



## Orleans Dental Center – Open as of January 2017

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### **Collaborative Partnership Brings Dental Center to Orleans**

**We are accepting patients for the Orleans Dental Center! Call (802)-754-6973 for more information.**

Northern Counties Health Care, a Federally Qualified Health Center, is pleased to announce the expansion of their dental program in collaborative partnership with North Country Hospital and the Village of Orleans, Vt.

In January 2015, North Country Hospital completed its community needs assessment which identified access to dental care as one of the biggest challenges facing people living in Orleans County. In Orleans County, 65% of adults aged 45-64 have had tooth extractions compared to the State average of 52%; nearly 10% of adult residents have lost ALL permanent teeth due to decay or disease; and only 39% of the population is served by community public water systems that have optimally fluoridated water vs. a State average of 56%. In 2014, of the Medicaid-eligible Vermonters in the Newport area aged 19-64, only 23% received preventative dental services.

In the Fall of 2015, Northern Counties Health Care (NCHC) identified a grant opportunity to help address these challenges. “Our goal,” Shawn Tester, CEO of NCHC, said, “was to expand access to affordable high-quality oral health services for people living in the Barton/Orleans area in order to improve their quality of life.” Working together with North Country Hospital and the Village of Orleans, the three organizations applied for grant funding which covered the cost of operations for a new dental center for up to two years.

Even with the grant funds, a site for the new dental center was needed, and this is where the partnership developed. The Village of Orleans owned the site of a former medical office building on Union Street, and offered it as part of the solution. North Country Hospital pledged \$100,000 in financial support toward the construction of the new facility at that location. NCHC covered the remaining balance of the construction costs. “Northern Counties Health Care has a strong track record of providing essential primary and preventative care services to the citizens of the Northeast Kingdom,” said North Country Hospital President Claudio Fort. “We are pleased to be a part of this important initiative to bring critically needed dental services to the Orleans/Barton community.”

With an identified acute need and an innovative collaborative approach to solving the communities’ challenges, NCHC was awarded the grant in June 2016, and construction began immediately. “Our grant stipulated a very narrow window to become operational and see our first patient,” said Tester. “John Morley and the Village of Orleans bent over backwards to help us meet our deadlines—they are a great partner to work with.”

The Orleans Dental Center employs a dentist, hygienist, dental assistant, receptionist and office supervisor. The practice has two Operatories and two hygiene rooms, and NCHC expects to serve at least 500 new patients within the first year of operations. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, NCHC is committed to provide services to all members of our communities, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. NCHC accepts Medicaid insurance as well as offering a sliding fee scale to make dental services more affordable.

The Orleans Dental Center opened to the community on January 3, 2017.



### *About Northern Counties Health Care*

NCHC is a Federally Qualified Health Center and Home Health & Hospice provider with five health centers and three dental centers serving Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. It is our mission to enhance the quality of life of our communities by providing compassionate, accessible, and affordable patient-centered health services.

### *About North Country Hospital*

North Country Hospital is a private, nonprofit acute care community hospital serving twenty-two communities in a two-county area in the rural Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Located on 30 acres in a quiet, easily accessible part of the City of Newport, North Country Hospital blends medical expertise and technology with a genuine concern for people. In addition to a population base of over 27,000 residents, the hospital provides care to the many area visitors, summer vacationers, skiers and other sportsmen.



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