provide comprehensive diagnosis and treatment of various sleep disorders, and has been serving the community for more than 20 years with highly qualified professionals and the most advanced instrumentation.

INFECTION PREVENTION TEAM PRESENTS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Members of the MVHS Infection Prevention Department were invited to present at the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology’s (APIC) 44th annual conference in Portland, Oregon in June. Heather Bernard, DNP, BS, RN, CIC, director of Infection Prevention at MVHS, presented Advancing the Practice of Infection Preventionists with the Guidance of the APIC Competency Model. Sarah Deming, RN, CIC; Katie Friot, MPH, RN, CIC; Tara Millson,MSN, RN, CIC and Earlena Rood, BSN, RN, CIC, presented Aligning the Workforce: Engaging Leadership to Ensure Accountability and Enhance Followership with a goal of empowering non-managers to engage their peers in effecting positive change.

FLU CLINICS SCHEDULED

Flu season is approaching and MVHS has scheduled POD drills for employees, volunteers and medical staff to receive the flu vaccine. Once the New York State Department of Health declares that flu is “prevalent” in the state or our region, those who do not receive the flu vaccine must wear a mask in all patient care areas throughout the flu season. New this year, employees may receive the vaccine at either location. A name badge is required in order to receive the vaccine.

CARDIAC SERVICES RECEIVES QUALITY AWARD

MVHS recently received the Mission: Lifeline® Bronze Receiving Quality Achievement Award for implementing specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association for the treatment of patients who suffer severe heart attacks. “MVHS is dedicated to improving the quality of care for our patients who suffer a heart attack, and the American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline program is helping us accomplish that goal through nationally respected clinical guidelines,” said Thomas Norton, MSHA, director of Cardiac Services. “We are pleased to be recognized for our dedication and achievements in cardiac care, and I am very proud of our team.”
Upcoming Events

Please visit the intranet or www.mvhealthsystem.org for a complete list of upcoming events.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13
Campaign for Quality

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16
POD Flu Drill at the St. Luke’s Campus

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19
POD Flu Drill at the St. Elizabeth Campus

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16
Medical Staff Reception

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29
Lights of Love Candle Lighting and Remembrance Service

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12
St. Elizabeth Medical Center Founders’ Day

Staff Announcements

June to September 2017

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT
Derrick Suehs, EdD, Assistant Vice President of Quality

MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS
Scott Buddle
Director of Risk Management

Jessica Firsching
Accounts Payable Manager

Sergey Germanovich
Assistant Director of Operations, MVHS Medical Group Primary Care

Dave Gogola
Director of Environmental Services for the St. Elizabeth Campus

Tamara Hebbard
Volunteer Services Manager

Nancy Menter, RN
Assistant Director of Hospitalist Services

Sulien Miller
Director of Language Assistance Program

Delta Rubsamen
Director of Volunteer Services

Evelyn Salgado-Parrillo, DDS
Director of Dental Services

Nicole Santiago
Assistant Director of Operations, MVHS Medical Group

Mark Testa
Director of Operations, MVHS Medical Group

MEDICAL STAFF
Michael Amponsah, MD
Interventional Cardiology

Alexander Carangelo, PA
Neurosurgical Specialists Office

Hamerton Jeanty, MD
Hospitalist Services

Cynthia Law, ANP-C
Town of Webb Health Center

Muhammad Nauman Jhandier, MD
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Felix Oduwa, MD
Family Practice

Angelica Pascone, PA-C
Washington Mills Medical Office

Christopher Powers, DPM
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Susan Rosato, FNP
Clinton Medical Office

Steven Rudd, MD
Medical Imaging

Kenneth Visalli, DO
Hospitalist Services

Najam ud Din, MD
Hematology/Oncology

Tanveer Zamani, MD, FRCSI
Surgery