

Nurse practitioners help fill the healthcare gap

BERLIN -- As the healthcare provider shortage crisis looms, nurse practitioners offer the high-quality, cost-effective, patient-centered services needed to help solve the increasing demand for healthcare in the United States.

Nurse practitioners, recognized from November 13 - November 19, during National Nurse Practitioner Week are licensed, expert clinicians with advanced training who provide primary, acute and specialty health care services. They work as a partner with their patients, helping them make educated healthcare decisions and healthy lifestyle choices.

Penny Kaye Jensen, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, FAANP is president of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

"Nurse practitioners have a proven

track record of success, and research has shown that they provide high-quality primary care with outcomes that are similar to primary care physicians," Dr. Jensen said.

National Nurse Practitioners Week was celebrated last week. It's a time to celebrate these unique healthcare providers.

Nurse Practitioners at AVH include Karen C. Lovett, CFNP, CNM of the Ear, Nose, Throat/Allergy Clinic of AVH Surgical Associates; and Susan M. Lessard, ARNP, Occupational Health Coordinator.

The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) is the oldest and largest national professional organization for nurse practitioners (NPs) of all specialties. AANP represents the interests of approximately 148,000 nurse practitioners in the country and



Left to right in photo: are Karen C. Lovett, CFNP, CNM of the Ear, Nose, Throat/Allergy Clinic of AVH Surgical Associates; and Susan M. Lessard, ARNP, Occupational Health Coordinator.

advocates for their active role as providers of high-quality, cost-effective, comprehensive, patient-centered and

personalized healthcare. For more information, please visit www.aanp.org.

'Watch Me Grow' program available to determine child's growth and development

COOS COUNTY -- Are you a parent of a child between the ages of one month and 6 years? Have you ever wondered what your child should be doing and learning at each stage of growth? Have you ever been concerned that your child might not have the skills she/he should have at a certain age? Have you ever wished that you had some tips on how to best support your child's growth and development? Well, now there is a program available throughout Coos County called "Watch Me Grow" that is there for you.

Watch Me Grow is an easy screening program that provides parents with an age related questionnaire that they can fill out at home just by watching their child. The questionnaire is called "Ages and Stages"

and it is easy to complete and score. Parents can get a free ages and stages questionnaire from The Family Support Programs at the Family Resource Center and Mental Health, Early Supports and Services, Bright Beginnings at Weeks Medical Center, Child and Family Services in Colebrook and participating child care centers. The questionnaires are designed to be filled out by parents at home and staff from the participating organizations can help parents understand the scoring and also offer information and tips for activities that are helpful at different stages of your child's first years.

Research shows that an infant's brain contains 25 percent of the synapses it will have as an adult

brain. Most thinking, reasoning and language skills are hardwired into our brains by the age of three, so providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for young children is critical for their success later in life. The Ages and Stages questionnaire will help parents understand what their child needs and how their child is developing.

Last year, the Coos Watch Me Grow program screened 395 children in the county and we plan to reach at least twice that number in the coming year. Watch Me Grow aims to work with parents so that every child in Coos is screened at least once a year. If you are interested and would like more information about the Watch Me Grow Ages and Stages questionnaire please contact, Sue Watson at the Family Resource Center (466-5190 ext. 303), Sue Chancy at Bright Beginnings/Weeks Medical Center (603-788-4911 ext. 5094), Ann-Marie Smith at Child and Family Services in Colebrook (237-4884), Rochelle Mulhern at Early Supports and Services (662-2233), Michele Santy, Infant Mental Health Berlin-Gorham (752-7404), Stacey Smith, Infant Mental Health Colebrook-Groveton (237-4955), Joanne Kaweck, Infant Mental Health Lancaster-Whitefield (444-5358) or ask your child care provider if they are part of Watch Me Grow.

Coos Watch Me Grow is a member of the State wide Department of Health and Human Services Watch Me Grow program and is supported by the Early Childhood Development North Country Strategy, funded by the Neil and Louise Tillson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. This five-year initiative is designed to help all children thrive by focusing services and information for parents on the early years of growth and development, supporting professional development and continued education for early childhood professionals, increasing access to infant mental health, and strengthening childcare and preschool services for all children, ages 0 - 6, in Coos County. We believe that investing early in families with young children will improve the future community and economic vitality and stability of the North Country. For more information about this project, please contact Catherine McDowell at cmcdowell@nrcr.com or go to www.investincoskids.com.

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