

Vigor[®]

Spring 2019

A Newsletter for Subscribers of
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont
and The Vermont Health Plan

Culinary Medicine:

bringing together
the joy of
cooking

&

the science
of nutrition.

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont publishes Vigor® for members and other interested parties.

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We'd like to hear from you.

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended to serve as medical or legal advice.

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How we protect your privacy

We must maintain the privacy of your health information by using or disclosing it only with your authorization or as otherwise allowed by law. You have the right to gain access to your health information and to information about our privacy practices. A complete copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices is available at www.bcbsvt.com, which includes information on:

- Our routine use and disclosure of personal health information (PHI);
- The internal protection of oral, written and electronic PHI; and
- The protection of information disclosed to plan sponsors or to employers.

Connect with us:



COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Getting ready to play ball at the Vermont Lake Monsters game

JUNE

20

ALA Lung Force Walk

Lung cancer is the top cancer killer of women and men. Walk or participate virtually! You can save lives by funding key lung cancer research and providing people who are impacted by lung cancer with essential resources, assistance and information.

Battery Park, Burlington
5–7:30 p.m.

<https://action.lung.org>

20

Vermont Lake Monsters

Cheer on the Lake Monsters with us, and win a prize when you play our Home Run for Health game! The Blue Cross and Blue Shield singers perform the National Anthem.

Centennial Field, Burlington
Doors 6 p.m.; game 7:05 p.m.

www.milb.com/vermont

27-29

Society for Acupuncture Research's Closing the Loop annual conference

We'll be part of a panel discussion during this conference focused on acupuncture research, policy and impact on community health.

Davis Center (UVM), Burlington
Various times

www.acupunctureresearch.org/program

For information about any of the events listed, please email events@bcbsvt.com or call (802) 764-4858.

To find our up-to-date Community Calendar, visit www.bcbsvt.com/calendar.



MEMBER CLAIMS PROCESSING UPDATE

We recently implemented an important technology upgrade that over time will be an improvement for everyone—members, clients and providers.

During the transition, we made every effort to minimize the impact to our customers. However, a percentage of our claims did not process correctly.

While many people won't be affected, you may receive a Summary of Health Plan Payment (formerly an Explanation of Benefits) that shows adjustments to your claim.

Thank you for your patience while we navigate this transition. Our mission is to

provide you with outstanding service and we acknowledge that this process may have caused delays and confusion.

- We are now paying claims at a more normal pace. As of **Monday, June 3 we have processed 97 percent of local claims** that have been submitted to us.
- **By June 30th, we expect to be processing our claims** in the manner in which you're more accustomed—with exceptional accuracy and timeliness.
- As we work through these fixes, we can ensure that no members will be financially disadvantaged due to our system upgrade.

- We take responsibility for any issues that resulted from this upgrade.
- We never intended to make our upgrade into your concern.
- We promise to own this disruption and fix it accordingly.
- We promise to mitigate and manage any new developments should they arise.
- Please rest assured that we are working hard to rectify this issue because we understand how important it is for you to be able to rely on your local health plan.

Details above were up to date at the time of printing.



President's message:

Dear Member,

As a Vermont native, born in Barre, Vermont's well-being, economic stability, and access to affordable health care are my primary concerns. As a company, we are committed to the future stability of Vermont's health care system and economic security.

When you think of us, picture your favorite member-owned, local food co-op, or your preferred, home-grown credit union. We are local. We are not-for-profit. We are here solely to protect Vermonters. And, we aren't publicly traded, which means we don't answer to Wall Street. All of this means we advocate for our members to find the best health care solutions for our current-day concerns right here in our hometowns.

- As Vermont's local, not-for-profit health plan, your premium dollars stay here in Vermont.
- Our non-profit status and operating efficiency means 87-90 cents of every dollar of premium goes to paying health care costs for our members.
- Our reserve represents approximately \$550 for each member, which equals one emergency room visit.
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont and our affiliates paid nearly \$1.3 billion toward member care in 2018. That is over \$100 million on average each month paid to hospitals and providers on behalf of Vermonters.
- By focusing on continuous improvement and cost management, we have significantly reduced administrative costs over time.

While it's important for our members to understand how we operate, it's also important to recognize that we don't just pay claims. We enrich our communities with health and wellness programming, stand by our local providers to find health care delivery solutions for lowering costs, and provide more than 400 jobs for Vermonters.

We are proud to be part of the Vermont landscape and have the opportunity to support you, our friends and neighbors. Thank you for choosing Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont. We hope you enjoy this issue of Vigor.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don George, President and CEO



Alison Precourt (L) and Leah Pryor (R)

Note: At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont we like to celebrate our partners, especially when they do exciting things for our communities that encourage health and wellness. As such, this article details UVM Medical Center's Culinary Medicine programming, which is supported and promoted by UVM Medical Center's employee wellness program as well as by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont's Accountable Blue program.

Culinary Medicine may be a new term for many people but for the health and wellness folks at the University of Vermont Medical Center, Culinary Medicine is a well-respected and necessary approach to diet, nutrition, and understanding our relationship to food.

Leah Pryor, chef educator for the University of Vermont Medical Center and fellow co-worker and food advocate Alison Precourt, a pediatric dietitian and certified Diabetes educator, have been part of an unstoppable team dedicated to fusing the science of nutrition with the joy of cooking for the health of us all.

Following, you will find a question and answer article to help you understand Culinary Medicine and the resources available to local businesses and Vermonters

Culinary Medicine:

bringing together the joy of cooking



the science of nutrition.

What inspired you to create a department at UVM Medical Center focused on the joy of cooking and the science of nutrition?

Leah: My passion started 20 years ago. As a chef, I've always loved to educate and entertain. But in this world of "health" you very rarely see the combo of dietitian and chef. We're constantly flooded with teaching kitchens and food programs and messages to eat well and live healthy and cook and eat, but no one actually helps us do it well with health in mind. So, I started thinking about the importance of providing real-world accountability and that's when the relationship between the chef and the dietitian surfaced. Our classes focus on the symbiotic relationship between a chef and a dietitian and allow us to help people "hit the reset button" when it comes to relationships with food.

Culinary Medicine is how we find our way back to our roots one bite at a time.

Leah Pryor



Alison: For me, it's a dance. I've been a registered dietitian for more than 35 years and as a scientist I've always tried to help people make smart nutritional decisions. Culinary Medicine brings the science of nutrition and the joy of cooking together. It is a perfect marriage and it makes nutritional science more human, attainable and likely to stick, while reminding people of the joy of handling unprocessed or minimally processed foods.

What is one of the biggest challenges when it comes to Culinary Medicine?

Leah: A lot of times when people come into our teaching kitchen, we have to disarm them, help them relax. We always have food on the tables that they can see and touch. To start, we also share a bite to eat, maybe bread and oil with bloomed spices. The most important thing to remember is we all have to eat—it is a great equalizer and a great place to start from when sharing knowledge.

Then, we'll talk about nutrition once we've relaxed people. We don't want to scare people with the science and the facts right off. Most of the time after a class people will share, "Oh I didn't realize the importance of building good flavor will also have an impact on my heart health or may even help lower my blood sugar because I'm no longer craving empty foods."

What can a class participant expect?

Leah: Our classes vary. In most situations classes are two-and-a-half hours long. Everything is set up. The food is there and we want it to be, from the first moment, a visual and sensory experience. People get excited! We invite them in and we can immediately see their curiosity spark. Then we start talking nutrition. Throughout it all we taste the food we're making. Just yesterday we were teaching people how to bloom spices!

Alison: We want to excite all of the senses through our teachings—sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. And we also impart knowledge about the nutritional benefits of cooking at home. The biggest thing I notice is people's emotional response to

the smell of cooking. For those who have lost the relationship between cooking and eating, it is amazing to see how the smell alone brings people back to family holidays or memories of growing up. It is truly emotional and then it is also physical.

Where do people find info about the Culinary Medicine classes?

Leah: UVM Medical Center's Healthsource website is excellent (VMHealth.org/MedCenterHealthsource). All of our programs are free and we're currently offering 12 classes per year. In 2019, we'll hold our family and nutrition classes and pain and inflammation classes again. Getting families back in the kitchen is very important to us.

We'll also be offering our corporate wellness Culinary Medicine classes for local employers here in Vermont. We'll come to you! We really want to bring food education and the joy of cooking to the entire community—including places of work. If we can make our Vermont business worksites healthier through Culinary Medicine, then we can continue to meet people where they are in their wellness journey, and continue to increase the well-being and health of all Vermonters. The take-away: we have the nutritionists and we have the chef, this is a unique offering to improve our communal wellbeing through healthy foods and cooking! .

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Food is and always has been sustenance and fuel for the day. It has provided us all a connection to our communities, the seasons and to one another. Cooking and finding the joy of cooking is also a way to show self-care and care for others.

Leah Pryor



What I love most about this work is it helps reset the family dynamic and encourages people make healthy choices that then bring people back to the table, slow down and connect with the planet and with one another.

Alison Precourt

Are there other programs you think people should know about when it comes to the food landscape here in Vermont?

Alison: We not only support our patients and their families and the local community, we're also teaching UVM medical students how to help manage food intake and eating for patients who have dietary limitations. Culinary Medicine has a lot of tendrils. And we recognize that most providers only have 15 minutes with their patients—we're sensitive to this as we teach nutrition to doctors in training. It's important knowledge, but it's also important that we make it easy to share and easily understood.

Food insecurity is a reality here in Vermont. And we believe strongly that fresh, healthy farm food should be available to all. So, we support and engage with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to help provide families with fresh food and nutrition education at their provider's office through Health Care Shares.

Leah: And there's also The Learning Garden, which is a teaching and community garden located on the Fanny Allen campus. We offer a 20-week course right at Fanny Allen. We teach people how to mold and shape the earth, how to plant and how to harvest. One of the most successful harvests I remember was when we harvested honey. The jars were beautiful, golden and glowing.

What is important for Vermonters to understand about this work?

Leah: The Vermont connection to food is different than in most places. There's a certain honor or reverence for our food—even the growing and harvesting of our food is special here in Vermont. But even so, we can still help people connect the dots between cooking and nutrition and while there's a deep connection to food here, some people experience food insecurity and can't connect as easily to healthy Vermont foods. Sometimes we miss this ability to create synergy.

But food as medicine helps to create the reset so people can connect to food like we once did. Food is and always has been sustenance and fuel for the day. It has provided us all a connection to our communities, the seasons and

to one another. Cooking and finding the joy of cooking is also a way to show self-care and care for others.

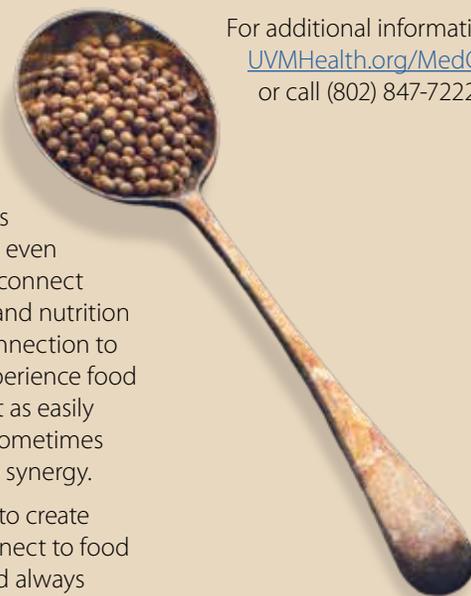
Alison: I've worked with all sorts of people and many families over the past 35 years here at UVM Medical Center. I see people who hold a deep respect for food, and I also see the other end of the spectrum—people who only eat fast foods and quick meals. What I love most about this work is it helps reset the family dynamic and encourages people make healthy choices that then bring people back to the table, slow down and connect with the planet and with one another.

Leah: Absolutely. Getting people back to the table together is the most important aspect of the work we're doing now.

Alison: Yes, and there are good statistics on the importance of family dinners, what eating together can do for people, for families.

Leah: If we can hold a safe space for people to learn about cooking and nutrition and how these two sciences are not at odds, then we can create a lot of momentum for change. Through cooking together we find things we've collectively lost—time, mindfulness, a slower pace, looking at our food, touching our food, recognizing our food and in essence recognizing one another. It is very important. Collectively, we've lost our way when it comes to food and cooking, but Culinary Medicine is how we find our way back to our roots one bite at a time.

For additional information, please visit UVMHealth.org/MedCenterHealthsource or call (802) 847-7222.



Through cooking together we find things we've collectively lost—time, mindfulness, a slower pace, looking at our food, touching our food, recognizing our food and in essence recognizing one another. It is very important.

Leah Pryor



What we focus on, we create



Inspiring action and building community through biking

Bethany Y., hadn't been on a bike in more than 25 years when she arrived at the first day of Wellness Revolution, a free cycling program for women offered by Terry Bicycles® and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont. April C., arrived on a single-speed 1950s-style cruiser she'd borrowed from her mother-in-law. Both felt a bit nervous and unsure of what to expect.

April C., braves the cold, the rain and the heat to bike year-round after participating in the Wellness Revolution cycling program.

"You know that old adage, 'it's like riding a bike?' Well, not for me," recalls Bethany. "I was close to walking away because I was so intimidated by the thought of biking again."

But both women soon discovered that there was room for all levels of biking comfort—and all types of bikes. The volunteer instructors took participants step by step through the process of getting comfortable on a bike, learning how it works and learning to make their own repairs—a skill the women found especially empowering.

Creating space to learn

When it came time to head out for a ride, it became clear that not everyone was ready. The instructors adapted quickly, forming a small group that stayed behind to keep practicing, breaking down each part of riding—from how to kick off to when to shift gears—until they felt confident about taking that next step. "They knew who to push and nudge, and who to support and guide," recalls Bethany. "And when we did go out on the road, our instructor coached us through the entire ride." Having for years lacked the confidence to ride on the road, Bethany described the group's final 11-mile road ride as "a game changer," and now considers biking part of her regular exercise toolkit.

The program deeply affected April, who serves as a program director for the Rutland Recreation & Parks Department. "It brought everything together for me—the importance of being active, community health, environmental issues—and convinced me to just give up all my

excuses," she says. Since then, she's been commuting to work by bike every day and making a significant effort to make biking her main mode of transportation around town, whether on outings with her family or trips to the grocery store.

The revolution continues

As community health professionals, Bethany and April see the program not only as a way for individuals to learn how to bike, but for continued community-building around healthy activities. Bethany, who serves as a chronic disease specialist for the Vermont Department of Health, notes that the program has helped her build a network for continued learning and recreation.

For April, the program's full potential became clear when she realized she'd become a role model for family members and beyond. A friend revealed that she and her daughter had seen April's family biking downtown, spurring her daughter to ask to go biking as well. "When kids see their parents or their friends biking, it breaks down a barrier," says April. "It's contagious."

Bethany Y., (L) and April C., (R) are both intrepid bikers and make time to stretch and laugh together at the Rutland Recreation & Parks Department.

"The support from Blue Cross and Terry Bicycles, as well as the flexibility to tap into the local biking community and make the program our own, has worked beautifully here in Rutland."

Bethany Y., 2018 Wellness Revolution participant



Welcome, Vicki Hildebrand



*Victoria, "Vicki" Hildebrand,
vice president and chief information officer*

We're excited to welcome our new vice president and chief information officer, **Victoria "Vicki" Hildebrand**. Vicki is responsible for the Information Technology solutions at BCBSVT, as well as implementing future technology and data management capabilities to better serve consumers, clients and employees.

Prior to her time at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, Ms. Hildebrand served as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the United States Department of Transportation where she drove a digital transformation program that resulted in tens of millions of dollars of savings, a more resilient cyber security infrastructure and the implementation of modern data management techniques across all the Department's agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration. Most laudably, she was the recipient of the prestigious [2018 FedScoop award](#), which recognizes tech leaders who make a positive impact on local and national communities.

Before working in Washington, Ms. Hildebrand worked for Hewlett-Packard Inc., for more than 30 years. Her tenure

covered leadership positions in hardware and software development, systems engineering, architecture, operations, global services and most recently as Vice President for Customer and Partner Advocacy where she advised customers on how to implement Digital and Business Transformation. She led the Marketing IT development teams through the complex acquisitions of Compaq and Electronic Data Systems Corporation (EDS).

Ms. Hildebrand has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Vermont and a Master's degree in Technology Management from Columbia University where she continues to help teach Digital Transformation. She's been active in STEM-related learning (science, technology, engineering and math) for her entire career and continues to support women with an interest in technology.

As a U.S. Figure Skating Gold Medalist and former coach, she spends her free time as a national level figure skating judge. Ms. Hildebrand is happy to be working in her home state of Vermont.



*L to R: Commissioner of Health
Dr. Mark Levine, Kim Langlais, Alan Cunningham,
Bethany Volini and Governor Phil Scott*

BCBSVT earns 2019 Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness Gold-Level Award

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont's (BCBSVT) employee wellness programs earned recognition from the Vermont Department of Health and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

BCBSVT received the 2019 Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness Gold-Level Award at the 2019 Worksite Wellness Conference on March 21. The award recognizes BCBSVT's commitment to employee wellness through programs and resources that encourage and support physical activity, personal well being and mindfulness.

Alan Cunningham, worksite health and wellness manager for BCBSVT, appreciates the state's recognition. "Our wellness committee works hard to plan and offer initiatives that will make a difference to our fellow employees," Cunningham says. "We're pleased that the committee's efforts have earned this award, and we're looking forward to another year of initiatives to help our colleagues manage their health." Cunningham notes that BCBSVT offers a wide array of programs to employees, including onsite yoga, exercise rooms, nutrition planning and much more.



Roasted roots, from Farmers To You

At spring's first blush we all look forward to early season vegetables and anticipate Vermont's luscious growing season. But in celebration of the last remaining roots in our root cellars and in preparation for light, summery meals, this simple-to-prepare and delicious-to-eat roasted roots recipe work for any meal during any season. We hope you'll enjoy!

Directions:

1. Choose the root vegetables to include—beets, potatoes, shallots, sweet potatoes, carrots, onions, turnips, and/or parsnips
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
3. Chop vegetables of choice into large bite-size pieces. Toss with olive oil (or melted butter, or a combo) until liberally coated, but not swimming. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and sprinkle with dried herbs; rosemary and thyme are particularly good here.
4. Transfer veggies to a roasting pan, making sure there is a bit of space between the pieces—otherwise they will steam, rather than roast; two pans may work better. Roast them until nicely browned and tender, about 50 minutes.

How to use them:

For breakfast

- serve as is
- stir into scrambled eggs
- make a tempeh and roots hash
- toss with crisped bacon pieces
- fold into an omelet
- top with grated cheese and heat under broiler for a minute or two
- make a frittata
- mix with some browned and crumbled breakfast sausage

For lunch or dinner

- serve as is
- throw into a green salad
- throw into a grain salad
- make veggie tacos
- whiz in a blender with some vegetable (or chicken) stock to make a quick soup
- toss with any cooked pasta shape
- use in a stir fry
- fill a pita with hummus and roots
- make a roasted root pizza

Do you know where your food was grown?

Connecting farmers to families and families to farmers is the goal of Farmers To You, a Vermont-based food hub that has been serving the Boston area since 2009 and offers Vermont pickup sites, too—in Barre, Berlin (at the Farmers To You Hub, across from BCBSVT campus), and Burlington.

See www.farmerstoyou.com for the local food and products available, keeping in mind that the offerings vary by season. Vermonters receive an 8 percent discount over the prices listed on the site.

Farmers markets offer another great way to access local food. Go to www.nofavt.org/find-organic-local-food/farmers-markets to see where the closest market is to you.

Find the hidden symbol and win a prize

Just find the symbol shown at left hidden somewhere in this publication and send us a letter telling us where you found it. Use the address found on the mailing panel.



We'll draw four lucky reader's names from the correct responses and announce the winners on our social media channels—so be certain to like, follow and engage with our channels. Each winner will receive a gift card to Amazon.com.

Connect with us:



Special challenge: Because of all the creative and unique responses (e.g. postcards, artwork, poems and notes) we've received over the years, we now present an additional winner with a gift card for the most creative entry for that issue's contest.

Electronic option: In an effort to be "green," we will accept your hidden symbol contest entry via email. Just email hiddensymbol@bcbsvt.com and we'll number your entry and enter you into the drawing!

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