

Note: I led the development of the communications plan and materials for activities related to Virginia Mason and Memorial Family of Services.

Communications Plan

Virginia Mason Medical Center Affiliation with Memorial Family of Services

Purpose of the Plan

To ensure clear, consistent, and timely communication about the affiliation between Memorial Family of Services and Virginia Mason Health System, reinforcing shared values, community benefit and the long-term vision for improved access, quality and patient-centered care.

Objectives

Internal

- Ensure all employees, leaders and boards understand the purpose, benefits and next steps of the affiliation.
- Reinforce stability, continuity of care and commitment to both organizations' missions.
- Build confidence in leadership, the System Integration Council and the process.

External

- Reassure patients, community members and business leaders that services will remain strong and accessible.
- Position the affiliation as a strategic, forward-looking partnership that expands high quality care in Central Washington.
- Establish Virginia Mason and Memorial as aligned, mission driven organizations committed to quality, safety and community wellness.
- Provide clear, consistent information to media to ensure accurate coverage.

Key Audiences

Internal

- Virginia Mason Boards of Directors
- Memorial Board of Trustees
- Executive leadership teams (both organizations)
- Managers and supervisors

- Leadership teams involved in integration planning
- All employees (clinical and non-clinical)

External

- General public
- Patients and families
- Yakima business leaders
- Community partners
- Local and regional media
- Elected officials
- Partner organizations (Kittitas Valley Healthcare, Confluence Health)

Messaging Framework

Primary Message

The affiliation between Memorial Family of Services and Virginia Mason strengthens access to high quality, patient-centered care in Central Washington by combining two mission driven, community focused health systems.

Supporting Messages

Shared Vision and Values

- Both organizations share a commitment to quality, safety and patient-centered care.
- The affiliation builds on long standing relationships and aligned missions.

Benefits to Patients and Community

- Expanded access to specialty care, advanced clinical programs and coordinated services.
- Enhanced ability to recruit and retain top clinical talent.
- Improved care pathways across primary, specialty and hospital services.

Stability and Continuity

- No immediate changes to how patients access care.
- Memorial remains deeply rooted in the Yakima community.
- Leadership teams remain in place and are working collaboratively.

Integration and Future Growth

- Integration teams are developing plans for clinical areas including primary care, digestive diseases, heart, cancer, neurosciences and orthopedics.
- The affiliation is a foundation for long-term growth and innovation.

Community Commitment

- The affiliation strengthens the region's health care infrastructure.

- Both organizations remain not-for-profit.

Tactics and Channels

Leadership and Board Communications

- Message to all boards and leadership
- Board briefing packets
- Talking points for board chairs
- Leadership FAQs

Employee Communications

- All-staff email from both CEOs
- Manager toolkit (talking points, FAQ)
- V-Net story and Q&A
- Town halls
- Department-level huddles led by managers
- Video message from Dr. Kaplan and Russ Myers
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Media Relations

- Joint press release
- Media briefing with both CEOs
- Op-ed or guest column in Yakima Herald-Republic
- Prepared statements and media Q&A

Community and Business Leader Outreach

- Personalized letters to Yakima business leaders
- Briefings with chambers of commerce
- Outreach to elected officials and civic partners
- Community newsletter update

General Public Communications

- Website updates on both organizations' sites
- Social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Patient-facing FAQs in clinics and hospitals (Primarily for Memorial)
- Signage and front-desk scripts (Primarily for Memorial)

Messaging by Audience

Boards and Executive Leadership

- Focus on strategy, long-term vision and governance.
- Emphasize shared values, quality and system level benefits.
- Provide clarity on integration timelines and decision making.

Managers and Supervisors

- Provide talking points to cascade to teams.
- Reinforce stability and continuity of operations.
- Equip leaders to answer employee questions.

All Employees

- What this means for employees.
- Reassurance about roles, reporting and patient care.
- Emphasis on mission, values and opportunities for growth.

General Public

- Reassurance about continuity of care.
- Emphasis on expanded access and improved services.
- Clear, simple language about what is changing and what is not.

Yakima Business Leaders

- Emphasize economic stability, workforce development and community benefit.
- Highlight opportunities for improved regional health outcomes.

Media

- Provide clear, consistent facts.
- Reinforce the affiliation as a strategic, mission driven partnership.
- Offer access to spokespeople and integration leaders.

Potential Issues and Risks

Potential concerns:

- Fear of job loss or major changes
- Community worry about loss of local identity
- Misunderstanding about ownership or governance

- Media speculation about financial drivers

Mitigation strategies:

- Clear, repeated reassurance about continuity
- Transparent FAQs
- Consistent messaging from all leaders
- Rapid response to misinformation
- Local spokespeople for Yakima-specific questions

Measures

- Employee understanding and confidence (pulse surveys)
- Manager and supervisor feedback
- Positive or neutral media coverage
- Community sentiment (social listening, business leader feedback)
- Smooth integration communications across clinical teams
- Engagement with digital content (website traffic, social metrics)

Timeline

Messages/Notes	Audiences	Medium	Timeline	Approve, Who?
<p>MEMO</p> <p>To: All Boards and Executive Leadership From: Gary S. Kaplan, MD, Chairman and CEO, Virginia Mason Health System Russ Myers, President and CEO, Memorial Family of Services</p> <p>RE: Memorial Family of Services Officially Joins Virginia Mason Health System</p> <p>We are happy to announce that as of Jan. 1, 2016, Memorial Family of Services is officially part of Virginia Mason Health System. We're excited about this affiliation and what it means for our communities, and we're</p>	<p>All Boards and Executive Leadership</p> <p>Include news release</p>	<p>Email</p>	<p>Jan. 4</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson</p> <p>Approve: Gary Kaplan, Russ Myers</p>

<p>confident that by joining together, Memorial and Virginia Mason both will thrive and grow in the years to come.</p> <p>In the weeks and months ahead we will share more information about what this affiliation means and the great work underway by our System Integration Council and planning groups.</p> <p>Happy New Year,</p> <p>Gary and Russ</p>				
<p>Same as above</p>	<p>All Team Members</p> <p>Include news release</p>	<p>Email</p> <p>V-Net</p>	<p>Jan. 4</p> <p>Jan. 4</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson</p> <p>Joe Rothrock</p> <p>Approve: Gary Kaplan</p>
<p>Same as above</p>	<p>General Public</p>	<p>Facebook</p> <p>Twitter</p>	<p>Jan. 5</p>	<p>Social Media Team</p> <p>Approve: Michelle Peterson</p>
<p>Memorial Family of Services' Affiliation with Virginia Mason Is Official</p> <p>SEATTLE – (Jan. 5, 2016) – The affiliation of Yakima-based Memorial Family of Services, which includes Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, with Virginia Mason Health System became final on Jan. 1 as expected, following regulatory review.</p> <p>"I am pleased to welcome Memorial to our organization," said Virginia Mason Chairman and CEO Gary S. Kaplan, MD. "We are partnering with a community focused health system that shares our vision for the future of health care and our commitment to quality and safety."</p>	<p>Media</p>	<p>News Release</p>	<p>Jan. 5</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson</p> <p>Approve: Gary Kaplan and Russ Myers</p>

<p>Dr. Kaplan and Memorial CEO Russ Myers, along with Jim Berg, chairman of the Memorial Board of Trustees, and James Young, chairman of the Virginia Mason Board of Directors, signed the legal document for the affiliation during a Dec. 20 ceremony in Yakima.</p> <p>“We are excited about joining the Virginia Mason organization,” Myers said, “and the opportunities this will create for expanding access to high quality, affordable and patient-centered health services in our community.”</p> <p>The affiliation is a non-cash transaction. Memorial Family of Services and Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, which is owned and operated by the Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital Association, become part of Virginia Mason.</p> <p>Teams from Virginia Mason and Memorial are developing plans that will guide the collaborative integration and enhancement of services over the next several months. Clinical areas designated for integration and/or enhancement first include digestive diseases, heart, cancer, neurosciences and orthopedics.</p> <p>“Our management and leadership teams share a vision and commitment to work together in building a health system that is greater than the sum of its parts,” Dr. Kaplan said.</p> <p>The affiliation expands Virginia Mason’s presence in Central Washington, where it has partnerships with Kittitas Valley Healthcare in Ellensburg and Confluence Health in Wenatchee for providing or supporting specific services.</p>				
<p>Same as above</p>		<p>News Briefs</p>	<p>Jan. 6</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson Joe Rothrock</p> <p>Approve: Gary Kaplan and Russ Myers</p>

<p>In January, Memorial Family of Services officially became part of Virginia Mason Health System.</p> <p>This affiliation supports Virginia Mason’s work to transform health care. Working closely with Memorial leadership, this affiliation is designed in a way that will allow the aligned organizations to offer clinical programs that bring high-quality, integrated and seamless care to patients on both sides of the Cascades. Under the affiliation structure, the health system will benefit from increased services provided in either location by Memorial or Virginia Mason.</p> <p>The overarching vision with Memorial is to create the healthiest communities in the United States. Ideally, the care will be so tightly aligned and coordinated that when a patient wakes up from a procedure, they won’t know whether they are at Memorial in Yakima or at Virginia Mason in Seattle.</p> <p>Through the work together, the focus is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To help the Memorial team provide the highest quality of care for patients in Yakima. 2) To grow patient volume at Memorial. When it makes sense for patients to stay in Yakima for their care, we want them to receive that care with Memorial. 3) To welcome Memorial patients to Virginia Mason. When it is appropriate for higher acuity patients to leave the Yakima community, we want those patients to be cared for at Virginia Mason. <p>Initially, efforts for clinical integration will focus on Digestive Diseases, Heart, Cancer, Orthopedics and Neurosciences.</p> <p>A System Integration Council, made up of leaders from both Memorial and Virginia Mason, is overseeing the work by prioritizing and monitoring integration initiatives and scoping the pace of work.</p> <p>More than 20 implementation groups have been formed to focus on integration, including groups for each of the initial</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>All Team Members</p>	<p>News Briefs</p> <p>V-Net</p>	<p>Jan. 20</p> <p>Jan. 21</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson Joe Rothrock</p> <p>Approve: Santokh Gill</p>
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<p>clinical areas, finance, supply chain, information systems, pharmacy and radiology.</p> <p>Regular updates will be provided through internal communications channels as this work progresses.</p>				
<p>FAQ for Virginia Mason Team Members</p> <p>Memorial Family of Services' Affiliation with Virginia Mason Health System</p> <p>Effective January 1, 2016</p> <p>What was announced? As of Jan. 1, Memorial Family of Services, including Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, officially joined Virginia Mason Health System following regulatory review. This reflects a shared commitment to high quality, patient-centered care.</p> <p>Why did Virginia Mason pursue this affiliation? Memorial is a strong, community focused health system with values that closely align with ours. By joining together, we can expand access to high quality, affordable care across Central Washington and strengthen our ability to serve patients on both sides of the Cascades.</p> <p>What does this mean for patients? Patients will continue to receive care from the providers they know and trust. Over time, patients will see expanded access to specialty services, improved care coordination, and a more seamless experience between Yakima and Seattle.</p> <p>Will anything change immediately at Virginia Mason? No. There are no immediate changes to how we deliver care, how teams operate or how patients access services. Integration work will be phased in over time.</p>	<p>All Team Members</p>	<p>V-Net headline</p> <p>Memorial page on V-Net</p> <p>Develop V-Net site for all Memorial information and updates</p>	<p>February</p>	<p>eHealth</p> <p>Approve: Michelle Peterson</p>

<p>What is the structure of the affiliation? This is a non-cash affiliation between two not-for-profit organizations. Memorial Family of Services and Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital become part of Virginia Mason, while maintaining their deep roots in the Yakima community.</p> <p>What areas will integrate first? Initial clinical integration priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digestive Diseases • Heart • Cancer • Neurosciences • Orthopedics <p>These areas were selected based on shared strengths, patient need and opportunities to improve access and outcomes.</p> <p>Who is overseeing the integration work? A System Integration Council, made up of leaders from both organizations, is guiding the work. More than 20 implementation groups are focused on clinical and operational areas such as finance, supply chain, information systems, pharmacy and radiology.</p> <p>How will employees stay informed? We will provide regular updates through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V-Net • News Briefs • Town Halls • Leadership cascades • A dedicated Memorial page on V-Net • An email inbox for questions <p>Our goal is to keep everyone informed, aligned and supported throughout the integration process.</p> <p>Will this affiliation affect my job? No immediate changes are expected. Both organizations remain committed to supporting employees and ensuring stability during the integration process. If changes occur in</p>				
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the future, they will be communicated clearly and with appropriate lead time.

How will this affiliation benefit Virginia Mason?

- Strengthens our presence in Central Washington
- Expands our ability to serve patients across the region
- Enhances clinical programs through shared expertise
- Supports our long-term strategy to transform health care
- Builds a system that is “greater than the sum of its parts,” as Dr. Kaplan noted

How will this benefit Memorial?

- Access to Virginia Mason’s clinical expertise and quality improvement methods (VMPS)
- Support for expanding specialty services in Yakima
- Opportunities to grow patient volume locally
- A stronger, more coordinated system for higher-acuity care

What should I say if patients or community members ask about the affiliation?

A simple, clear response:

Memorial Family of Services has joined Virginia Mason Health System. Patients will continue to receive care from the same providers, and over time, the affiliation will expand access to specialty services and improve coordination between Yakima and Seattle.

If you receive questions you’re unsure how to answer, please direct them to your manager or the integration email inbox.

Will there be opportunities for employees to ask questions directly?

Yes.

- Russ Myers will attend Virginia Mason Town Halls.
- Dr. Kaplan will attend Memorial Town Halls.
- Leaders will share updates at ELG, LTQM, MMM, Senior Council and other standing meetings.

<p>Where can I find the most up-to-date information? A dedicated Memorial page on V-Net will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQs • Integration updates • Clinical area highlights • Leadership messages • Links to resources and past communications 				
<p>Ongoing updates:</p> <p>In each update, feature the work of one or more of the clinical areas and/or one or more of the other integration groups.</p>	<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Meetings</p>	<p>ELG:</p> <p>LTQM: Jan. 21 (Russ Myers attending)</p> <p>MMM: Feb. 3 March 2 April 6 May 4 June 4 July 6 Aug. 3 Sept. 7 Oct. 5 Nov. 2 Dec. 7</p> <p>All Provider Town Halls:</p> <p>Prof. Staff:</p> <p>Senior Council:</p>	<p>Gary Kaplan</p> <p>Gary Kaplan</p> <p>Sarah Patterson</p> <p>Gary Kaplan</p> <p>Gary Kaplan</p> <p>Gary Kaplan/Sarah Patterson</p>

<p>Town Halls</p> <p>Russ Myers to attend Virginia Mason Town Hall(s) to answer team member questions.</p> <p>Gary Kaplan to attend Memorial Town Hall(s) to answer team member questions.</p>	All Team Members	Town Hall	TBD	<p>Michelle Peterson Joe Rothrock</p> <p>Gary Kaplan Russ Myers</p>
<p>Ongoing updates:</p> <p>In each update, feature the work of one or more of the clinical areas and/or one or more of the other integration groups</p>	All Team Members	<p>News Briefs</p> <p>V-Net</p> <p>Town Halls</p>	Ongoing	<p>Michelle Peterson</p> <p>Sarah Patterson Santokh Gill Joe Rothrock</p>
Email box for questions regarding integration	All Team Members	Outlook	Ongoing	Communications
<p>New name/logo communication</p> <p>Share new naming convention</p>	<p>All Team Members</p> <p>General Public</p>	<p>News Briefs</p> <p>V-Net</p> <p>Social Media</p>	When decisions are made	<p>Michelle Peterson Social Media Team</p> <p>Approve: Gary Kaplan, Russ Myers, Sarah Patterson Santokh Gill</p>
Yakima Rotary Meeting	Yakima Business Leaders	Presentation	March/ April	<p>Michelle Peterson</p> <p>Gary Kaplan Russ Myers</p>

<p>Boilerplate update – Virginia Mason About Virginia Mason</p> <p>Virginia Mason, founded in 1920, is a nonprofit regional health care system based in Seattle that serves the Pacific Northwest. In the Puget Sound region, the system includes 336-bed Virginia Mason Hospital; a primary and specialty care group practice of more than 480 physicians; regional medical centers in Seattle, Bainbridge Island, Bellevue, Federal Way, Kirkland, Issaquah and Lynnwood; Bailey-Boushay House, the first skilled-nursing and outpatient chronic care management program in the U.S. designed and built specifically to meet the needs of people with HIV/AIDS; Benaroya Research Institute, which is internationally recognized for autoimmune disease research; and Virginia Mason Institute, which trains health care professionals and others from around the world in the Virginia Mason Production System, an innovative management methodology for continually improving quality, safety and efficiency. Virginia Mason online: www.VirginiaMason.org</p> <p>Virginia Mason also includes Yakima-based Memorial Family of Services and Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, a 226-bed facility serving the Yakima Valley in Central Washington since 1950. Memorial Family of Services comprises primary care practices and specialty care services, including high quality cardiac care, a continuum of cancer care, hospice care and advanced services for children with special health care needs. Memorial online: www.YakimaMemorial.org</p>	Media	News Releases	January	Michelle Peterson
<p>External website updates:</p> <p>Add information to affiliations pages on VirginiaMason.org</p> <p>Updates to Memorial website</p>	General Public	External Websites	January	Michelle Peterson eHealth

<p>Suggested Twitter Posts</p> <p>Announcement We're proud to share that Memorial Family of Services in Yakima has officially affiliated with Virginia Mason Health System. Together, we're expanding access to high quality, patient-centered care in Central Washington.</p> <p>Community Focus This affiliation strengthens our shared commitment to the Yakima community. Patients will continue receiving the same trusted care, with expanded access to specialty services over time.</p> <p>Leadership Quote "Our organizations share a vision for the future of health care and a deep commitment to quality and safety." — Dr. Gary Kaplan, Virginia Mason Chairman & CEO</p> <p>What's Next Integration teams from both organizations are working together to enhance services in heart, cancer, neurosciences, orthopedics, and more.</p> <p>Stability and Continuity Patients will continue to see their same providers and access care as they always have. This affiliation strengthens our ability to serve the community for years to come.</p>	<p>General Public</p>	<p>Social Media</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Michelle Peterson Social Media Team</p>
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