

Laura Nichols retirement is well earned



Laura Nichols

After ten years of living and practicing in Vernonia, Physician Assistant Laura Nichols is retiring...at least that's what she says.

Laura came to the U.S. as a nurse from war-torn England after World War II, and had several careers while raising her family. She has shied away from nothing, from taking over a practice of 3,000 patients single-handedly in Utah to coordinating medical relief efforts from ground zero in the Vernonia flood of '96.

"Appointed as Laura's medical supervisor in 1999, fresh out of my residency," said Mark

Livingston, M.D., "I quickly realized I was dealing with a legend in the Physician Assistant profession." Oregon law requires a PA to be in close contact with a physician, who must review charts on a regular basis. Livingston described those times as a learning experience. "We collaborate, but most often Laura is the teacher and I am the pupil."

Among the lessons Nichols teaches is that technology has an impersonal side, and it is often not a complete solution. She also asks, "Have you actually listened to your patients?"

Early in her career, Medical

Assistant Jeanette Doherty worked with pulmonologists, cardiologists, oncologists, internal medicine and family practice doctors. "...and none of them can measure up to Laura Nichols, P.A.-C.," said Doherty. "Laura has taken the word 'compassion' to a new level...healing in a way that addresses the patient's whole being. People tell how Laura's positive influence helped them stop smoking, or change their lifestyle to prevent or heal a health problem. Some patients tell me she literally saved their lives, when no one else could properly diagnose their health problem."

"Laura has a passion about life," Clinic Manager Cathy Rozenik said, "She has a wonderful sense of humor, yet she can lay the law down to patients who don't follow her advice, and [make] you feel like a child caught with your hand in the cookie jar."

"I hope that Laura enjoys her well-earned retirement, writes the book she has talked of, and paints many pictures of the Oregon Coast that she loves," said office assistant Marla Rethwill.

Office Assistant Sue Blair, said "Laura was on call whenever she was needed and never turned a patient away, regardless of the hour or the circumstance."

We will miss this dedicated caregiver, and wish her the very best in retirement. She deserves it!

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner

Holiday Schedule

Providence-Vernonia has announced schedule changes for clinic hours during the Christmas and New Years holidays, as follows:

- December 24: 8:00 to 3:00
- December 25, 26: Closed.
- December 31: 8:00 to 3:00
- January 1: Closed.
- January 2: Regular hours (8:00 to 5:00).



Mammovan: The schedule for 2004 Mobile Mammography Screening at Vernonia has been received. The Van will be in Vernonia once a month, always on a Wednesday. The next scheduled visit will be February 25, 2004. (The Mammovan does not come to Vernonia in January.) Call the Clinic office at 503-429-9191 to schedule an appointment.

Goodbyes

Goodbye to Laura. So Long to Mark Livingston, M.D.

Laura Nichols, P.A. at Providence-Vernonia Clinic, is retiring on December 19. She has been a dedicated practitioner in Vernonia for about ten years, and has been a very positive influence on the health of our community. We wish her the best. (Please see statements from a few of her associates at the Clinic.)

Dr. Livingston is also leaving the Vernonia clinic, as of December 31; as reported in the last issue of The Independent, Dr. Livingston will be expanding his practice in St. Helens. He still feels somewhat "rooted" in Vernonia, with family connections and by his love for rural medicine. By the way, the initials of his clinic in St. Helens (The Livingston Clinic) say it all: "Tender Loving Care." We'll miss you, Dr. Livingston.

A note from Clinic Manager Cathy Rozinek:

Although we have special holiday hours, the Providence Clinic will remain open, continuing to bring healthcare to patients. Craig Stevens, M.D., who is replacing Dr. Livingston, will be seeing patients in Vernonia starting the first Monday in January. Family Nurse Practitioner Amy Leatherwood will start on January 2.

Judy Hargis, P.A.-C will complete the staff, who will be seeing patients on the exact same schedule as before. Medical Assistants Jeanette Doherty and Dawn Anderson will continue to support these caregivers.

God Bless, and Best Wishes for a healthy, happy holiday season to all.

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